Scrambling to the Bottom? Mining, Resources & Underdevelopment

Ray Bush

The 21st century race for resources and territory has simultaneously induced cries of optimism from donors and the international agencies, but there is despair from critics and many on the continent: that plunder and looting continues in a manner reminiscent of the colonial past (Bond, 2006; Bush, 2007). But is the current scramble similar to the previous looting of African resources? Are there no benefits from the demand for Africa’s resources? Can the current dynamic be characterised as a scramble or, is it simply ‘business as usual’ for the good of civil society?

Africa holds 42% of the world’s share of bauxite; 38% of its uranium; 42% of the world’s reserves of gold; 73% of its platinum; 88% of diamonds. The continent also has enormous reserves of non-ferrous metals like chromite (44%), manganese (82%), vanadium (95%) and cobalt (55%). Despite this abundance of resource wealth – and these figures probably underestimate resource availability because of limited surveying – there is little evidence that raw materials are translated into growth with justice and equality. And there is only limited evidence that strategies to convert local resources nationally, or to pool them regionally, will generate real value added for Africans. For while the continent’s average economic growth rates have been high since 2000 compared with previous decades due almost entirely to the unprecedented price of crude oil and metals, African raw material producers do not benefit from the resource scramble.

Large scale resource income is limited to a few and largely oil producing countries like Nigeria, Angola and Sudan. And where mining for gold and other minerals continues apace, so too has displacement of communities/migration, increased environmental hazards and poor health and well being. Smaller countries too have hit the recent headlines, like Equatorial Guinea where oil has encouraged an attempted coup and imperialist intervention. Resource rich countries, moreover, consume only a tiny amount of what they produce. This indicates that the path to industrial-based growth remains limited, almost entirely to South Africa and Nigeria. African states seem unable, under present contracts, to access improved value added from the processing of copper, gold and diamonds, bauxite, crude oil and cobalt. Value remains locked in the industrial centres of international capital.

Resource abundance accompanied by high levels of poverty and destitution in resource producing countries has led to an inverse relationship between resource availability and economic performance: the ‘curse of resources’. Between 1960 and 1990, for instance, the World Bank indicated that ‘developing countries with few natural resources grew 2-3 times faster than natural resource-abundant countries’ (World Bank, 2003:149); the exception to the rule was diamond rich Botswana. The idea of the resource curse has captured the imagination of many and certainly driven...
contemporary donor prescriptions for Africa.; Here are five main reasons (Ross, 1999; Auty, 1995; Yates, 1996):

1) A fall in terms of trade for primary commodities;

2) The instability of international commodity markets;

3) Weak or non-existent linkages between resource and non-resource areas (both spatial and sectoral);

4) Impoverishment of rural livelihoods;

5) ‘Dutch disease’: an appreciation of a country’s exchange rate following an increase in exports accompanying resource exploration, an effect that is often paralleled by the movement of investment away from non-resource sectors as labour moves to be employed in mining enclaves.

The ‘resource curse’ has been a dominant feature in explanations of ‘crisis in Africa’ – used as shorthand to explain poor economic development especially when linked with war and conflict as in Sierra Leone and Liberia, Angola and the DRC. These explanations of crisis, that war and upheaval are driven by ‘greed’ or ‘grievance’, have downplayed shifts in terms of trade and commodity market instability. In the contemporary period, such negative market volatility is absent. Since 2000 sustained high commodity prices mark a new stable era but there are two problems with this idea of stability. First, it has been ideologically convenient for donors to underplay market volatility, shaped after all by demands of consuming countries, major international companies and the power of financial speculation driven by profit taking. Donors blame poor economic performance on poor governance and corruption: it is an inconvenient truth to see the cause of persistent underperformance located in the asymmetry of the world economy. The second problem with the current optimism that high commodity prices will deliver sustained economic growth, is the failure to have an historical context with which to view current raw material demand. Just how unusual and how sustainable is the current spectacular economic growth for Angola, DRC and Zambia?

Outside of any historical context, the growth figures for selected resource rich countries imply opportunity for development of infrastructure, employment growth and improved provision of public goods. But it remains unclear just why and how increased windfall income will be directed toward poverty reduction. And it is unclear for just how long current high minerals prices will continue. Periodic high raw material prices are not new but we need to note there has been a secular decline in the industrial commodity price index. In the context of the last 163 years – from 1845 to 2008 – the increased commodity prices around which there is so much optimism reflects more accurately a breakdown in the trading of commodities. This breakdown is characterised by immiseration and abjection for people living in resource rich economies, spoils politics as elites benefit from unproductive rentierism and unprecedented profits for mining companies. It must also be noted that increases in oil and metals prices is not always matched by world market prices for other African commodities like sugar and cotton. Thus, the impact of even the contemporary (short term) high for the commodities price index is not generalised across Africa. Non-oil producers are in particular confronted by the enormous cost of energy.
This issue of ROAPE unravels several of the contemporary false dawns that are promised by donors and company rhetoric that imply Africa gains from the current resource boom. The articles here go beyond a ‘stocktaking’ of mining debates to examine issues of the control and regulation of mining capital, the role of transparency and corporate responsibility, implications for development, sovereignty, imperialist intervention and local resistance that influence the political economy of resource rich African states.

How to regulate or control mining companies has been a persistent feature of the relations between international capital and the state in Africa. Now is the time to revisit those important debates to ask if the state in Africa is better positioned to exact higher returns from foreign capital – an issue about which the journal would welcome future contributions. The 1960s and the years of nationalisations in the 1970s were marked by an optimism in Africa that mining companies could be controlled: regulation was inappropriate when nationalist rhetoric demanded nothing less than complete control. Very often, however, nationalisation became a relief for foreign capital at a time of tumbling commodity prices. It was also a strategy of last resort or a pragmatic response by African politicians struggling for legitimacy and doing so by promoting spoils politics – the use of the public purse for private gain. Nationalisation was seldom a tool for national development but reflected, instead, the promotion of sectional interests.

In 1984 Newsweek had a banner headline, ‘The Death of Mining’ – the international economic downturn took the wind from the sails of African states. Structural adjustment disciplined any state with the temerity to take on the mining houses, or any other international company for that matter. The new optimism about the contemporary African scramble for resources requires us to ask, what exactly does the scramble mean? We need to also ask, what impact do actual investments in mining have in Africa and what impact does the repeated mantra about mineral-led growth have on being able to strategise around issues of poverty reduction, the promotion of justice and struggles against imperialism?

In this issue John Lungu examines aspects of the historical and contemporary relationship between the government of Zambia and the privatised international mining companies. This is important not only because of increased Chinese involvement but also rumoured Russian interest to invest $2 billion in Zambia’s mining sector. Lungu provides an explanation of Zambia’s enduring dependency on copper revenue to fund national development, and the consequent importance of tax and royalty agreements to Zambia’s political economy. He also notes the importance of struggles within civil society to pressure the state to exact higher returns from mining companies.

Ongoing struggles in Africa highlight the need for improved returns from foreign direct investment to state finances. There is now a new language of transparency in the extractive industries. Conversations with many mining company executives reveal that the years up to 2002 were lacking examples of corporate responsibility. Corporate irresponsibility was easier to cite with cyanide spillages, attacks on artisanal miners, pollution of waterways and so on. Companies now, however, flaunt their ‘green’ credentials of responsibility. Anglo American for example, whose net profit was $7.3 billion in 2007, stresses through its subsidiary Anglo Gold Ashanti (AGA) in Ghana, that more than $1.5 million is spent on livelihood strategies for communities impacted by their mining activity. Yet AGA continues to be accused of human rights abuses in Obuasi, where mine executives proudly boast ‘the mine is the community and the
community is the mine’. There have also been similar accusations about the company’s activities in South America regarding, amongst other things, the destruction of communities bordering their operations. Anglo agrees with voluntary codes of conduct but shrinks, like other companies, from those codes being compulsory or well policed. But even if they were compulsory, do African states and local officials have the capacity to confront mining company excesses and to check on compliance? There is an enormous gulf between the number of ‘experts’ that mining companies use in their African operations and the numbers and expertise available, and that can be afforded, by African states in their negotiations with mining companies.

There is a call for the greater regulation of international mining companies by Western advocacy and international protest movements. In this issue, Bonnie Campbell examines issues of regulation and legitimacy in Africa’s mining industry with a detailed exposé of Canada’s position regarding corporate social responsibility. She does this at a time of massive growth in Canadian corporate expansion in mining in Africa and at a time of tremendous public awareness of the negative impacts of the activities of Canadian mining enterprises. She looks at the issues raised by resource governance, the ‘securitisation’ of mining activities and the debate in Canada regarding the efficacy of legislation to limit corporate abuse of communities impacted by mining companies.

Corporate demand for new oil and mineral development has a dramatic impact on communities that live close to concessions or are displaced by them. That impact is harshly exposed in the ways in which artisanal or small scale (sometimes referred to as ‘illegal’) mining is dealt with by African states, security forces and international companies. Artisanal small scale mining (ASM) provides employment in sub-Saharan Africa for at least two million people. Conditions are harsh, child and female labour extensive but the sector provides work, income and opportunities to offset persistent rural impoverishment and de-agrarianisation. ASM challenges concession agreements made between governments and companies; it also challenges the legality of corporate property and concessions – especially when the area or parts of it once handed to companies is not mined.

Sabine Luning in this issue examines the impact of liberalisation of the gold mining sector in Burkina Faso for artisanal miners. She examines the power relations that emerge around the allocation of concessions to companies and the marginal positions of artisanal miners since the mid-1990s. ASM can be viewed as one of many local strategies to contest the power of international capital and local state collusion with it. Resistance is evident throughout the continent to the consequences of mining expansion and the disruption and dislocation that it creates. Owusu-Korantang details the success of a Ghanaian advocacy group that defends the rights of communities that are often displaced and then sandwiched between private mining concessions and government demarcated forest reserves. Such communities are ‘thrown out of development’, dumped with only cursory reference made by policy makers to the negative impact that mining has on lives and livelihoods in gold and other ore bearing areas. ‘Wasted lives’, to use Zygmunt Bauman’s (2001) phrase, are common where mining companies operate. But so too is resistance! Owusu-Korantang illustrates this from the perspective of advocacy and grassroots opposition to existing mining operations. Mining communities are not against mining per se, only the consequences of current political, economic and social impacts. These have disposed and jettisoned many people from sustainable, but not always wholly desirable, relations of production. But company strategies of
‘alternative livelihoods’, petty commodity production, fishponds and oil palm cultivation, fail to replace people’s security following their loss of land. The role of corporations in the process of displacing people from existing livelihoods is often neglected among mining advocates who call for African ‘modernisation’. As the London Financial Times has noted, African mineral producers can no longer ‘sit on their natural mineral wealth, rather like inefficient dragons, confident that their riches will be there tomorrow’ (Financial Times, 19 March 2001).

Two articles in this issue look at the impact of international investment and at imperial designs in Africa and how these relate directly to issues of oil and uranium. Cyril Obi looks at the implications of the entry of Chinese oil companies for resistance in the Niger Delta – long the exclusive preserve of Western oil firms. Obi looks at how local resistance has responded to the Chinese presence and whether the explosions in 2006 or the capture of Chinese oil workers in 2007 might be an indication of things to come for Chinese oil capital, or even whether this resistance is simply an extension of previous opposition to all foreign oil companies irrespective of their nationality.

Jeremy Keenan documents Tuareg struggles and resistance in Niger and Mali. He notes that while international capture of uranium is critical to grievances around land and marginalisation of Tuareg communities, the explanation for conflict must include an assessment of the ongoing impact on the region of the global ‘war on terror’; here he examines the complexity of these rebellions. Across the Sahel, as elsewhere in Africa, struggles over resources go beyond economic interests of companies and the local displacement of communities and haggling over royalties. They include key geostrategic issues of imperialist intervention and, as in the cases of Nigeria, Sudan, Zambia and DRC, they include the need to understand the implications of China’s increased demand for resources.

China stresses a policy of non-intervention in Africa. It says it does not attach conditionalities to its foreign investment and aid. This has implications that go beyond the still inadequately researched issues of swamping Africa with cheap Chinese goods and services, harsh labour practices linked to China’s management of development projects and increased presence of what can only be described as a Chinese bourgeoisie in Africa’s towns and countryside. The implication of China’s policy of non-intervention in Africa is that Beijing colludes with the continent’s authoritarian and repressive regimes. We need to ask, in what way is that collusion different from western capitals’ support for regimes that ensure the flow of Africa’s oil and metals to the US, Europe and Asia?

We need also to revisit the idea whether there are strategies that can be adopted that will police corporations and predatory states, and politicians, who are eager to reap the benefits for personal or corporate gain. These strategies, however, will need to be generated from within Africa by communities affected by mining and not just from outside by donors stressing the importance of non-binding EITI initiatives and the like. The call for African states to improve the mechanisms of control over mining companies will intensify if projections for sustained raw material demand are accurate. The credit crisis and looming Western recession will jeopardise that sustained demand, notwithstanding growth of India’s and China’s economy. Several West African states will need to learn the lesson of assuming oil led growth will meet local development needs. Ghana’s recent oil finds led to many church services of thanksgiving but for the religious, prayers of regret may have been more appropriate.
In this issue Gisa Weszkalnys examines the management of expectations of prospective oil growth in São Tomé e Príncipe. She explores the debate about contrasting expectations and realities as the island gets closer to its ‘take off’. The challenges that accompany windfall profits are notorious although there is no necessary reason why they should lead to a resource curse. The important issues clearly are, how resource income is generated and managed; how can political elites eager to line their pockets from the public purse be controlled; what role can be exacted by workers and peasants concerned that revenue be used to improve their conditions of existence; and how can a strategy of equitable growth and redistribution be fashioned without special ethnic or regional claims hijacking national development plans?

One umbrella concern that provides cover for these many linked issues is the idea of sovereignty: what can states do and how can they manage their autonomy of decision making? Alicia Campos examines the principle of sovereignty and the implication for development in Africa. She explores the implications for transnational social movements around the exploitation of natural resources and contrasts different social demands in relation to oil extraction in two different locations: Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara. She argues convincingly that international norms of self-determination and those developed for non-autonomous people, in cases like Western Sahara, allow the positing of issues and demands over mineral resources in quite different ways from where ‘sovereignty’ is more established as in Equatorial Guinea – notwithstanding the recent coup attempt.

The revised and updated articles that appear here were presented to a conference on *Mining, the State and Development in Africa* held in Leeds in September 2007, bringing together a uniquely large number of African scholars and activists. Thanks are recorded here to the financial support of the British Academy, Lipman Miliband Trust, Oxfam-Novib, Third World Network – Africa, the *Review of African Political Economy* and the University of Leeds who made this conference possible. This journal will revisit many of the concerns raised in this issue and we encourage submissions that will contribute to the debate. We question the idea of the resource curse and indicate the need to see the deleterious consequences of resource availability in Africa resulting from particular strategies of capital accumulation promoted by and a symptom of underdevelopment. It is important to explore further the debate that if mining companies are part of a particular type of uneven capitalist development in Africa where commodification of land and labour is partial and restrictive, what strategies can be developed to counter the poverty generating consequences of mining on a world scale?

**Bibliography**


Regulation & Legitimacy in the Mining Industry in Africa: Where does Canada Stand?

Bonnie Campbell

There are more than 1,000 mining companies listed on Canadian stock exchanges, more than any other country and, as such, represent the most important source of investment in mining in Africa. This article provides a preliminary evaluation of the experience and report of the Canadian National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It does so in the context of the surge of Canadian investment in mining in Africa and of increasing public awareness of the negative impacts of the activities of Canadian mining enterprises. It examines the issues of resource governance and the ‘securitisation’ of mining activities. The recommendations favouring adoption of a Canadian set of CSR Standards for Canadian extractive-sector companies operating abroad is contextualised in the global expansion of transnational mining investment that since the 1990s led to increasing conflicts with local communities.

The demand for the adoption of CSR guidelines in Canada was a response to the need for better ‘certification’, intending to ensure and reinforce the legitimacy of the operations of Canadian companies in the extractive sector. The CSR initiative came at a time of mounting pressure from an increasing number of alleged violations of human rights and negative social and environmental impacts involving Canadian companies. Public awareness of these issues has been on the increase and culminated in the 2005 unanimous Report from the all party Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs. The report called for firm measures including the withdrawal of public support to a company operating in the Philippines (GoC, 2005). This context and the multiple forms of public support given to Canadian mining companies operating abroad, underline the timeliness of an evaluation of the current situation. It is important because of the apparent reticence of the Government of Canada (GoC) to accept the recommendations resulting from the Canadian National Roundtables. This involved an extensive process of public consultation and I examine whether the proposed recent recommendations go beyond past initiatives in this area with regard to clarifying the social and political responsibility of the actors concerned.

There are several contemporary tendencies that need to be examined to help contextualise issues related to mining, regulation and the state (Campbell, 2006a). The first of these is the process of reform of regulatory and legal frameworks
favouring greater harmonisation and stability in the mining sector in Africa. This
process was carried out at the instigation of the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI)
over the last 20 years (World Bank, 1992; Campbell, 2004, 2006b). The reforms were
intended to create a more favourable environment for foreign investment and they
entailed a process of redefining the role of the state – a process so profound it has no
historical precedent. In this context, the introduction of new fiscal and regulatory
frameworks had the effect of driving down norms and standards in areas of critical
importance for social and economic development, as well as the protection of the
environment. The second contextualising issue is that the externally driven reform
process may well have contributed to undermining the legitimacy of the govern-
ments of mineral rich countries (UNRISD, 2000). Third, economic reforms and
mining policies more specifically, have not sufficiently contributed to building
effective and accountable states representing and responding to the needs of their
population – an essential element to improve the peaceful management of potential
conflict. Fourth, there has been insufficient capacity in Africa and elsewhere to
monitor and implement regulations. This may lead to the potential by-passing of
governments as key regulatory agents and consequently further undermine their
legitimacy. Finally, where there have been conflicts or potential conflicts, mining
companies have turned to private security companies or co-opted armed groups to
protect installations, further undermining the legitimacy of states. It has also
contributed to greater insecurity for mining activities (Commission for Africa, 2005;
Campbell, 2006a).

Regulation & Legitimacy in the Mining Industry
The regulation of conflicts between transnational mining investment and local
communities has recently been examined through national, transnational and local
legal processes (Szablowski, 2007). This study has explored especially the operation
of a transnational legal regime managed by the World Bank Group (WBG) intended
to remedy the social and environmental impacts of projects which receive WBG
assistance. Szablowski allows a resetting and evaluation of the Canadian
experience. His contribution enables analysis of a proposed certification process
proposed by the transnational legal regime on the one hand, and de-certification
resulting from growing resistance by those affected by mining activities on the other.

The first key issue here is the redefinition of the role and functions of the state as well
as the new delineation between public and private spheres of authority. In the policy
environment of the 1980s and 1990s and under the leadership of the WBG,

the new agenda advocated comprehensive privatisation of state companies, an end to
restrictions on foreign ownership and the repatriation of profits, lowering rates of taxation and
royalties, restructuring labour laws to permit greater flexibility, and the termination of
performance requirements such as those mandating local sourcing or local hiring. In addition,
mining legislation had to be rationalised, administrative processes simplified, technical
services to the industry (such as modernisation of the mining cadastre) improved and
‘subjective’ elements of bureaucratic discretion removed from the permitting and approvals
processes (Szabowski, 2007:34).

The World Bank (1992) made it very clear that the role of government was to create a
suitable environment for the private sector. This required,
A clearly articulated mining sector policy that emphasises the role of the private sector as **owner and operator** and of government as **regulator and promoter** (World Bank, 1992:53, emphasis added).

As Szablowski noted, government was to stop ‘being an owner-operator pursuing social or political goals through its operational involvement in the mining industry’. Instead, governments were encouraged ‘to become efficient and “apolitical” regulator[s]’ (Szablowski, 2007:34); their role was to facilitate private investment. The myriad of policy that the World Bank promoted through the package of privatisation and liberalisation reforms was accompanied by the assertion that the early reformers were ahead of their competitors. Africa’s experience over 20 years has been a cumulative process of reform leading to several generations of increasingly liberalised mining regimes (Campbell, 2004).

States had enormous difficulty responding to pressures circumscribed by the legal and practical conditions to attract foreign investment. The lack or little room to manoeuvre led some states to respond to, if not reconcile, competing internal and external pressures involved in ‘a formal award of rights to the investor accompanied by an informal delegation of local regulatory responsibilities.’ It led states to the ‘transferring [of] legal authority to mineral enterprises to manage social mediation’ (Szablowski, 2007:27). Another coping strategy adopted by states to deal with new mining regimes was one of ‘selective absence’. The state basically ‘absented itself from substantial parts’ of the legal regimes intended to help ‘mediate between investors and community interests’ (Szablowski, 2007:28, 45).

One of the consequences of liberalisation of the African mining sector has been the way in which past public functions of the state have increasingly been delegated to private operators. These include service delivery and also rule setting and implementation. The tendency has been for ‘an increased (and often reluctant) assumption of state-like responsibilities by transnational mining enterprises at the discreet behest of weak governments’ (Szablowski, 2007:120, 59).

There are two further problems with the programmes reforming the certification of the mining sector: the narrowing of political space and the risk of undermining state legitimacy. The external origin of the reform process responsible for the new regulatory frameworks introduced into African mineral rich countries may well have had other far reaching implications, to which little attention has been paid, related to issues of state accountability and state legitimacy. UNRISD noted in an important study certain dangers of such trends:

> Pressure to standardise macroeconomic objectives encourages governments to restrict policy making to experts and insulates key economic institutions from democratic scrutiny (UNRISD, 2000:1).

These objectives included conservative fiscal policies, privatisation, and open trade and capital accounts, all of which reflect an acceptance of price stability as the primary concern of macroeconomic policy. Democratisation can be affected by this process in two ways: First, it may distort the structure of accountability by encouraging national authorities to be more responsive to financial markets and multilateral institutions than to fledging parliaments and citizens. Second, social policies, which were crucial in consolidating Western democracies, may be treated as residuals of macroeconomic policy, and democratisation that does not conform to economic orthodoxy dismissed as populism (UNRISD, 2000:1-2).
The potential results may be significant. There may be an erosion of public confidence in the legitimacy of domestic institutions if their actions are dictated by external agents. It is also possible that the growing trend towards the creation of autonomous public authorities that check the discretionary powers of governments in key areas of policy-making might accelerate. Institutions that are potential candidates for autonomization include central banks, trade and finance ministries, tax administration offices, independent courts, electoral bodies, and ombudsmen.

It is important to see how these trends might affect political processes. As UNRISD notes:

*Technocratic approaches to making economic policy may affect the way governments respond to the concerns of citizens and elected representatives on such issues as employment, social protection and poverty eradication* (2000:3).

The study noted that if the fiscal authorities are independent, there is a risk they will be more responsive to market dictates than to the needs of the electorate, or, indeed, the electoral cycle. Redistributive pressures may directly conflict with the social policies favoured by civil servants as they seek to control expenditures, meet multilateral loan obligations, and attract private capital. New public management reform promotes an improvement of public sector accountability, primarily by increasing managers’ freedom to manage. To achieve this, it is commonly argued, policy-making must be kept separate from service delivery, ‘which becomes the responsibility of executive agencies’ (UNRISD, 2000:4). Finally, the costs of technocratic regulation itself must be taken into account. The UNRISD report argues that in a technocratic political process, technocratic groups are insulated from external pressure. One potential consequence is that the content of policies may well be determined by rules that are context-indifferent; that is, policy-making will be separate from policy implementation. Using the social sector as an example, the study concluded, amongst other things, that,

*Technocratic decision making has resulted in the ‘technification’ of social and political problems. In other words, poverty and social inequalities have been transformed into technical terms, with emphasis on targeting and safety nets … There are increasing demands for expertise in the social sector. However, there is less participation in the administration of targeted social programs, with the World Bank and national technocrats setting the agenda and maintaining overall control* (UNRISD, 2000:6).

Debates over the relationship between technocracy and political process are not new, and there is every reason to suppose they will continue. The point is that differing views about the role of each may be marginalised or even muzzled when technocracy is imposed from outside and when the parameters of domestic debate about institutional reform are set in advance. The outcome may well be a ‘depoliticisation’ of social and economic issues as a result of the ‘technification’ of terms in which they are discussed.

There has been a process of the standardisation of norms whether these concern economic efficiency or social issues. Since the mid-1980s, the multilateral financial institutions have assumed a leadership role in suggesting the direction and the degree of reform to which countries must comply. Moreover, in the context of global economic liberalisation, these rules emanate less and less from the national arena and increasingly from multilateral institutions and frameworks (Campbell, 2000). The trend towards the transnationalisation of rules and norms reflects not only a
redefinition of the locus of the production of these norms, but also a shifting and a
redefinition of the boundaries which delineate the public and the private spheres,
the political and the technical (Deblock & Brunelle, 1999).

Current tendencies involve a process of the redefinition of the role of the state and
potentially a reduction of its redistributive powers. The result is an altering of its
capacity of democratic response as a consequence of the acceptance of economic
reforms intended to be long term and binding in nature within and across political
jurisdictions. Although according to Teivo Teivainen (2002:189), ‘When politically
crucial decisions are transferred to the “economic” sphere in the globalisation
process, the inherently political nature of the economic should, in principle, become
more transparent,’ this is often not necessarily the case. The usefulness of such an
approach is to draw attention to the new constitutional norms or new normative
frameworks which result from economic reforms. Although presented as neutral,
under certain circumstances such new norms have precedence over democratic
norms, a process which Teivainen describes as ‘the transnational politics of
economism’ (2002:17). This process has also been analysed from the perspective of
legal pluralism which, as Szablowski argued, offers a particularly effective vantage
point from which to examine the dynamics of legitimation, its connection to
regulation, and its pursuit both inside and outside state structures.

The second important issue to note is that with globalisation the state has difficulty
in offering legitimacy through legal processes:

For example, mining enterprises operating in the Global South are not able to respond to their
critics, either locally or transnationally, with the simple assertion that their responsibilities
begin and end with compliance with a host state’s legal requirements. It may be that in a
globalising era, for many audiences, states appear too weak or too complicit to offer a convincing
check on the actions of corporate giants. Or perhaps, curiously, the retreat of the state from the
mediation of socio-economic relations has left private enterprise increasingly subject to social
claims (Szablowski, 2007:60).

The result has been that ‘the transnational dimension of legitimation brought on by
globalisation has prompted the development of global policy arenas and has
spark ed the need for transnational law making, with far reaching consequences’
(2007:60). What is being debated through the resulting ‘global legal politics’
concerning the rights and obligations of enterprises ‘is the regulatory terms on
which different audiences are willing to find that the entitlements of transnational
enterprises will be deemed legitimate’ (2007:65). However, and as illustrated in the
Canadian process described below, only third party certification backed by solid
performance requirements can offer credibility. Nonetheless

the willingness of industry actors to adopt more independent and rigid forms of certification is
directly related to the perceived level of threat that civil society is able to exercise over that
industry (Szablowski, 2007:70-71).

The mining industry has increasingly recognised that it was losing an important
battle for public opinion and would be faced with a legitimacy problem if nothing
were done. Looming large was a profound state crisis in many of the countries where
many enterprises operated, a problem of the sovereignty of states and consequently,
a problem of legitimacy of the operations of mining enterprises. Industry initiatives
have been characterised by the Global Mining Initiative in 1998, the Mining, Mineral
and Sustainable Development project (MMSD) or the Sustainable Development
Framework of 2003, issued by the successor to the International Council on Metals and the Environment (ICME), the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM). The BWI have assumed the lead with regard to mining industry certification efforts. The uniqueness of the WBG’s position as a powerful lending institution and promoter of private investment, as well as the resources it has been able to mobilise explain the BWI success in formulating a regime capable of achieving its strategic objectives and becoming a site of global norm production.

Over the last fifteen years the WBG has developed an elaborate set of standards in a wide variety of areas, whether with regard to environmental impact assessments (EIA), involuntary resettlement (IR), which, as Szabolowski suggests, collectively can be seen as the WBG safeguard policy regime. Since the 1990s, private sector projects that received assistance from the International Financial Corporation (IFC) or the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) increasingly came under outside scrutiny. In the 1980s, the IFC had no formal environmental or social approach or capacity. Environmental reviews of IFC projects were outsourced to the World Bank. During the early 1990s, safeguard policies were used as non-mandatory guidance for project preparation. In 1998 and 1999 respectively, IFC and MIGA adopted their own mandatory safeguard policies, using in most cases text identical to that of the IBRD/IDA (Szabolowski, 2007:94).

While the body of these continually evolving standards is obviously very detailed and substantial, these transnational norms and practices raise three difficulties. The first is the preference for technocratic over political legitimation processes among project sponsors and corporate-oriented transnational law-makers, such as MIGA and the IFC (Szabolowski, 2007:300). This option raises problems of legitimation which have not yet been addressed. For in the routine application of its social provisions, the WBG safeguard policy regime lacks the oversight required to ensure that its goals are being achieved. The second difficulty relates to the forms of participation which accompany the implementation of the WBG safeguard policy regime. Szabolowski illustrates this issue with regard to the controversial policy of Involuntary Resettlement (IR). The argument made is that IR Policy represents a normative change as compared with former state legal regimes. This is because of the manner in which the various responsibilities for policy implementation, including fact-gathering, local consultation, resettlement plan design, are assigned to the project sponsor. As a result, the form and content of the involvement of project affected people are determined by the companies participating in the process and their input is mediated by the supervising agency via the company’s reports. Thus ‘project-affected persons ... are not parties to the private contractual relationship that exists between the WBG agency and its client.’ They are therefore denied rights of access to information and decision making that affects their IR (Szabolowski, 2007:119-20).

Finally, the emergence of a body of norms and standards that have their origin in the multilateral arena as in the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), legitimises the operation of private operators while imposing relatively limited regulatory responsibilities on governments. These may allow governments to shift the locus of responsibility for what were previously considered state functions (clinics, roads, infrastructure, etc.) to the private operators of large-scale mining projects. This trend can be documented in a wide range of situations whether with regard to Ghana, Mali or the DRC (Keita, 2007; Belem, 2004, 2008 forthcoming; Mazalto forthcoming 2008). Such a transfer however, not only silences the legitimate and indeed
necessary right of governments to offer services to their populations, a precondition to their being held publicly accountable, but also, contributes to obscuring the issue of government responsibility itself. Referring to one aspect of this broader process, EIAs, Szablowski notes that their most significant feature

\[
is that it does not have any mechanism for fixing the ‘social responsibility’ of government’ …
\]

\[
The decision-making architecture of EIA provides no place for discussing the issue of governmental responsibility for social and environmental burdens that will not be assumed by the project proponent’ (2007:57).
\]

With the WBG safeguard policy regime, the locus of responsibility is left essentially with private actors while the complex issues of reinforcing regulatory capacity of states or developmental objectives are not addressed. The danger which arises is that while certification institutions will help to legitimate corporate entitlements, much less attention has been paid to the issue of weak regulatory capacity of the states concerned and the consequences for the legitimacy of the new institutions and practices, notably due to the externally driven nature of the ‘certification process’.

Having provided some background to explain why the need for better ‘certification’ has become such a contemporary issue I will now assess the extent to which a recent initiative to set out Canadian performance standards for Canadian enterprises, addressed key issues of legitimacy, participation and political responsibility in the mining sector.

**Canada’s Response: Regulation & Legitimacy**

The recent Canadian government initiative concerning CSR in the extractive sector may be seen as a response to increasing concern, both within the public and parliamentary committees, regarding the alleged negative impacts of Canadian mining companies operating in the Global South. Although the issue of CSR addresses only ‘the tip of iceberg’ of the broader set of issues raised by resource exploitation (Akabzaa, 2004, 2008 forthcoming; Aryee, 2001; Campbell, 2004), the recommendations which resulted from the Canadian National Roundtable process merit close attention. This is because beyond their significance as concrete proposals in answer to issues of accountability and responsibility, they may be seen as part of a cumulative process of broadening the space for communication and political debate in this area. The widely followed public consultations which took place were a critical component of a process which had the potential to contribute to reinforcing ideas of legitimacy and regulation. Furthermore, the Report produced in 2007 was presented as a step in an ongoing process and pointed in its conclusions to areas where work should be continued and consequently where the ‘communicative process’ might be deepened.

The contemporary context, unlike the 1980s has been characterised as the ‘selective absence of states’. Civil society organisations have played a critically important role in identifying and maintaining attention on key issues such as environmental and social impacts. These might otherwise be dismissed if considered at odds with the interests and perspectives of corporate actors driven by shorter term imperatives of market competition. The role of civil society organisations is increasingly recognised by both public and private actors as an essential component of discussions concerning certification schemes. This is illustrated by the central place they occupied in the Canadian Roundtable experience.
A number of key recommendations in the Report of the Advisory Group submitted to the Canadian Government in March 2007 need to be examined carefully. The first is the issue of the weak regulatory capacity of many of the governments of the countries in which Canadian mining companies are operating. This raises the question of the shared responsibility of the countries of origin of mining enterprises. The second concerns examining the extent to which the initiative concerning better certification gave preference to technocratic legitimisation processes as opposed to political ones. This implies broadening the notion of political and social responsibility beyond a technocratic formulation and consequently, formulating recommendations which clarify the political and social responsibility of the actors concerned. Third, there is a need for more meaningful forms of consultation, reporting, monitoring and, where necessary, the introduction of remedial measures, involving those affected by the activities of Canadian companies.

There is also the need to consider the implications of the forms of consultation process which took place through the Roundtables. Notable in this regard was the importance of the role of the public hearings, where members from civil society – whether from communities affected by mining or from Canada – and of expert witnesses could be heard. The capacity of these hearings to bear weight on the recommendations of the Advisory Group and in this manner to reinforce a ‘communicative process’ certainly contributed to the vitality of emerging ideas of legitimacy around these issues.

The Canadian Extractive Sector

There are more than 1,000 mining companies listed on Canadian stock exchanges, more than in any other country. The vast majority of these are exploration or junior companies (Natural Resources Canada, 2006a). Among Canada’s goods-producing sectors, Canadian mining companies listed on Canadian stock exchanges are the largest outward investors, with interests in more than 8,000 exploration and mining properties in over 100 countries around the world. Canadian projects include over 200 mines, smelters, refineries, plants under construction, and other advanced mineral projects. Canadian-based companies conduct around 40 per cent of all mineral exploration undertaken in the world. Canada’s minerals and metals industry accounts for approximately C$50 billion or about 12 per cent of all Canadian direct investment abroad. According to Natural Resources Canada, outside South African investments, companies registered on Canadian stock exchanges now represent the most important source of investment in mining in Africa.

From a total amount of approximately C$6 billion in 2005, Canadian mining investment in Africa is expected to exceed C$14 billion in 2010. The Canadian Roundtable process dealt with the extractive sector as a whole. Energy (all sectors) contributed C$75.2 billion, or 5.9 per cent, of GDP in 2005, of which crude oil and natural gas accounted for C$27.9 billion (Canada, Natural Resources Canada (2006b). The Canadian oil and gas industry is traditionally divided into three categories: upstream (exploration), midstream (processing, storage and transportation) and downstream (refining, marketing, distribution). The upstream sector is the largest single private sector investor in Canada. In 2005, new investment in the Canadian oil and gas industry was valued at C$45.3 billion (Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, 2006).

Most of Canada’s petroleum production is exported. In 2005, 1.58 million barrels per day of crude oil, 0.44 million barrels per day of refined petroleum products and 3.8
trillion cubic feet of natural gas were exported, mainly to the US. Seventy-five
Canadian oil and gas exploration and production companies have land holdings in
69 countries and areas of the world (Doig’s Digest, 2006). Five of Canada’s most
prominent petroleum companies operate in over a dozen developing countries,
including China, Algeria, Peru and off the coast of North Africa. These are Nexen,
Husky, Talisman, PetroCanada, and Canadian Natural Resources.

Extractive-sector industries directly employ more than 638,000 Canadians and
sustain a substantial domestic cluster of mainly small and medium-sized
companies engaged in equipment manufacture and supply, engineering, consulting
and geo-science services (Natural Resources Canada, 2006b). The energy and
metallic minerals industry is the second largest component of Canadian direct
investment abroad (an estimated C$104.1 billion in direct investment) behind the
financial services sector.

### Table 1: Cumulative Mining Assets of Canadian Public Companies in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties, Plant &amp; Equipment, deferred exploration expenditures at cost less accumulated amortization and write-downs (C$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ‘0’ or ‘—’ indicate that no identifiable asset has been reported. It should not be interpreted that there are no
Canadian investments in these countries or years. Canadian public companies are defined as companies having
physical offices in Canada (head-office or operating office). Source: Government of Canada, Natural Resources
Canada, 2006.
Establishing the National Roundtable Process of Consultation

In June 2005, the 38th Parliament’s Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT) issued its report, ‘Mining in Developing Countries and Corporate Social Responsibility’ which called on the federal government to ‘put in place a process involving relevant industry associations, non-governmental organisations and experts, which will lead to the strengthening of existing programmes and policies in this area, and, where necessary, to the establishment of new ones’ (Government of Canada, 2005:2).

In response, the government held four National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Canadian Extractive Sector in Developing Countries between June and November 2006 in Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Montreal. The process was led by an Advisory Group whose report was intended to summarise the input received across all of the Roundtables, as well as incorporate the input from 104 written submissions received on the topic of CSR and the Canadian extractive sector operating abroad. The report was to include a review of the mandate and management of the process, summarise the key messages communicated for all of the major themes, and provide recommendations to the Government of Canada.

The final report was intended to contribute to the government’s initiative to review the challenges associated with Canadian extractive-sector companies operating in developing countries. It was also intended to generate a response to Parliament presenting recommendations for government, civil society, the investment community and the extractive industry on ways to strengthen the CSR performance of the extractive sector in developing countries. Throughout the Roundtable process the term CSR was understood to refer to

*the way firms integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their values, culture, decision making, strategy and operations in a transparent and accountable manner and thereby establish better practices within the firm, create wealth and improve society* (GoC, 2006:5).

This definition was furnished in the CSR National Roundtables Discussion Paper (GoC Industry Canada, 2006) and assisted in framing the discussions at all of the Roundtables. The concrete focus of discussions throughout the Roundtable process was on the environmental, social and human rights performance and impacts of Canadian extractive companies on the communities and states in which they operate. Each Roundtable provided an opportunity to gather input from the public through Open Sessions and to foster an in-depth, policy-relevant discussion with invited participants in closed Issue Focus Sessions.

The Roundtable Process of Consultation

Government leadership in organising the National Roundtables was provided by an inter-departmental Steering Committee, chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The Steering Committee included representatives from Natural Resources Canada, Industry Canada, Environment Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Department of Justice, Export Development Canada, and the Privy Council Office.
The Steering Committee worked with an Advisory Group made up of experts drawn from across stakeholder groups. The Advisory Group included representatives from industry associations; individuals currently within or recently retired from extractive-sector companies active overseas; civil society organisations; labour; academics; and the financial sector. The Roundtable sessions included hearing oral testimony from the public, industry and labour organisations and written submissions from invited experts and face-to-face discussions.

**Industry Participation**

Industry recognition of the need for a consultative process was clearly illustrated by the participation of the directors of the Mining Association of Canada (MAC), Gordon Peeling, and the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDCA), Tony Andrews, on the Advisory Group. Such consultations were not new to either of the mining associations. The Mining Association of Canada has a history of engagement in multi-stakeholder processes. They have been broad based such as the Whitehorse Mining Initiative (1992-1994) and more narrowly focused like the Species at Risk Act Working Group that combined both industry and environmental group members. Consequently, when the Government made the commitment to hold a series of roundtables on the issues raised in the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade 2005 Report and asked the MAC to participate in the advisory group, it did so without hesitation. MAC has its own CSR activity called Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) which has been part of its work since 2001 (and public since 2004). TSM deals with many, but not all, of the performance issues raised in the SCFAIT report and hence the roundtables were viewed as a learning opportunity by MAC. There was also a desire on the part of industry to seek clarity from the Government of Canada as to what its expectations were with respect to the extractive sector’s CSR performance.

The roundtable process saw an evolution of the views of some of the participants from industry concerning recognition of the existence of problems and the need for recommendations. While this evolution was sufficient to allow the recommendations to receive unanimous support, views among industry representatives remained mixed as to the magnitude of those problems. Nonetheless, the need for such standards left little doubt as expressed by one industry representative:

*The industry participants on the Advisory Group agree on the wisdom of these standards generally applicable by all Canadian mining companies operating in developing countries, because deficient performance abroad by any Canadian mining company reflects badly on and complicates the lives of all Canadian mining companies (Interview, 8 August 2007).*

**The Overall Recommendations**

The Report (GoC, 2007) represents the outcome of a 10 month process of consultation, discussion and negotiation. It was characterised at the outset by the wide variance of views among the 17 members of the Advisory Group concerning what was needed. However, there was a common recognition that the process was an occasion to move forward in an area of vital and growing concern. On the one hand, representatives from civil society wanted to establish a mandatory set of standards through a legislative process. On the other, industry representatives were adamantly opposed to mandatory standards and reaffirmed their belief in voluntary norms, the application of which would rest with industry. The end result was a
proposal for a voluntary Canadian CSR Framework that would nonetheless apply to all companies in the extractive sector.

Beyond the set of recommendations put forward by the Advisory Group for adoption by the GoC, the Report included recommendations for the consideration of industry, financial institutions, the investment community, pension funds, and civil society, as means to enhance the CSR performance of Canadian companies in the extractive sector operating internationally.

The Report’s central recommendation concerned the development of a Canadian CSR Framework. Advisory Group members urged the GoC, in cooperation with other actors involved, to adopt a set of CSR Standards that Canadian extractive-sector companies operating abroad would be expected to meet. They would be reinforced through appropriate reporting, compliance and other mechanisms, involving the withdrawal of government support for non-compliance. The main components of the Canadian CSR Framework and their key attributes, as recommended in the Report were:

1) The Canadian CSR Standards, for initial application, are to be based on existing international standards that are supported by ongoing multi-stakeholder and multilateral dialogue;

2) CSR reporting obligations based on the Global Reporting Initiative or its equivalent during an initial phase-in period, at a level that reflects the size of the operation. The Global Reporting Initiative relies on an international multi-stakeholder process for its development and continued improvement and applies universally-applicable reporting principles, guidance and indicators for organisations of all sizes and sectors;

3) An independent Ombudsman office to provide advisory services, fact finding and reporting regarding complaints with respect to the operations in developing countries of Canadian extractive companies;

4) A tripartite Compliance Review Committee to determine the nature and degree of company non-compliance with the Canadian CSR Standards, based upon findings of the Ombudsman with respect to complaints, and to make recommendations regarding appropriate responses in such cases;

5) The development of policies and guidelines for measuring serious failure by a company to meet the CSR standards, including findings by the Compliance Review Committee. In the event of a serious failure and when steps to bring the company into compliance have also failed, government support for the company would be withdrawn.

6) A multi-stakeholder Canadian Extractive Sector Advisory Group to advise government on the implementation and further development of the Canadian CSR Framework.

The Report recognised,

That in many instances, Canadian extractive companies are operating in countries where governance capacity is weak, where there is corruption and ... armed conflict ... human rights protection and the enforcement of environmental regulations are often weak or non-existent. It is therefore recommended
that the Government of Canada: work with those developing countries that seek to promote economic and social development through investment in the extractive sectors ... to optimise the social and economic benefits of extractive projects; exercise influence in multilateral and regional fora to advance the rights of indigenous peoples with relation to extractive-sector issues; enhance revenue transparency; build capacity for host country judicial systems; and work with like-minded countries to strengthen CSR requirements at the World Bank Group and the regional development banks related to lending and support to private sector clients (GoC, 2007, Executive Summary:iv).

The Report also noted that in making these recommendations, ‘the Advisory Group recognizes that the transformation of the ideas and concepts which underlie them into practical, workable measures will require additional work beyond ... the roundtable process’. In this the Advisory Group noted ‘that the CSR standards and reporting frameworks recommended for initial application fall short of addressing the full range of issues ... regarding extractive industries, particularly with regard to human rights. As a result, an ongoing process has been recommended to ensure that the standards and overall framework are improved over time’ (GoC, 2007:iv).

The Report recommended a series of concrete proposals for immediate attention. The Canadian standards were to have as their initial framework the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Performance Standards and the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. They were also to use IFC Guidance Notes and the IFC Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Guidelines. Guidance notes developed for the Canadian CSR Standards were intended to clarify and augment the interpretation and application of these standards in particular areas.2

The application and interpretation of these standards were intended to ensure the observance and respect for principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other related instruments3 that are within the sphere of the control of companies. Specific guidelines related to the application and interpretation of human rights principles were to be developed. It was recommended that the GoC, over the medium (three-five years) and longer term (five-ten years), support and participate in multi-stakeholder efforts to provide leadership in the development of an enhanced international CSR framework that incorporates best practices developed through the Canadian CSR Framework.

It was also proposed that the GoC endorse the use of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) as the reporting component of the Canadian CSR Framework and expect that all Canadian extractive companies report using GRI, or its equivalent during an initial phase-in period, at a level that reflects the size of the operation. With a goal of realising sector-wide GRI coverage, it was recommended that the GoC include GRI or GRI-equivalent reporting as a fundamental component of the Canadian CSR Framework. That would then be considered as one factor in the determination of compliance with the Framework. Also recommended was the establishment of a scheme within the Income Tax Act that would provide refundable tax credits for CSR reporting using GRI Guidelines or their equivalent. Additionally that there be collaboration with securities regulators and exchanges on adopting GRI reporting for the overseas operations of Canadian extractive-sector companies as a
requirement for listing and that financial institutions, investors, insurers, and other market actors promote GRI reporting by extractive-sector companies and use such reports in assessing investment risk.

It was also recommended that the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) make known the standards regarding social, environmental, human rights and development impacts used by the Canada Investment Fund for Africa (CIFA). That knowledge would be used to help screen investments and measures to ensure adherence to the proposed standards. CIDA should monitor and report annually to Parliament on CIFA’s activities and how they conformed to the objectives of the fund, and on development impacts achieved through CIFA. The report further recommended that Export Development Canada (EDC) improve its disclosure policy. Subject to bona fide commercial confidentiality concerns, EDC should publicly release information in a list of specified areas.

With regard to the compliance component of the Canadian CSR Framework, it was recommended that the GoC fund the establishment of an independent Ombudsman office, mandated to provide advisory, fact-finding and reporting functions. Further, the Government of Canada was recommended to establish a standing tripartite Compliance Review Committee that would determine the nature and degree of any company non-compliance with the Canadian CSR Standards and make recommendations with regard to what further action should be taken.

In cases of serious non-compliance where the Compliance Review Committee determined that remedial steps have not been or are unlikely to be successful, the Compliance Review Committee would make recommendations with regard to the withdrawal of financial and/or non-financial services by the Government of Canada. The compliance mechanism would apply to all Canadian companies, that is, those incorporated in Canada and those that have their head office in Canada.

With regard to conditioning of government support, it was recognized that the government may provide Canadian extractive-sector companies with support in their foreign operations, including trade missions, that goes beyond ordinary consular services (meaning those consular services that are routinely provided to Canadian citizens). However, when such support seeks to promote a Canadian company or its interests in a foreign country, it was recommended that the GoC condition this support on compliance with the Canadian CSR Standards. Finally, it was recommended that determination by the GoC of a serious failure by a company to meet the Canadian CSR Standards should lead to the withdrawal of this additional support.

Based on existing international standards and obligations, the Report’s recommendations proposing the creation of a set of Canadian CRS Standards were both concrete and immediately operational. Their implementation would allow the government to begin to better monitor and respond to human rights and environmental concerns raised by the activities of Canadian companies operating abroad. Moreover, the process set in motion by the Report was presented as one which would be ongoing.
Canada’s Accountability & Responsibility in the Mining Sector

More than a year after the submission of the unanimous Report to the Government of Canada, there has still not been an official response (Embassy, 2008). Further to its publication, there were clear indications that certain sectors of industry and notably the Canadian Chamber of Commerce were attempting to ensure that the government backtrack and not adopt the Report. Yet there were also strong messages from national and international leaders urging the Harper Government to seize the opportunity offered by the Report to contribute to moving practices forward in this area. One such statement came from John G. Ruggie, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Secretary on Business and Human Rights. He had been invited to appear as an expert witness before the roundtable process. In a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada dated 16 January 2008, Mr. Ruggie quoted the latter’s declaration at the Heiligendamm G8 Summit in June 2007 and noted:

the implementation of the recommendations from this process will place Canada among the most active G8 countries in advancing international guidelines and principles on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in this (the extractive) sector.

We can now summarise what was innovative in the Report and what issues remain untouched. While the origins of the norms on which the proposed Canadian CSR Standards are to be based – if the Report is accepted – remain the multilateral arena, it is innovative that there was the decision to establish a national CSR framework – the first of its kind to our knowledge. This represents an attempt to set out clear responsibilities not only for the private sector but for the GoC. In this sense, there is an explicit recognition that regulatory capacity cannot be treated simply as a technical or administrative issue to be resolved by the introduction of the right set of procedures, implemented and monitored by corporate actors and put forward as universally valid for companies operating in a wide range of countries. The proposed recommendations broaden what have been identified in the first part of this article as technocratic legitimation processes to include political responsibility. There appears to be clear recognition from within industry that the role of the GoC needs to be clarified – one of the objectives sought by industry representatives through the consultation process. As one representative put it:

The primary role of the Government of Canada should be to work with other governments to increase their capacity to manage resource development in a manner consistent with ‘sustainable development’. It was also important for industry to have a clear understanding of what the Government of Canada’s expectations were/are with respect to industry performance regarding human rights, sustainable development etc. There was neither clarity in the case of the latter nor sufficient effort in the past to working with the business community on development in developing countries where resources would be a significant part of the development opportunity … The way forward is to enhance the achievement of development objectives by encouraging partnerships between governments, industry and civil society organizations (Interview with Gordon Peeling, 16 August 2007, emphasis added)

This observation made by the President of the Mining Association of Canada and Member of the Advisory Group of the National Roundtables seems to confirm Szabłowski’s analysis concerning the tendency for governments to attempt to transfer what were previously considered public responsibilities to reluctant actors in the private sector. It points as well to the lack of clarity in this process, with the result of an effective blurring of the division of responsibilities between the public and the private actors.
The roundtable process seems to have sidestepped the question of the effective participation of affected communities in consultations. This is an area which appears to be conditioned by current certification regimes which emanate increasingly from the multilateral arena. The reasons for this have clearly to do with the sensitive and unresolved status of discussions domestically, notably with regard to the demands of First Nations affected by mining activities in Canada. Here, the archaic nature of mining legislation in several Canadian provinces and lack of political will, continue to restrict meaningful forms of consultation and accommodation of Aboriginal rights and title before the granting of mineral leases. Consequently, although the recommendations did not address the complex issue of the forms of consultation required with local communities before extractive activities are allowed to go forward (explicitly rejecting the civil society initiative to the Advisory Group of the recommendation in favour of free, prior and informed consent), the proposal to establish an independent Ombudsman tried to provide well-defined channels of participation for fact-finding in order to assess the material basis related to complaints. The recommendations also identified the locus of the political responsibility for this process as resting with an independent Ombudsman who would be responsible for the publication of the results of the fact-finding process and public reporting on an annual basis.

There are other important areas that the Report did not address. In the presence of the weak institutional capacity of many of the host governments of the countries where Canadian companies operate, and in the context of the emergence of a body of norms and standards that have their origin in the multilateral arena, current initiatives have tended to legitimise the activities of private operators, while imposing relatively limited regulatory responsibilities on governments. The absence of close attention to the issue of the weakened institutional and political capacity and consequently, of the regulatory capacity of host governments is particularly salient. As legitimacy and regulation are interdependent products of legal processes, such an omission can only detract from establishment of regulatory terms which are deemed legitimate.

In the context of the weakened institutional and political capacities of many of the mineral rich countries of Africa, the tendency on the part of multilateral financial institutions and Western nations, including Canada, has been to suggest that such issues, which are in fact deeply rooted historically, can be treated as ‘weak governance’ and resolved by the introduction of the right set of good administrative and procedural measures. Such a perspective appears strikingly insufficient. On the one hand, as noted, the increasing technicisation of decision-making processes runs the risk of sidelining dissenting views and depoliticizing the issue of resource distribution. On the other, in the context of the overriding emphasis on technical and administrative aspects of ‘governance’, proposals, notably by Canadian government officials, to ‘capacity building for resource governance’ in developing countries, miss the key point. This is that past reform measures which sought to open up the extractive sectors for investment did so in a manner that has severely weakened the political and institutional capacity of local governments. Consequently, it becomes a circular argument to call for the reinforcing of local capacity if the nature of past and ongoing reforms which weaken local capacity is not questioned.

The absence of attention to the critical question of the crisis of the state of many mineral rich countries, to the forms of liberalisation which may be a contributing
factor to weakening institutional capacity, or to the conditions for reinforcing state legitimacy as a precondition to ensuring future social and political stability (Campbell, 2006b) appears paradoxical. This is not the least because of the importance accorded by industry representatives to issues of security and risk minimization in the countries in which growing mining investment is anticipated.

In this regard, the roundtable process did not address in its main recommendations, the need for much closer attention to be paid to the coherence of Canadian investment, trade and aid policies and the issue as to whether these policies contribute to the social and economic development of the countries in which Canadian extractive companies operate. Nor did the recommendations address the policies and positions advanced by Canada in international institutions (World Bank Group, UN agencies, etc.) with a view to ensuring that the policies of these organisations contribute to the social and economic development of the countries where Canadian mining companies are present. Both of these areas were however, mentioned as ‘requiring further attention by the Government of Canada and upon which the Canadian Extractive Sector Advisory Group could provide advice’ (GoC, 2007:60).

Finally, to the extent that the initiative for the reform process of mining codes or the regulatory frameworks of the mining sector more generally in mineral rich countries of Africa, remain externally driven, the issue of the appropriation of these initiatives, as well as the reinforcement, rather that the erosion of state legitimacy, remain unresolved. Also unresolved is the issue of social and political responsibility for these processes.

Looking Forward
Mounting pressure from negative social and environmental impacts and allegations of violations of human rights involving Canadian mining companies at the origin of the roundtables brought the problem of the legitimacy of mining activities to a head. As Sz ablowski documents, multilateral initiatives have responded through the elaboration of a transnational legal framework. The current situation in which many African countries find themselves however, suggests several shortcomings. These are especially noticeable with regard to poor local capacity to monitor, implement and enforce new norms and regulations, and should this become necessary, to implement remedial measures. The permissiveness of situations resulting from what at times takes the form of an ‘enforcement vacuum’ has led to a trend towards the employment of private security forces and ‘the privatisation of risk’ which may well further reduce legitimacy of the governments concerned. There is therefore a need for better forms of ‘certification’ that will ensure and reinforce the legitimacy not only of the operations of Canadian companies in the extractive sector but of the governments of the countries in which they operate.

To the extent that the recommendations of the Roundtable Report set out measures to ensure better accountability, this set of proposals goes beyond past initiatives emanating from the multilateral arena. It is significant in the way it has contributed to clarifying the social and political responsibility of the various actors concerned.

But the GoC remains reticent in recognising that security for Canadian mining operations is best assured by processes underpinning legitimacy of regulatory measures. It would be short-sighted for the GoC not to advance the debate
concerning accountability and responsibility in the mining sector. For the issue of reinforcing the legitimacy of the regulatory processes which govern mining activities, if these are to be sustainable, needs to be reset within the broader framework of ensuring resources are developed to contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods of the populations in the communities and countries concerned. The security of mining companies and their activities will never be assured if mining communities and countries where they operate is not also assured and the promise of social and economic development respected. These issues are inextricably linked.

Bonnie Campbell, Department of Political Science at the Université du Québec à Montréal; e-mail: campbell.bonnie@uqm.ca

Endnotes

1. Over the period 2001-2007, the investments of the IFC in the oil, gas and mining sector represented US$4,073 billion.

2. These were to include but not be limited to: mine closure, reclamation and economic transition; resettlement and provision of fair and appropriate compensation; biodiversity conservation; definition of broad community support for a project; use of forced or child labour through supply chain relationships; and environmental and social assessments and management systems.

3. For example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Bibliography


Campbell, B. et al. (2004), ‘The Challenges of Development, Mining Codes in Africa and Corporate Responsibility,’ in International and Comparative Mineral Law and Policy, by Elizabeth Bastida, Thomas Walde and Janeth Warden


Liberalisation of the Gold Mining Sector in Burkina Faso

Sabine Luning

Since the liberalisation of the gold mining sector in the 1990s, the state of Burkina Faso has the task of allotting exploration and exploitation permits to private companies. International junior companies are exploring vast concessions in Burkina, and publish promising prospects on the internet. Scrutinising the presence of (inter)national companies both on the web and on the ground, the article shows how a set of concessions constitutes a ‘field’, defined as a system of social positions structured in terms of power relations. Concessions bring together a wide range of professionals in mining: potential investors, international companies, Burkinabe entrepreneurs and artisanal miners. The article describes how legal distinctions affect the power structure of working arrangements on one particular group of exploration permits in the central part of Burkina, currently held by the Canadian company High River Gold: the Bissa permit Group. It examines what happens on the ground when companies are allotted formal titles, whereas artisanal miners can at best aspire to obtain marginal places for their informal practices.

Introduction

Over the last fifteen years the organisation of mining in Burkina Faso has made a shift from dominant state intervention – both on the level of production and the selling of gold – to a sector giving ample room to private companies. In this process of liberalisation, however, the state has not simply ‘rolled back’ (Nugent, 2004) but its tasks have been redefined. Recently, scholars rightly acknowledge that the death of the state has been greatly exaggerated by both critics and proponents of globalisation (Ballard & Banks, 2003:294). In developing countries in particular, the state’s role remains pivotal in the resource sector (Ross, 1999:305; MMSD, 2002:66). According to the new mining law, introduced in Burkina Faso in the nineties, the state is the ultimate owner of the land and its mineral resources (Lavigne Delville, 1999). In this capacity it has the monopoly for handing out mining titles, and classifying economic actors in terms of their legal status. Bourdieu (1984) has pointed to the relationship between power and classification. With the notion of ‘field’ he intends to study networks of professional positions and to illuminate how the classification of positions is part of power struggles. So far, anthropologists studying mining in Burkina Faso have ignored this aspect of power relations. Artisanal mining has been studied, but not in relation to the mining laws, the presence of foreign direct investors, and companies with formal concessions. The studies focused on face-to-face working relations of artisanal miners and informal economic practices on mining sites (Werthmann, 2000, 2003a, 2003b; Grätz, 2004 and Grätz, 2003 draft).
This article builds upon analyses that show how the distinction between formal and informal is the outcome of power relations, produced in the processes by which the state allots legal titles (Elyachar, 2003). A set of concessions (also called exploration permits as the translation of the French legal term *permis d’exploration*), are taken as the focus for this article. The set of concessions, situated on the Central Plateau, are studied as a ‘field’, defined as open network of social relations structured around competition over desirable resources (Lamont & Molnar, 2002). The open character of the network has to be stressed, since the actual collaborations and contestations found on the ground, within these concessions, are informed by actors off-site. Face-to-face working arrangements on artisanal mining sites are shaped in relation to wider social arenas connected by indirect media such as the internet (Tsing, 2000, 2004). Adopting Bourdieu’s notion of field aims to take into account the open character of networks; a field ends where its effects end (Bourdieu, 1984). Players on site and off site influence mining activities on a tangible concession area. Consequently, I have chosen to discuss mining both with managers in the boardroom and artisanal miners on a mining site. Moreover, the approach motivated me to include on-line relations in the enquiry. I investigate how concessions are represented in the public domain, who the audiences are that companies address through the Internet, and how the information in the public domain articulates with working practices on the ground. On the internet, international companies operating in Burkina Faso provide extensive information about exploration activities in their concessions, as well as about the presence of artisanal miners. A map taken from the web helps to introduce the case study. All the actors this article will focus on are involved in permit areas shown on Map 1.

In the middle, the map shows two sets of concessions lumped together under the names Kindo Group and Kaya Group. Different companies are involved in these...
concessions, but our main focus will be on the Canadian junior High River Gold Mines Ltd (identity at the Toronto Stock Exchange: TSX: HRG) and the private Burkinabe Company Société SOMIKA whose director is Adama Kindo. High River hopes to develop their ‘jewel in the crown’, the Bissa Gold Deposit, into their second open-pit mine in Burkina Faso, whereas Kindo’s company is present in the area with exploration permits and authorisations to buy up gold from artisanal miners working in the area (AAM).

In order to study these concessions as a field, two tasks are at hand. First, we need to analyse how the formal mining system works out in shaping relations between international as well as Burkinabe entrepreneurs and local actors involved in artisanal mining in the concessions of our case study. Second, we will have to assess how these relations on the ground are informed by connections to partners and audiences elsewhere. To approach concessions as a ‘field’ helps to analyse varieties and scope of collaborations and articulations. Artisanal miners do not work in isolation, nor does the mere presence of international companies erase artisanal mining practices altogether. The latter has been suggested in Jaques et al. (2006), where he explores how the new mining code is affecting artisanal mining. He points to the fact that the frontline of artisanal mining activities has been on the move over the last twenty-five years.

The increasing rarity and depletion of known and accessible resources, the dearth of new discoveries, and the freezing of the best areas by mining companies, have, since the late-1990s, forced many artisanal gold miners to abandon the traditional gold-producing areas of the Sahel and migrate to new ‘unexplored’ ground in the south. The pioneering front of artisanal gold mining has thus steadily shifted southward by about 50 km per year. This movement has occurred along two main axes, one southwest and another southeast; artisanal miners have gradually ‘colonised’ the entire country (Jaques et al. 2006:116-17).

The search for gold in the region which this article focuses on started relatively early. Prospecting titles of (international) gold mining companies cover the ground almost completely. In Jaques’ analysis this region exemplifies a setting where companies are ‘freezing’ the best areas. However, as we will see, the coverage of the region with concessions does not exclude artisanal mining altogether. Instead it profoundly affects relationships between different types of companies and a broad scope of people involved in artisanal mining. The article analyses how the institutional shifts which are conveniently labelled as ‘economic liberalisation’ work out on the ground. I show how the present permit system articulates with practices of artisanal miners. It is important to note the effects of different permits for the spatial positioning and working arrangements of artisanal miners in Burkina Faso.

After a description of some of the general features of the present mining regulations in Burkina Faso, I scrutinise information posted on the website of the current exploration holder, High River, in particular the history of transfers, strategic alliances with other companies and the spatial outline of the permit. This will then be connected to data obtained during anthropological fieldwork carried out in 2007 in Burkina Faso. In this period I obtained information from the exploration director in West Africa of High River on the company’s choices and strategies in dealing with artisanal mining within the permit zone, and I have studied the working arrangements of artisanal miners at different places within the concession of High River, in particular Baskouda (situated a little to the north of Bouly indicated on Map 2 on page 392).
Mining in Burkina Faso

Mining in Burkina Faso increased in importance only in the 1980s, when several dramatic droughts in West Africa triggered artisanal mining. Only the southwestern region of Burkina Faso has a longer history of mining activities (Kiétéga, 1983), but not sufficiently to attract serious colonial interests (Bantenga, 1995). The revolutionary regime of Thomas Sankara, which came to power in a military coup d’état in 1983, targeted mining in order to generate national revenues for Burkina Faso. It restructured the mining sector by positioning the state as sole owner of the land and its resources (Réforme Agraire et Foncière, 1984). Sankara also made a considerable effort to control the gold market. In 1986 the Burkinabé Precious Metals Counter (CBMP) was set up with a monopoly over collecting, processing and marketing precious metals (Gueye, 2001:18-19). In 1987, Sankara was assassinated in another coup d’état which brought Blaise Compaore to power. Since 1992, his regime has moved gradually to a multiparty democracy and is based on liberal economic policies (Otayek, 1992) favouring fewer restrictions on trade and a reduction of tax burdens for entrepreneurs (Ettema & Gielen, 1992).

An initial step toward privatisation was the introduction of the first new mining code in 1993, revised in 1997, along with a new system of mining titles capable of accommodating private players with different capacity and equipment. Mining regulation covers three types of activities: exploration, exploitation and commercialisation. A research permit is awarded to a maximum size of 250 square kilometres, and authorises its holder to explore for minerals. If mineral deposits are found within the research zone, and a feasibility study is positive, the company may apply for a mining permit (permis d’exploitation) (Gueye, 2001; Luning, 2006).

All international companies operating in Burkina are so-called juniors. Mining companies are defined largely by the way in which they derive their revenues. A senior producer or operator generates its revenues from the production and sale of the commodity it is mining. A junior mining company has no mining operations and is essentially a venture capital company. It must rely almost entirely on the capital markets to finance its exploration activities. When a junior company decides to apply for a mining permit to go into production, they become mid-tier producers. Several junior companies have expressed their intention to establish an open pit mine: High River has already opened a mine at Taparko-Bouroum in 2007, Gold Fields (GFI) together with Orezone are seriously investigating options for a mine at Essakane, Etruscan Inc. is building the Youga Gold Mine. However, junior companies may also decide to sell their promising license to a senior production company, such as AngloGold Ashanti, and Barrick. Senior mining companies follow the activities of juniors closely.

Hence, juniors make the output of exploration results available on the web. This information serves both to attract investors money to pursue exploration and to draw attention from bigger companies who may decide to buy up permits as a preparation for exploitation activities in the future.

This article primarily focuses on the relationship between a Canadian junior company, a Burkinabe company and artisanal miners. From the moment of issuing an exploration permit in Burkina Faso, the permit holder is likely to be confronted with artisanal miners. Companies admit, as we will see, that the presence of artisanal miners is considered to be a sign of promising prospects. Junior mining companies then have to choose a strategy for dealing with this presence. Most
companies will opt for an arrangement in which security personnel bars access to the most promising areas where the company intends to undertake exploration activities, whilst in other parts of the permit zone artisanal miners are allowed to work, on condition that a Burkinabe company regulates their activity. Most exploration companies allow Burkinabe companies to act in parts of the permit zone as buyers of gold on the basis of an authorisation for artisanal mining (*autorisation d’exploitation artisanale*, (AAM)). An AAM can only be issued to Burkinabé and the license gives the owner the right to buy gold in a specific area of one square kilometre. The AAM holder has a monopoly on the buying of gold in this area, leaving the actual exploitation to artisanal miners. The AAM holder will put a security service in place to ensure that gold bearing ore is processed in a confined area. An AAM does not allow the holder to export gold, but does not prevent him from having a general licence for buying and exporting gold. General licences for buying gold are not linked to a specific place of exploration or exploitation. On the contrary, license holders have to wait at their shop – mostly in Ouagadougou – until gold is offered to them for sale. It is precisely the spatial distance from the places where gold is actually mined that motivates licensed gold buyers to seek additional AAM; this brings them close to the production source. Every Burkinabe entrepreneur who wants to apply for an AAM needs to check if exploration permits have been issued. Only the *Direction Générale des Mines et des Carrières* can grant the authorisation, but the holder of an exploration permit has to allow the interested party to go ahead with the application when his permit area is concerned. These are the formal ground-rules that are at work in the arrangements different players on the ground choose to engage in.

**High River in the Public Domain**

The present ideology of liberalisation stipulates that the mining sector in Burkina Faso depends on foreign capital and technological knowledge. International companies and investors are explicitly invited to take an interest in mining in this West African country. With data banks, audit reports and websites, the state and junior mining companies are actively courting companies and financial brokers. The state attempts to prove the proper functioning of the mining laws (see e.g. http://www.legiburkina.bf/), as well as demonstrating its capacity to guarantee stability and security in the country. Junior companies, on the other hand, try to attract investors by promising prospects. This explains the overt efforts to inform ‘the public’ on the mining sector in Burkina Faso (Luning, 2006; Tsing, 2000).

The Bissa Hill Deposit is clearly of major importance to High River. It is the jewel in the crown of seven exploration permits regrouped under the name Bissa Hill Permit group, totalling an area of 1009 km.² High River’s webpage describes the history of the companies that have been involved in exploring the area, before High River took over in 2005. In the early nineties, UK based Randgold Resources Ltd. (‘Randgold’) was the first international company to explore the area. In the mid-1990s Newmont Overseas Exploration Ltd. and North Ltd optioned the project. In 2001, Delta Gold Ltd. and Randgold entered into a joint venture agreement which led in 2004 to the delineation of the Bissa Hill deposit and the Gougre prospect. In reaction, the Canadian junior Jilbey optioned the project and continued intensive exploration. Further positive exploration results prompted High River, which held a 29 per cent equity interest in Jilbey, to merge with that company in September 2005 (http://www.hrg.ca/s/Bissa.asp, downloaded 29 June 2007). Moreover, the 21 permits in the Kindo and Kaya Groups that are presently owned by Goldrush Resources Ltd.

Even though websites may not provide details on the exact nature of the joint ventures and option agreements, the summary shows the complex history of transfers and collaborations prior to the situation in 2007. Since the end of 2005, High River has carried out intense explorations at Bissa Hill, culminating in extensive reporting of research results on the web. High River formulates high hopes and is targeting Bissa for construction of their second open-pit mine in Burkina. The reports on the web serve to attract investors in order to pursue exploration and perhaps the construction of a mine. It is difficult to estimate whether High River will actually develop a mine at Bissa. Perhaps it may never come to that. Even then, the efforts and reporting on results may yield profits in the future. They enhance the status of the Bissa permit as a promising prospect, and may motivate a major company to buy the permits to set up production activities.

One question I wanted to explore was the extent to which web pages inform the public on connections between Canadian juniors and Burkinabe actors, both private
companies and artisanal miners? As we have seen, one group of permits is called Kindo, a common family name in Burkina Faso. Indeed, two of the permits within the Kindo group (Kongoussi 1 and Tikare) are under option from the Burkinabe entrepreneur, Adama Kindo. High River inherited this option agreement with Kindo when it merged with the Jilbey in 2005. Jilbey had agreed to explore the two permits of Kindo with the option to acquire 100 per cent interest. In two instalments, Mr. Kindo has received 60 million CFA, almost 92,000 Euro. Moreover, if prospecting would yield results in the future, Mr. Kindo would retain a three per cent annual royalty from gold production from the properties (SRK, 2006:19). Kindo’s option still holds even after the transfers from Jilbey to High River, and from High River to Goldrush.

There are many company reports that mention artisanal miners but one example will suffice here. Goldrush points to the presence of artisanal mining to amplify its high hopes for exploring the two permits on which Kindo has options:

*In early 2006 rock sampling conducted over a 1 km long east-west trending artisanal mining site on Goldrush’s Kongoussi 1 and Tikare permits yielded significant anomalous gold values over the entire area covered by the historic mining activities. Enduring artisanal mining is an excellent indicator of potential economic gold mineralization as crude artisanal mining techniques are usually productive only with grades in excess of 20 g/t gold. This highly mineralized zone was named the Ronguen Gold Discovery after a tiny nearby village* (http://www.goldrushresources.ca/, downloaded 30 April 2008).

The presence of artisanal miners is openly presented as an index for promising gold prospects. The *Northern Miner*, a Canadian journal for professionals in the mining business, reported a speech which Don Willoughby, CEO of Goldrush, gave in Toronto, ‘Goldrush follows the artisanal miners in Burkina Faso’, (http://www.northernminer.com/issues/verify.asp, Vol. 93, No. 51, 11-17 February 2008).

The information taken from the public domain illustrates the complex interrelations between junior companies, between juniors and private Burkinabe companies as well as between companies and artisanal miners. The first thing to note is the long history of transfers of exploration permits. These transfers are part of complex histories of joint ventures and mergers, difficult for outsiders to trace and understand. It raises the question of how people living and mining in the area perceive this string of foreign explorers. Second, we have come across Burkinabe companies with exploration permits who lack the expertise and funds to engage in exploration. How do we interpret the fact that they chose to obtain these permits in the first place? Third, we see junior companies not just tolerating artisanal miners; but clearly using their presence as an index for future prospects. Finally, web-based information testifies to the complex relations between national and international companies as well as formal and informal actors in the mining sector in Burkina Faso. But how do informants on the ground, employees of companies or informal miners, comment upon these complex interrelations?

**Relations on the Ground: High River, Kindo & Artisanal Miners on the Bissa Permit Zone**

Artisanal miners have been working in the area, presently covered by High River’s Bissa concession since the 1980s. Some miners recounted vividly how strictly artisanal mining had been organised in Sankara’s time. In the comparisons made by miners, the rigid organisation of the past was contrasted favourably with the present
situation. At least the Sankara period of strict state control provided a clear social situation, whereas the large set of (private) players makes the current situation less transparent. The coming and going of different prospectors and gold buying ‘authorities’ are perceived as random and unregulated: who will come next, what will be the claims and how will they deal with artisanal miners? The way High River approaches artisanal miners working within their concessions differs from time to time and from place to place. This causes feelings of great insecurity among the miners; how long will they be able to continue working in a good location, when and how will they be moved, who will be in charge in a new place where they may be tolerated due to its marginal interest to High River?

In June 2007, a journalist from the *Northern Miner* was invited to visit High River’s sites in Burkina. On the Bissa permit zone High River’s chief geologist John Learn took the author to artisanal miners working close to Gougre, a gold prospect recently discovered within the area and shown on Map 2.

*The drive from Bissa Hill to Gougre puts the workings of artisanal miners in the area on full display. While the miners aren’t allowed to continue working on high-priority targets, companies will often allow them to mine low-priority areas. A visit to the artisanal camp shows that relations between the artisans and High River, as represented by Learn, are open and cordial* (Vaccaro, 2007:4).

The journalist portrays High River in a way the company wants to be seen back home: tolerant towards artisanal miners, on condition that they do not infringe upon the central prospecting areas. Early 2007, the exploration director West Africa of High River gave two reasons for trying to accommodate artisanal miners: it is better to try and contain it than to waste energy on failing attempts to prohibit it. Moreover, in line with the information on the web, the director acknowledged that artisanal miners could serve as informal prospectors for the company; their activities are monitored with interest. However, within the Bissa permit group, High River has been very cautious to permit artisanal mining. The artisanal miners that are allowed to work in certain areas should collaborate with a Burkinabe company holding an AAM license and has been careful in selecting which Burkinabe entrepreneurs would be allowed to work as AAM holders within their permit zone. High River has chosen to collaborate with Adama Kindo and his Company SOMIKA Sarl, *Société Minière Kindo Adama*. Kindo was allowed to lodge a request to obtain an AAM near the village of Baskouda, where artisanal mining was in a ‘low-priority area’ for High River which the Ministry of Mines, Quarries and Energy granted. High River prefers the social climate to be calm on artisanal mining sites and price is an important factor in this respect. When an AAM holder tries to lower the price paid for gold, he can expect artisanal miners to try to smuggle ore out of the zone. The number of vigilantes and police present within an AAM area are an indication of the prices paid, and the temptation of transgression. Compared to other AAM holders in Burkina, Kindo’s company SOMIKA was paying a relatively good price for gold at the time. In mid January 2007, the time of the fieldwork in Baskouda, world market prices for gold were at $630 per ounce, approximately 17 Euro per gram. At the time, gold buyers at Baskouda paid artisanal miners 8,000 CFA (12.20 EUR) per gram. In turn, these buyers were forced to sell to SOMIKA for 8,500 CFA (12.95 EUR) per gram.

Artisanal mining at the ‘low-priority’ area of Baskouda did not pose any problems to High River. How does High River deal with artisanal miners working closer to or even at ‘high priority’ areas? At the time of research the Bissa Hill Deposit had
already been sealed off for artisanal miners. Villagers of Bissa had obtained jobs to perform surveillance tasks, and signs had been posted to warn artisanal miners off. However, as the visiting journalist of the *Northern Miner* reported, in 2007 the prospect of Gougre was still the scene of heavy artisanal mining. Map 2 confirms, nevertheless, that High River had every intention of exploring actively at Gougre, even though – or perhaps because – this is also a zone where artisanal mining takes place. In the nineties, the presence of artisanal miners may even have triggered exploration activities. Artisanal miners, in turn, had been following the company’s prospecting activities with great care. They freely admitted to estimate carefully in which direction exploration activities were projected in order to tap into these areas. For Gougre, so the director exploration explained, High River would never grant a request to apply for an AAM. This would formalise artisanal mining and make it very difficult to evict the miners at a later stage. Clearly the time for eviction was rapidly approaching when, at the start of 2008, I carried out fieldwork once more. Rumours spread that High River was about to clear out the area, and in anticipation of the eviction, the mining crews worked frantically to take out as much ore from their pits as possible. At the time, it was impossible to find artisanal miners at Gougre who found time to talk to me. In January 2008, High River hired bulldozers to close all the pits of artisanal miners. Even though the artisanal miners were angered – not just for losing the prospects of finding gold, but also because many had wasted their time on useless digging – they did not strongly oppose the violence they had seen coming for a long time. The absence of formal AAM makes artisanal miners highly vulnerable for companies who can, at any time, claim to exercise their formal property rights. The case study shows that artisanal miners depend upon AAM for protection, and this will only be allowed at less promising places within the permit areas. Kindo was allowed to confine the artisanal mining to a place beyond the direct interest of High River, on a site that would not be marked by a very tense and militarised atmosphere.

Organising artisanal mining within the Bissa permit is only one of the possible lines of collaboration between High River and Kindo. Over the years, Kindo has solicited several AAM’s in the region, including locations where exploration permits had not at the time been granted; later, Kindo obtained exploration permits in the area. According to the exploration director, Kindo is not interested in undertaking exploration himself, but his exploration permits form an umbrella that protects his artisanal gold mining and gold buying activities in the region. He can now block other Burkinabe from obtaining AAM’s in the vicinity of the artisanal mining sites where he is buying the gold. As we have seen, for the actual exploration activities Kindo collaborates with Goldrush. This form of juggling with permits occurs all over Burkina Faso. Burkinabe companies such as Kindo are involved in different types of activities, and collaborate with Canadian juniors such as High River and Goldrush in various forms and for different reasons.

I was given additional information on Kindo’s collection of permits by another Burkinabe entrepreneur. When the state started to privatise the mining sector in the mid-1990s, the regime had to show to multilateral organisations that exploration permits would not just end up in foreign hands; Burkinabe would also have to take part in exploration. Consequently, government officials had been active in placing permits in the hands of specific Burkinabe entrepreneurs, among them Adama Kindo. Kindo had never been active in mining and is not an expert. He is, however, known to have good connections with the Compaore regime. This may have been an important factor in the build-up of Kindo’s mining portfolio. The question of the
emergence of Burkinabe entrepreneurs in the mining sector merits more research and for our topic, so does the shifting position of the state in the transition of a state controlled to a liberalised mining sector. Jaques et al. (2006:129) indicated that many Burkinabe entrepreneurs in the mining sector have a history as exploration and mining professionals working for the state until they were made redundant when the gold price dropped in the late 1990s. It is important to study the shift in the mining regime in relation to shifts in professional careers in order to assess continuities in power positions. Previous jobs and present-day friendships with members of the regime may give rise to strong linkages between the field of politics and economics, strengthening rather than weakening the position of the state.

Perhaps the management of High River had been aware of Kindo’s connections. In that case, this knowledge may have been an additional reason for allowing Kindo to apply for an AAM in High River’s permit area. For a junior such as High River a good relationship with the regime is extremely valuable. A quote from the Northern Miner underlines the importance of this relationship:

*While High River has experienced some hiccups in forging a relationship with the government – mine development was delayed last year for two months when the government held up trucks in the capital of Ouagadougou due to confusion over taxation issues – it also offers benefits to High River* (Vaccaro, 2007:1).

High River’s strategy in dealing with artisanal miners is influenced by different factors, partly by their wish to cater for audiences back home and to enhance their networks within Burkina Faso itself. Artisanal mining is considered useful, but also potentially harmful to the company’s exploration activities. It is followed with interest, but allowed only as long as it does not hinder the Company’s prospecting. High River’s security personnel presently lock off two areas, the Bissa Hills and Gougre, within the concession. Only in zones where High River does not have prospecting plans, are Burkinabe companies allowed to set up shop with AAMs. What are the working arrangements at such a site?

### Organisation of Artisanal Mining on the Site near Baskouda

Before Kindo Adamo obtained the AAM, artisanal miners in the 1980s had already been active on the site near the village of Baskouda. However, at the time, this concerned alluvial gold extraction, whereas hard rock mining only took off in the last part of 2006: the hills were tackled with groups of miners digging narrow pits (width approximately 2 by 2 metres) of over thirty metres. From the 1980s the site of Baskouda has known periods of boom alternating with periods when only a few people remained. In the boom times men dominated artisanal mining; in lean periods women remained to re-work the tailings the men had left behind. Such ups and downs are characteristic of many mining sites in Burkina.

In November 2006, Baskouda attracted hundreds of villagers and miners from elsewhere, after a small group of pioneer artisanal miners found gold. The development caught the attention both of High River and Kindo Adamo. They had to react quickly for in the slipstream of miners, the place had already begun to draw the attention of middle-men working for companies with gold buying licenses. A fast response by permit holders was needed, since a company with an AAM can only hope to get a grip in the early stages of a gold rush. Once a location has many miners and gold buyers it is very difficult to regain control. The reaction of High River and Kindo Adamo was swift, and the AAM was in effect from early January 2007.
onwards. When I visited the site in mid-January 2007, the situation seemed relatively quiet and well organised.

The mining site was made up of two distinct zones: high up in the hills groups of men worked to extract gold-bearing ore from a number of pits. This digging area contrasted with the market/residential zone situated at the foot of the hill, where the ore was taken for processing. The impact of SOMIKA was most strongly felt in this market/residential zone; at the centre of this zone the company set up an area secluded by straw mats for the ore. The processing of all the ore – from pulverisation to selling – had to take place within this area. Hence, the name for this zone, both in French and in the local language, Moore: comptoir. This secluded area allowed SOMIKA to check on the work process of the treatment of ore (pulverisation and washing) and to control the buying up of the extracted gold. At the entrance of the comptoir, vigilantes of a security company, hired by SOMIKA, controlled access. Sometimes these guards searched the body of a person whom they suspected of smuggling gold from the area to the outside. Mainly women were involved in the work of extracting the gold from the ore; men were engaged in buying the gold. The comptoir was divided in different work places for processing of ore: in each, a wooden structure covered by straw mats (a ‘hangar’) served as work space for women pulverising the ore, and a sluice would be used to wash the crushed ore. These work places had been set up by female entrepreneurs who owned the hangar, the utensils used by women engaged in pulverisation, the sluice, and the metal containers filled with water to wash the crushed ore. The men who brought their ore paid the women who pulverised it for 500 CFA per tomato tin (a container of about two litres). The pulverised ore would then be washed on the sluice. The owner of the ore appropriated the gold that would be separated (often with the use of mercury) during the washing. The owner of the work place would be entitled to the remains on the sluice. From time to time, women would take parts of this pulverised ore in sacks to a mill and the fine powder would be re-washed for further extraction of remaining gold. Every owner had to sell his or her ore to one of the individual gold buyers who would sit and wait under a big hangar. Since all gold buyers offered the same price, most of them would try to attract customers by advancing payments. As we will see, provisioning of credits is extremely important on mining sites. At the end of each day, all the gold buyers of the comptoir had to sell the gold they bought to SOMIKA, gold obtained from ore that had been dug up in the hills of Baskouda.

The hill in Baskouda was covered with over one hundred relatively small pits being worked by groups of six to eight men including two diggers. Work would continue at night when it was less hot, and ore needed to be protected from thieves. Artisanal miners in Burkina Faso do not receive wages; until gold is found the diggers will just be fed and looked after (medicines) by a so-called pit-owner (bokosoba). Both male and female pit-owners operated at the site of Baskouda. All these people had committed themselves to feed the group working for them. Expenses may include medical help in case of illness, but the provisioning of medicines referred very often to drugs, both ‘uppers’ and ‘downers’. Only when rich ore started to be extracted, would the pit-owner be compensated for his or her investments with half of the total ore; the other half of the ore would be divided among the members of the crew. At the start of the digging it is hard to tell how long it may take before tangible spoils can be divided, and how much gold will be obtained in the end. This uncertainty is rewarded once earnings can be divided. Male pit-owners could take part in the mining activities of the crew, but on this mining site most of them could be seen riding on big motorbikes, transporting the foodstuffs needed for the men who did the
actual digging. In Baskouda, pit-owners were often women: they used earnings from their restaurant in the marketplace, or ‘hangar’ to feed a group of male miners. Some of the gold-buyers opted to become pit-owners, others preferred to provide pit-owners with the financial means to look after their workforce. The credit would assure the gold-buyer that the pit-owner would eventually sell his gold to him. The situation in Baskouda showed once more that artisanal mining sites constitute a complex world of debts; some of these would be settled in cash, some of them in ore (Grätz, 2004).

Policing activities occurred both in the area of the comptoir and on the hill where mining occurred. Employees of SOMIKA together with staff of the security firm only seemed to be pre-occupied with the organisation of the market and residential space – stipulating rules where showering and the washing of clothes were permitted – and controlling the area of the comptoir. They saw their main task was to assure that people processing and gold-buying played by the rules of the AAM holder. Strict controls and bodychecks were part and parcel of their policing practices. Outside of this area, and in particular in the places where the actual mining activities were taking place, the presence of SOMIKA was much less felt. The policing activities on the hill were dependent upon hierarchies among artisanal miners themselves. Some people on this mining site had strong reputations that allowed them to impose their authority on other miners. These people played a role when quarrels among miners of different teams would occur. On the artisanal mining site of Baskouda, artisanal miners carefully followed developments of gold findings in pits of other working groups. As soon as rich ore was found, a fierce competition would arise for the occupation of neighbouring spaces (Luning, 2006, 2008). Moreover, serious quarrels could also arise once neighbouring groups were at work. Groups were supposed to work in vertical lines downward, but the direction of quartz veins could force them to work sideways. A neighbouring group could take offence and object that the group had started taking out ‘their’ ore. Employees of SOMIKA never interfered with these sorts of conflicts. Baskouda had one ‘strong’ person in particular who provided working groups with protection. His capacity to coerce people (he either threatened them with violence or used it) into honesty, or pressurise them into giving up attempts at theft was based on a reputation of fearlessness. He was considered ‘awesome’. Many stories circulated by both artisanal miners and employees of SOMIKA supporting his reputation of fearlessness and invincibility (Luning, 2006 and forthcoming). His reputation allowed him to boast openly about how he transgressed rules that the AAM holder tried to instill. He told me that he had been asked to work for SOMIKA, but had chosen to work independently.

AAM zones are put in place to confine artisanal miners to specific areas where they can have some reassurance that they will not be evicted. This formal acknowledgement, however, has its price; it pins miners down to restricted areas and forces them into a regime of selling their gold to the AAM holder. However, the way the mining site at Baskouda was policed shows once more the permeability of formal and informal positions and relationships.

Conclusions
A set of concessions in the central part of Burkina Faso served as my point of departure and this spatial unit is the product of what is called ‘liberalisation’. The carving out of these concessions is strongly linked to the recent process of opening up the national territory of Burkina Faso for foreign investments. Powerful
international arenas have been involved in defining the regime of mining titles, facilitating (international) companies to settle down as explorers in the case study area. We analysed how this set of concessions constitutes a field, in Bourdieu’s definition of a system of social positions structured internally in terms of power relations. The notion of field allows us to question rather than presume the nature of power relations. In the study of power relations at work in the mining sector three issues warrant scrutiny and suggest lines for further investigations:

1) The effects of liberalisation on the power position of the state. Broadening the perspective on the state by including its power to classify economic actors in terms of legal and illegal, points to the complex dynamics in the political economy of mining in Burkina Faso. This broader analysis points to strength rather than weakness of the state. This perspective should be supplemented by a line of enquiry into the recent history of local capital. The information on the professional career of Kindo Adama hints at the informal relations crosscutting the fields of state and economic relations. Not only does the state have the power to define what is legal and what is illegal, it also decides who will be given entrepreneurial opportunities. Research into the backgrounds and profiles of present day mining entrepreneurs may show us the overlap in the professional fields, and hence the tangible power relations between state officials and economic entrepreneurs. The data presented in this article indicate that such a scrutiny will show that liberalisation of the mining sector cannot be described simply in terms of a withdrawal of the state.

2) The study of a concession as a field enables us to elaborate upon the complex nature of power relations between different types of miners. The boundary between formal and informal is used to move artisanal miners from promising to marginal places within the concession. Exploration companies can obtain a legal land title, artisanal miners cannot; the latter are merely ‘there’. This law leads to inequality on the ground where companies have concessions and artisanal miners marginal places.

The legal system of mining titles brings about processes of spatial exclusion that are much more complex, dynamic and ambivalent than may sometimes be portrayed (Jaques, et al. 2006). The permit system certainly contributes to the movement of artisanal mining southward, but the processes of lawful exclusion cannot be equated to freezing areas. The concessions themselves are turned into moving frontiers, a terrain of power play between formal and informal miners. We have analysed the social process of artisanal miners being present and permit holders moving in. Characteristic of this process is that companies first seem to see artisanal miners as promise and then as a problem. The presence of artisanal miners may even have motivated the exploration company to move in with an exploration permit since it is considered to be a sign of gold potential. The more reliable this sign turns out to be, the more likely it is that in due course these artisanal miners will be evicted from their place. They will have to move from a ‘high priority’ deposit or prospect to a ‘low priority’ place. Once this has been established artisanal miners may be portrayed as illegal ‘encroachers’, as a group that has to be prevented from moving in (again). The ‘problem’ is subsequently managed by working out spatial arrangements for which the law provides solutions. Again, the power of legal classifications transpires from the definition of the actors involved in the solution. Artisanal miners can never claim legal rights in places, not even in the places where they are tolerated after eviction. For their formal protection in the ‘low priority’ zones, artisanal miners depend upon AAM holders. However, the rights of artisanal miners within an AAM zone are defined in terms of obligations to sell their gold to
authorised gold buyers. The AAM zones restrict artisanal miners both in their spatial position and in their choice for selling their gold.

Despite the complexity, this process demonstrates that distinctions between legal and illegal result in enhancing the power of companies and marginalising artisanal miners. However, the findings regarding the artisanal mining site at Baskouda suggest that the informal processes are also important. Kindo Adama’s company at Baskouda depends heavily upon strong personalities among miners for the governing of the artisanal mining site. Policing of miners working on the hill is left to key figures with ‘awesome’ reputations, a quality these strong men underscore by showing disrespect of formal rules. Not only does Kindo depend upon informal power holders, these strong men prove their ability for policing by transgressing formal and informal rules. It is important to ask how these transgressions affect attitudes of artisanal miners towards rules and different power holders? In what ways do they comply with rules and resistance to them and do they associate with power holders or keep them at their distance? The interface between formal and informal is a crucial topic for understanding processes of staging as well as circumventing the rules in power relations.

3) The notion of ‘field’ emphasises the open character of networks. Bourdieu stressed openness by claiming that a ‘field’ ends where its effects end (Bourdieu, 1984). This approach motivated me to include on-line relations in my enquiry. However, I focused largely on the self-representation of companies. Interestingly, even this restricted type of web-info pointed to the ambivalence of power relations. We saw for instance, that junior companies openly admit to see the presence of artisanal miners as an index for promising prospects. Their presence is mentioned to enhance the value of the permit, but it also alerts the audience to the risk of tensions and outright conflicts. Even in attempts to show off the value of permits, the web presence of mining companies open interesting windows on a ‘field’ marked by exclusions, unequal partnerships, and uneasy forms of collaboration and co-habitation. This invites us to pursue research on the relationships between on-site mining practices and on-line representation of these practices beyond ‘keeping up appearances’ (see Tsing, 2000). Presently, mining companies are under pressure to comply with an agenda of corporate responsibility and sustainable development. Websites of NGOs, multilateral institutions and academic networks inform the public on the current situation in the mining sector and the issues that warrant public debates and stricter regulations. It would be important to study how these web sources represent what happens on the ground and how these representations affect power relations in the field of mining.

Sabine Luning is in the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at the University of Leiden; e-mail: SLuning@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

Bibliography


Elyachar, J. (2003), ‘Mappings of Power: The State, NGOs, and International Organizations in

Ettema, W. & G. Gielen (1992), Burkina Faso, Amsterdam: KIT.

Grätz, T. (2004), ‘Gold trading networks and the creation of trust. A case study from northern Bénin’, Africa 74, 2, pp. 147-172; (2003, draft), ‘The rise of vigilante groups and militias: political transcontinuities or signs of state devolution?’


Copper Mining Agreements in Zambia: Renegotiation or Law Reform?

John Lungu

Poverty levels in Zambia are historically associated with development in the mining sector. As long as the sector was performing well and enjoying high international prices for copper, the revenues to government were high and the government could afford the provision of, for example, public health. It is however paradoxical that in the current upturn of commodity prices, the Zambian government has not obtained sufficient revenues to enable it to provide the required public goods. Close scrutiny of the way the state-owned mining company, Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM), was privatised in the late 1990s reveals that the agreements made between the government and the new mining companies were lopsided. As a consequence, the government has been unable to earn revenues to the same extent as countries like Chile prompting civil society to pressure the government to renegotiate the agreements. The government has, however, chosen the path of law reform to increase the taxation on foreign-owned mining companies.

Introduction

During the 1960s and the 1970s, African development thinking was heavily influenced by a belief in African socialism: a form of rebellion from the capitalist orientation of the colonial economies. African socialism, it was envisaged, would become a vehicle through which the process of decolonisation could be fulfilled. Many countries in Africa practiced with some form of socialism even though the approaches between countries varied. Tanzania experimented with Ujamaa, whilst Ethiopian socialism led to the land reforms of 1975. Zambia implemented its development programmes guided by Kaunda’s philosophy of humanism. The declines in the economies of most countries in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s and 1990s necessitated a paradigm shift to neo-liberal philosophies based on market economics. One condition that remained relatively unchanged is that many people on the continent still live in conditions of extreme poverty. The level of poverty and human misery is paradoxical when it is considered that the continent is endowed with abundant natural resources. Consequently, many have commented that these enormous resource endowments have proved a curse rather than a blessing (Humfrey, Sachs & Stiglitz, 2007).

The exploitation of these resources by multinational corporations has resulted in social-economic inequality, deterioration in labour and employment standards,
environmental degradation and the exclusion of the majority of the people from accessing essential social services. Thus, the relationship between socio-economic justice and natural resource exploitation raises urgent questions about the social responsibilities and obligations of both the state and the corporations.

This article briefly traces the development of the mining sector in Zambia from the colonial period. I discuss the underlying political philosophies that have guided change in the sector and focus on the mining agreements signed between the Zambian government and mining companies and their impact on mining communities. I further assess the reactions of civil society and the pressure they have brought on the government to renegotiate the agreements.

**Copper Mining in the Zambian Economy**

Commercial copper mining in Zambia started at the Roan Antelope Mine (Luanshya) in 1928. Since then, copper mining has dominated Zambia’s economy. Two private companies owned the copper mines: the Roan Selection Trust (RST) and the Anglo-American Corporation (AAC). The favourable world prices of copper through the 1960s and early 1970s raised the confidence of the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP), making them promise people rapid development funded by government revenue earned by the mining sector. The rapid growth of mining would, it was expected, spur industrialisation and bring an end to poverty. The wealth earned from copper mining helped Zambia attain the middle-income country status by 1969. Out of a total population of four million in this same year, a total of 317,150 people were in formal employment. Of these, 75,546 were working in the mining sector (Central Statistical Office, 2005). Of the people working in the mining sector, 52,600 were directly employed by the two private mining companies (Lungu & Mulenga, 2005).

Because of the inertia of the mining companies in delivering substantial investment, Kaunda, following the tenets of humanism, nationalised the mines in 1969. All rights of ownership of minerals reverted to the state and the government obtained 51 per cent of shares in all existing mines. In 1982, the nationalised mining companies were consolidated to form the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM). During the era of a nationalised mining industry, the government was able to direct the profits of newly nationalised copper mines towards building hospitals and schools and providing subsidies to state-owned manufacturing companies and consumers. Throughout the post-independence era and on a yearly basis, mining contributed over 50 per cent of the country’s foreign exchange requirements and over two-thirds of central government revenue (GRZ, 2005).

The copper mines historically have made significant contributions to the development of the country and the Copperbelt. For example, as early as 1929, the private mining companies provided orderly residential areas to house employees and also supplied food rations. The companies also provided hospitals and recreation facilities. Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines continued with this welfare policy which tied in with the state’s humanist developmental philosophy. It operated a ‘cradle to the grave’ welfare policy, providing nappies to the newly born and even subsidising burial arrangements for the dead. The copper mining company did not just look after its workers, it also provided services to the whole urban mining community. Major progress in terms of development was made in the first decade of independence.
Development slowed when the price of copper collapsed. Following the first oil crisis in 1974 and the collapse of copper prices, the country started borrowing in order to maintain social provision. After the second oil crisis in 1979, the country drifted into a severe debt crisis. For twenty years, the economy collapsed at an internationally unprecedented rate as copper prices fell relative to the prices of imports. Between 1974 and 1994, per capita income fell by 50 per cent, leaving the country the 25th poorest in the world (Ferguson, 1999:6). Throughout the economic crisis, the copper mining company was treated as a ‘cash cow’, milked without corresponding investment in machinery and prospecting ventures as had been the case before nationalisation. To compound the problem of lack of investment, the ore bodies within the existing mines could only be accessed at great depths raising the cost of production. Output also fell from a high of 750,000 tonnes in 1973 to 257,000 tonnes by 2000 (Chamber of Mines, 2005). With little copper revenue, the state could not support the social infrastructure it had created. GDP per capita also declined to less than $300 and over 80 per cent of the country’s population started experiencing extreme poverty, forcing the government to borrow for both social and economic infrastructure maintenance and balance of payments support. With massive debt the country had no choice but to adopt economic liberalisation policies designed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The country entered its first World Bank structural adjustment programme in 1983 and since then, the international finance institutions have tightly policed Zambia’s economic policies.

The economy continued to decline and by the mid-1980s, there were repeated urban food riots and industrial unrest leading to unpopularity of the ruling party UNIP and Kaunda. In 1990, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) was formed, headed by ZCTU leader Frederick Chiluba. They swept the board in elections in 1991 (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997; Baylies & Szeftel, 1992; see also Lungu, 1997). The MMD ran on a manifesto that promised to liberalise the economy, privatise state owned enterprises and secure a new democratic political dispensation. This election victory also ensured a return to neo-liberal thinking and market economics. In other words, this was a rejection of the socialist ideas embedded in the humanism of the Kaunda era.

The Privatisation Process: the Role of External Aid Donors

The crown jewels of the privatisation process were understood to be the copper mines. As early as 1993, Zambia’s second Privatisation and Industrial Reform Credit (PIRC II) from the World Bank required that the government study options for privatising ZCCM. A Germany Company, Kienbaum Development Services (GmbH), was contracted to assess the options and reported in April 1994, recommending that ZCCM be unbundled into five separate units (Lungu & Silengo, 1997). By 1995, the Bank (Economic Recovery and Investment Project, ERIP) and IMF (Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, ESAF) extended loans that demanded Zambia adopt and implement plans within the ESAF framework. The Bank repeated the demand in 1996 (Economic and Structural Adjustment Credit, ESAC II) and 1999 (Structural Adjustment Fund, SAF), as did the IMF in 1999 (Enhanced SAF) (Situmbeko & Zulu, 2004).

Throughout the process, the government sought delays for technical and political reasons and the issue became a sticking point in relations with donors, with repeated accusations of bad faith on either side (Fraser & Lungu, 2007). The Mineworkers’ Union of Zambia expressed concerns that unbundling of ZCCM into
a number of companies either would leave the least attractive assets with insecure futures, or would leave the government with significant assets on its hands. Better, they concluded, to encourage one serious investor to take on all of the liabilities and all of the facilities. The union was also concerned that introducing intra-company competition would drive down conditions of service for their members (Muchimba, 1998).

What broke the deadlock was Zambia’s qualification in 1996 to the World Bank’s Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. This process for relief of unpayable poor country debt established frequent hurdles (most importantly the HIPC decision point and completion point) for the country to clear, each of which involved an assessment of performance by international finance institutions’ staff before debt relief was delivered. As each hurdle approached, Zambia came under pressure to push through privatisations that were more controversial. In most cases, the state stalled, tried to appease domestic interests, and then eventually went ahead, choosing debt relief over domestic politics. Throughout the privatisation period, the government was encouraged by donors to establish an ‘investor friendly’ policy regime. The most significant policy changes were enshrined in the 1995 Investment Act (reform of the Act was a condition of the World Bank’s 1993 PIRC II loan) and the Mines and Minerals Act of 1995.

The Investment Act established the Zambian Investment Centre (ZIC) to assist companies through the process of buying into the Zambian economy, as well as laying out the procedures for doing so. It provided the general incentives that applied to all investors as well as special incentives for investors in particular industries. It also provided assurances against forced acquisition of companies by the state, preventing a repeat of Kaunda’s nationalisations. The Act did away with foreign exchange controls, allowing companies to take out of Zambia, without interference, all funds in respect of dividends, principle and interest on foreign loans, management fees and other charges.

The Mines and Minerals Act of 1972, which regulated the nationalised industry was also repealed. This gave way to the Mines and Minerals Act of 1995 providing particular incentives for investors in mining. Under the Act, tax paid for copper removed from Zambia – called a ‘mineral royalty’ would be charged at the rate of 3 per cent of the net back value of the minerals produced (Mines and Minerals Act, 1995), although this was later amended to 2 per cent. The Act permitted companies to minimise their income tax returns by allowing deductions for investment in mining. It also provided relief from paying customs duties on imported machinery and equipment. The Act did not specify the amounts of these forms of relief. Instead it permitted the government to enter into ‘Development Agreements’ with specific companies, under which more incentives than the Act granted could be extended including reductions in royalty rates.

Two international consultants – Rothschild, and Clifford Chance – finally advised the Zambian government on the practical modalities of privatising ZCCM (GRZ/ZCCM Negotiating Privatisation team, 2000). They suggested that the company be privatised in two stages. In stage 1, substantial majority interests in all ZCCM assets were to be offered in a number of separate packages that would leave the Zambian state – in the form of a company called ZCCM Investment Holdings (ZCCM-IH) – as an owner of minority interests in companies controlled and managed by the incoming investors. In stage 2, the Government would then dispose of all, or a substantial part of, its share holding. These shares were to be offered for sale to the
Zambian public. Stage two has not yet been realised. The final outcome of the process was that the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines was sold to seven different companies. These included Anglo-American Corporation (AAC) with a shareholding of 65 per cent at Konkola, the Binani Group of Companies (UK) with a shareholding of 85 per cent at Luanshya, Metorex Plc (South Africa) at Chibuluma, Anglo vaal (South Africa) which bought the Chambeshi smelter, and First Quantum (Canada) and Glencore International (Switzerland) (73.1 per cent) which bought Nkana and Mufulira mines to form Mopani. Others were the Non Ferrous Metals Company (China) at Chambeshi mine and First Quantum (Canada) at Bwana Mukubwa.

Some companies have undergone changes in ownership even though they still retain the original names. For example, Konkola Copper Mines is now owned by Vedanta resources, a company registered in London while Chambeshi Metals and Luanshya Copper mines are now owned by Enya, a company registered in Switzerland. Ownership of the copper mines has thus undergone three major phases. From their establishment to 1969, the mines were in private hands under the control of the Roan Selection Trust (RST) and the Anglo-American Corporation (AAC). From 1969 to 1997, the mines were nationalised and operated as ZCCM from 1982. They are now in private hands with many players out of the original two. The development agreements signed with these companies outline the terms under which the different mines operate.

The Mines and Minerals Act (1995) permitted the government to enter into ‘Development Agreements’ with specific companies. Under these agreements, the government could also extend more incentives than the Act granted. These documents established the terms under which the mines were sold and the rights and responsibilities of the Zambian state and the new mining companies.

The original development agreements were negotiated during the privatisation process between 1997 and 2000. Despite the Mines and Minerals Act specifying that mineral royalties should be set at 3 per cent for those holding large-scale mining licences, the rate negotiated by most mining companies was 0.6 per cent of the gross revenue of minerals produced. The agreements also allowed companies to avoid paying a good deal of corporate tax by carrying forward losses for periods of between 15 and 20 years on a ‘first-in, first-out’ basis, meaning that losses made in the first year of operations and the subsequent investment in the later years, could be subtracted in subsequent years from taxable profits. The companies were also granted deductions of 100 per cent of capital expenditure in the year in which the expenditure was incurred and were exempted from paying customs and excise duties or any other duty or import tax levied on machinery and equipment. This exemption was extended to other contracting firms importing machinery for mines development. The agreements also reduced corporation tax from the original 35 per cent to 25 per cent. Further, the government undertook not to amend any of these tax regimes after the agreement was struck, for as much as between 15 and 20 years. These ‘stability periods’ are a particularly important provision because until they expire, the terms of the Development Agreement are assumed to be legally binding and overrule any existing or future national legislation, whatever the policies of future Zambian governments. Although there is a provision that if at any time during the stability period either party feels that the other is not holding up their side of the bargain, they can refer the dispute to an international arbitration process, the legality of the development agreements remains questionable and the whole understanding remains controversial.
There has been some speculation as to what led the Zambian government to sign these agreements, which appear to be against the national interest. Economists have argued that the underlying motivation was to make Zambian mining attractive as an investment destination for foreign direct investment, coming from the background of low copper prices and loss making mines. Edith Nawakwi, the then Minister of Finance, recently stated that the copper mines were at the time making losses of up to $1 million a day and that, if these conditions continued, they would close down. The demand for privatisation, she stated, ‘was like somebody is pointing a gun to your head’. She further states that the government was borrowing in order to pay salaries to ZCCM employees (BBC World Service radio programme ‘Taxing Questions’, programme two, 2007). To turn the mines around recapitalisation was necessary requiring huge sums of finance which the government could not raise. While this may be true, the Zambian government also came under pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to privatise the copper mines. This was part of the conditionality set by the two international finance institutions for Zambia to qualify for debt relief. There is however a suggestion that government ministers may have benefited from these secret deals. The case of the sale of Luanshya mine to the Binani Group helps to explain this allegation. In this case it was very clear that the Binani Group had failed to operate the Luanshya mine but government was reluctant to terminate the agreement and continued paying salaries to RAMCOZ employees even when it was not government’s responsibility to do so as the company was privately (part of the Binani Group) owned. Whatever the circumstances, the government must bear the blame because after all, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) ran on a manifesto that promised to liberalise the economy, privatisate state owned enterprises and secure a new democratic political dispensation. Therefore, privatisation was a principle government policy of the time.

With all the incentives outlined above, the privatisation strategy seems to have worked in economic terms. According to Lenard Nkhata, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Mines, ‘Closed mines have opened up, new mines are coming up, and the existing mines that were limping are doing very well’ (Fraser & Lungu, 2007:19). This view is also held by the Mineworkers’ Union of Zambia who recognises that:

*Since 1998 we have close to $1.4 billion which has gone into the mining industry, into refurbishment of plants, and purchases of spares and machinery. So one sees that privatisation addressed capitalisation, the issue of refurbishing and the issue of exploration and drilling. It has shown in increased copper production* (Fraser & Lungu, 2007:19).

The mining industry’s representative body, the Chamber of Mines, also boasts that, by 2005 the companies were putting in over $350 million a year. Reflecting the new investments, production has rebounded to 500,000 tons by 2007. The Chamber of Mines further predicts that production will be as high as 800,000 tons in 2009 (Chamber of Mines, 2005). These figures are partly possible because investment has led to the opening of new mines for the first time in 25 years. The effects that these increases in copper production will have on the price have however not been estimated or studied. It is only hoped that China’s appetite for consumption of mineral resources will continue for some time to come thus maintaining at high levels the commodity prices. However, the investment boom cannot be attributed to privatisation alone. As Fraser and Lungu (2007) have shown, in the last seven years of ZCCM’s operations (1990-1996), investment in the copper mines was running around $125 million a year. Following privatisation, for the next seven years, 1997 to
2003, under the new investors, this average figure crept to $135 million. It is also important to point out that during this period, three of the seven initial investors pulled out of the country without making any significant investments. ‘The investment boom thus only started in 2004, after the world copper price explosion started’ (Fraser & Lungu, 2007:20). Thus the commodity price boom, rather than privatisation itself, has been the major incentive to increased investment and production.

The world copper price explosion started in 2004. In the intervening period, the average copper price on the London Metal Exchange was between $1,558 per tonne and $1,815. By 2006, this price had doubled to $3,684 per tonne. The price of copper per tonne mid 2008 was well over $8,000. Profits in the industry have also risen. First Quantum’s net earnings exploded from $4.6 million in 2003 to $152.8 million in 2005 (First Quantum Annual Report, 2005). Similarly, Konkola Copper Mines operating profit increased from $52.7 million in the year to 2005 to $206.3 million in 2006 (Vedanta Resources Plc Annual Report, 2006). The questions that arise from the commodity price boom are whether the new situation is also as good in development terms and whether the Zambian government has been able to collect enough revenue from the copper price explosion to enable it to improve social provision and infrastructure. I previously noted in a study with Alistair Fraser (2007) that the Zambian government has incurred losses in tax revenues through the subsidies given to the private mining companies. It has also been reported that Zambia has had the lowest mining taxes compared with other mineral-rich countries in Africa and the whole world. For example, where Chile earned a total of $8 billion from royalties in the 2005/2006 financial year, Zambia only earned $10 million (K35 billion) (Chirwa, 2008).

The Current Debate

From this discussion, it is clear that concessions provided by the government in the development agreements partly reflect the fact that the principal aim of privatisation was establishing an attractive investment environment to bring in new investment. This was prioritised over ensuring that new investors accepted responsibilities to share in the wealth that would flow from their operations. The concessions also result from the fact that Zambian negotiators found themselves in a weak position in the privatisation discussions. The government sold the mines when the price of copper was low and the company incurring year-on-year losses. This made it a buyer’s market, and the assets given away cheaply with few strings attached. Second, the World Bank pushed the government to sell the assets quickly. Potential purchasers knew this, and although the state did delay for several years, companies did not need to bargain in fear that the government might refuse altogether. Third, although the government stated that one of its objectives for the privatisation was that it should be a transparent process consistent with good order in the industry, the process was extremely secretive. There was no consultation with stakeholders or public discussion of the terms of the agreements. This weakened checks on the state negotiators, and allowed the companies to brush away any concerns the state might express about public perception of or resistance to the deals.

Whatever the weaknesses of negotiators, there is no excuse for multinational investors to blackmail one of the world’s poorest countries to provide special concessions from its national laws. Many of these companies have signed up to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines on
investment which are designed to promote good corporate citizenship. These state clearly that, ‘Enterprises should refrain from seeking or accepting exemptions not contemplated in the statutory or regulatory framework related to environmental, health, safety, labour, taxation, financial incentives or other issues’ (Lungu & Mulenga, 2005:47). However, the Chamber of Mines of Zambia is quite brazen about the companies’ lobbying effort. They have stated that:

*The investment climate that prevailed in the country at the time was not attractive to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and since by necessity mining operations are long-term the new investors demanded, as a matter of prudence, for special conditions in the purchase conditions* (Chamber of Mines, 2005:12).

The economic conditions worldwide have however changed. The price of copper has risen dramatically. It has enabled civil society and the opposition political parties in Zambia to mount pressure on the government to renegotiate the development agreements. Some of the contentious issues in the development agreements are the clauses that relate to taxation and the stability periods. Surprisingly, even the World Bank is in support of the Zambian government’s efforts in this direction. But it is not very clear what the Bank wants Zambia to achieve in this process. Is it that the Bank has now seen an opportunity to wean the country off its support, knowing very well that continued support to the country means providing subsidies to the private mining companies or is the Bank now convinced that the country has a credible development agenda that can be supported with resources gained from renegotiation? Whatever the case, the government at some time was in the process of constituting a team to carry out the renegotiation.

However, before this team could start the negotiations the government announced that instead of wasting time negotiating, they were simply going to change legislation that governs the operations of the development agreements: the Mines and Minerals Act of 1995 and the various statutes that govern different types of taxes. In the budget speech for the year 2008, the Minister of Finance, Ngande Magandu, indicated that he was going to propose to parliament changes to the mining fiscal and regulatory regime. He stated that the development agreements in their current form were lopsided and that it was necessary to bring about an equitable distribution of the mineral wealth between the government and the mining companies.

Why has the government hurriedly changed its perception of the mining companies when it has always defended the interests of foreign private mining firms? The underlying explanation is that the government is now in a hurry to deal with its unpopularity on the Copperbelt, Lusaka and most urban centres. It should be recalled that in the November 2006 elections, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) lost all the urban seats on the Copperbelt and Lusaka. The MMD has also failed to unseat the opposition in all the by-elections so far held on the Copperbelt, especially Michael Sata’s Patriotic Front. The Patriotic Front has campaigned on grounds of increasing mineral taxes and reducing personal taxes for the mine workers. Through these promises, they have won the support of most urban workers who consider the MMD as having sold out the country to multinational corporations and is responsible for their misery. In order to change the public perception, the government proposed a change in the fiscal regime by increasing the non-taxable threshold for personal taxes and changing the fiscal regime affecting the mining industry in the 2008 budget in the hope of improving its tainted image. The proposed fiscal regime for the mines includes:
• Increasing the corporate tax from the current 25 per cent to 30 per cent;
• Increasing the mineral royalty tax from the current 0.6 per cent to 3 per cent;
• Introducing a withholding tax on interest, royalties, management fees and payments to affiliates or sub-contractors in the mining sector at 15 per cent;
• Introducing a variable profit tax of up to 15 per cent on taxable income which is above 8 per cent of gross income;
• Introducing a windfall tax to be triggered at different price levels for different base metals. For copper, the windfall tax will be 25 per cent when the copper price is between $2.50 to $3.00 per pound or $2,500 to $3,000 per tonne; 50 per cent when the price is between $3.00 and $3.50 and 75 per cent when the price exceeds $3.50;
• Reducing capital allowances from 100 per cent currently to 25 per cent. Government also proposed to ring fence capital expenditures for new projects. These will only become deductible when the projects start production;
• The reference price on which these taxes will be based will be the price tenable at the London Metal exchange, Metal Bulletin or any other metal exchange market recognised by the Commissioner General of taxes.

These measures according to the Minister of Finance are expected to bring in additional revenues of $415 million in 2008. The issue at hand is that it is no longer morally right for the companies to pay low taxes when the situation has changed for the better.

The mining companies, on the other hand, have resisted the government proposals arguing that the measures will make mining financially unsustainable. Through the Chamber of Mines, they counter proposed that while they where agreeable to the royalty rate being raised to 3 per cent it must be graduated from 1 to 3 per cent. How this was going to be applied has not been explained. The mining companies also objected to the 25 per cent windfall tax in preference for 12.5 per cent. They also made it very clear to the parliamentary committee on estimates and revenue that they would only accept the introduction a windfall and a variable tax and not both. They further objected to the reduced capital allowance in preference for the status quo. This they said would maintain the viability of mining investments and also maintain the ability of the companies to fund further investments. While this may be true, it is important to note that the mining companies in Zambia do not want to take risks. By insisting that the capital allowance remains at 100 per cent they are simply confirming the short term perception they have of their investment despite arguing that mining is a long term investment. They want to recoup their investment in the shortest time possible.

One very important issue to note in the debate is also that the proposals and counter proposals are now being made directly to the parliamentary committee as opposed to the government renegotiating team. It appears that as a matter of strategy, the government is renegotiating with the copper mining companies through the parliamentary committee as opposed to the special team. While the Chamber of Mines maintains that they need to sit and renegotiate, by making counter proposals to the parliamentary committee, they are in actual fact negotiating. The Chamber of mines, have always maintained that the development agreements are legal contracts
and that the Zambian government can do nothing to alter them until the stability periods expire. However, by making counter proposals to the parliamentary committee they seem to have realised that the Zambian parliament has the right to legislate and that this right cannot be alienated from parliament by a contract. Thus the government has chosen the path of law reform over renegotiation. The amendments to the various laws have now been passed into law and came into effect on 1 April 2008 when the government expects the mining companies to start paying the various taxes. There is however a possibility that some mining companies may take the government to court to challenge the changes even though this position has been weakened by Konkola Copper Mines who have publicly stated that they will comply with the new tax regime.

As the government starts collecting the revenues projected, new concerns are emerging for civil society: the first concern is the requirement for good governance and transparency in the use of the resources gained from law reform. This concern stems from the fact that even though the government has been planning to collect revenues on the basis of the new tax regime, the expected revenues are not reflected in the 2008 budget. Thus the public does not know what the government plans to spend the extra revenue on. It is now being suggested that the government should actually sign up with the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI). That, it is thought, could compel government to publish what it receives from the mining companies in terms of taxes and also to compel the mining companies to publish what they pay to the government. If this happened, civil society will be able to monitor government expenditure of the new revenue which may eventually reduce the levels of inappropriate expenditures and corruption. The second concern surrounds the need for the country to embark on a long term development agenda that should lead the country to sustained growth and development. This perspective requires Zambia to rekindle the diversification debate. This has been a long standing government policy initiative that has yielded limited results and still remains an important policy option for the Zambian government.

Zambia can also usefully learn from its previous attempts at diversification. In 1965, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) declared independence unilaterally (UDI) from Britain. This brought to Zambia a sense of urgency to develop its local manufacturing industry and reduce import dependency on manufactures from Rhodesia. At the same time, and following Kaunda’s humanist ideals, the government promulgated reforms in both the manufacturing and mining industries. The Mulungushi reforms of 1968 increased government participation in industry while the 1969 Matero reforms initiated government into the mining sector by taking over 51 per cent of shares from the mining companies. In the manufacturing sector, the government established the Industrial Development Corporation (INDECO) which utilised the revenues from copper to establish new industries. The industries established however, where dependent on imported raw materials and so most would not survive the foreign exchange shortage that followed. The enterprises established were also inward looking, trying to satisfy local demand guided by the import substitution strategy. The interaction of low copper prices in the 1970s and the 1980s and the rising oil prices created a foreign exchange problem for the country which affected the development of these industries. This situation compelled the government to engage in programmes aimed at diversifying the economy to agriculture. Limited results have been achieved from diversification even though the country’s export earnings from non-traditional exports (vegetables, sugar, tobacco, cotton and flowers) have increased over time. The increase, however, is not sufficient
to replace copper’s export earnings. The attempt at diversification although limited in scope was done through the establishment of state enterprises in the various sectors of the economy. The new wave must be spearheaded by the private sector in line with the government’s neo-liberal approach and market orientation. To involve the private sector however, requires devising an incentive structure that will attract entrepreneurship in other sectors, other than mining. The incentive structure should be supported with the revenues collected from the new tax regime. Diversification will ensure that even when the gains from copper stop flowing, there will still be revenues generated by other sectors of the economy. Diversification will also widen the employment opportunities. These concerns are likely to engage civil society for sometime to come.

Conclusions

This article has discussed the historical development of the mining sector in Zambia. Mirroring the country’s political development, the mining industry has gone through three major phases. Initially they were in private hands under two major companies: the Anglo American Corporation (AAC) and the Roan Selection Trust (RST). The copper mines were nationalised in 1969 following the tenets of Zambian humanism. During this period copper mining provided revenues which in turn were utilised for infrastructure development and social provisions as well as supporting the country’s industrialisation strategy of import substitution (ISS). The setting up of industries was done through the Industrial Development Corporation (INDECO). Because of a lack of investment in the mines and the low price of copper on the international metal markets, the copper mines started facing serious problems such that by the time of privatisation they were subsidised through government borrowing. With many non-performing industries on its hands, the Zambian government was forced through the World Bank and IMF conditionality to privatise. The privatisation of the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) was facilitated by changing the Mine and Minerals Act.

One of the principal changes in the Mines and Minerals Act (1995) was the permission of the government to enter into ‘Development Agreements’ with specific companies. Under these agreements, the government could also extend more incentives than the Act granted. These documents established the terms under which the mines were sold and the rights and responsibilities of the Zambian state and the new mining companies. The original development agreements were negotiated between 1997 and 2000. As pointed out, the development agreements signed between the Zambian government and the various mining companies were lopsided. Civil society and the opposition political parties have now spearheaded the reform debate. In addition, the government has also realised that in order to improve its tainted image of a ‘comprador state’ on the Copperbelt and most of Zambia’s urban centres, it needs to change the law in order for it to have revenues to provide the various public projects. The choice for the government has either been to renegotiate the agreements or to take the route of unilateral law reform preferring the latter. The laws are now in place to collect the appropriate revenues from the copper mines.

The experience of Zambia is also a lesson for other mineral rich countries to enter into flexible contracts that permit changes when circumstances in which contracts are signed change. Although it has been argued that government failure to sign flexible contracts were dictated by the economic and political circumstances of the
time, it is also true that good negotiators will always include a clause in any contract that permits revision should circumstances change. The major outcome of privatisation of the copper mines in Zambia has been a considerable loss of welfare for the communities as the new mining companies have followed to the letter the terms of the development agreements. Now that the law has been reformed the revenue collection from the copper mines is expected to increase. In fact for the year 2008, it is expected that the government will earn an additional $415 million in revenue from the copper mines. With the revenues from copper increasing, the country requires a well defined development agenda that can help manage negative impacts should the copper price bubble burst. In the short term, the government has to avoid the overvaluation of the local currency resulting from excessive injection of foreign currency earned from copper (the ‘Dutch disease’). This will make the countries agricultural and manufactured exports dearer and so inhibit the growth of these sectors. In the longer term however, one of the policy options still available to the government is diversification of the economy to other sectors other than mining. This policy option however needs to be recreated to accommodate the private sector since government no longer participates directly in production. It will involve improving infrastructure to accommodate the growth of other sectors and also establish an incentive structure attractive to both local and foreign investors in sectors other than mining.

John Lungu, Copperbelt University, Kitwe, Zambia; e-mail: lunguj@cbu.ac.zm or mwanzajml@yahoo.co.uk

Bibliography


Campbell-White, Oliver & Anita Bhatia (1998), Privatisation in Africa, IBRD, Washington, DC.


Fraser, Alistair & John Lungu (2007), ‘For whom the windfalls? winners and losers in the privatisation of Zambia’s copper mines’, Catholic Centre for Justice Development and Peace (CCJDP) and Civil Society Trade Networ (CSTNZ), Lusaka.


MUZ/NFCA (2005), Minutes of the Eighth Negotiation Meeting for 2004 to 2005 Collective Agreement, 11 February.


Enter the Dragon? Chinese Oil Companies & Resistance in the Niger Delta

Cyril I. Obi

This article explores the ramifications of the entry of Chinese state oil companies into the volatile Niger Delta for the politics of local resistance in the region – until recently, virtually the preserve of Western oil multinationals and smaller Independents. The entry of Chinese oil companies in the context of a ‘new’ scramble for Africa’s resources, and as a response to strategic moves by the Nigerian petro-state and ruling elite to increase oil revenues, and diversify its near-total dependence on Western actors, oil technology, markets and conditionalities, has drawn a quick response from the local communities in the Niger Delta. On 29 April 2006, an Ijaw youth militia, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), exploded a car bomb in the city of Warri, warning the Chinese oil companies to stay away from the Niger Delta, and further threatening that they would be treated as ‘thieves’ and attacked. Since then, there have been reports of the kidnapping and subsequent release of some Chinese oil workers in the region.

What is the potential impact of the entry of Chinese oil capital on the fragile oil environment and the human rights situation in this volatile oil-rich region? Does the existing evidence suggest a fundamental difference in local responses to Chinese and Western oil capital in the Niger Delta? What explanations can be advanced for the local response to the entry of Chinese oil companies in the Niger Delta? The paper also analyzes the likely response of the Chinese oil companies to the perceived threat(s) that local resistance in the Niger Delta could pose to their extractive, profit and energy security interests, given their antecedents in other African new oil states, particularly Sudan, where Chinese companies or Chinese oil workers were targeted by rebels, and were deeply involved with the state and dominant elite in mining oil and repressing local resistance. This assumes further significance in the securitization of the Niger Delta’s oil within the context of a post-9/11 US-led (militarised) energy security paradigm that has placed the region in the context of an energy-rich Gulf of Guinea, which is central to Western global strategic interests. While demonstrating that a clear anti-Chinese oil position does not as yet exist in the Niger Delta, the article critically examines the prospects for the future of the forces and trajectories of local resistance in the Niger Delta.
Introduction

On 29 April 2006, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) detonated a car bomb close to the Warri oil refinery in the western part of the volatile oil-rich Niger Delta. The explosion coincided with the visit of the Chinese President Hu Jintao to Nigeria, and the granting of four oil drilling licences valued at $4 billion to Chinese oil companies and appeared to send a clear message to the latest entrant into the globalised plunder of the Niger Delta’s oil. In a statement sent by email to media organisations around the world, MEND noted:

‘We wish to warn the Chinese government and its oil companies to steer well clear of the Niger Delta’ [and added for chilling effect that], ‘The Chinese government by investing in stolen crude places its citizens in our line of fire’ (BBC News, 2006; China Daily, 2006).

This event and the subsequent abduction of nine Chinese National Petroleum Company workers (on contract, conducting seismic work for Nigerian Agip Oil Corporation – a subsidiary of Italian ENI), at Sagbama, Bayelsa state1 by an unidentified armed group (Olaniyi, 2007a; China View, 2007), raised concerns about the implications of these attacks for the politics of local resistance in the Niger Delta. That resistance, since the 1990s, involved growing opposition to the predatory activities of the Western Oil multinationals: Shell, Chevron Texaco, Exxon Mobil, Total and Agip-ENI, working in partnership with the Nigerian state to exploit and pollute the oil-rich, but impoverished region. This article explores the ramifications of the entry of Chinese oil companies: Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Chinese National Offshore Corporation (CNOOC) and Sinopec in the context of a ‘new’ scramble for Africa’s resources and for the politics of local resistance in the Niger Delta. This location has long been regarded as the exclusive preserve of Western oil multinationals after Shell began operations there over half a century ago.

The entry of Chinese oil companies into the Niger Delta is driven by China’s quest to diversify its dependence on oil from the Middle East. It is also driven by the profit from the lucrative international oil trade, an increased influence in Nigeria and attempts to provide stable oil supplies to its rapidly industrialising economy. China has become the world’s second largest importer of crude oil (for 30 per cent of its energy needs) after the United States. On the part of the Nigerian faction of the transnational capitalist elite and President Obasanjo’s government, the invitation to the Chinese was part of an effort to broaden the global base of oil accumulation in the Niger Delta. It also wanted to increase oil revenues and leverage its bargaining power over the various western oil companies and foreign state oil corporations that dominate the Nigerian oil industry, and are struggling for increased access to the strategic oil resources of the Niger Delta region.

It is therefore important to raise critical questions about why the entry of the Chinese into the ‘oil scramble’ has drawn a quick response from certain forces in the Niger Delta.

• How should the MEND explosions of April 2006 and the abduction of Chinese oil workers in 2007 be interpreted? Is it a sign of things to come for Chinese oil capital or a continuation of resistance against all foreign oil companies – regardless of their nationality or the faction of transnational capital that they represent?
What is the potential impact of the entry of Chinese oil capital on the volatile oil-rich region given its rather weak record on human rights and social responsibility in other African oil or mineral rich locales? Protests have occurred in Zambia against the poor working and safety conditions in Chinese-owned copper mines (Shacinda, 2006; Lusaka Times, 2008; Asia News, 2008), and Sudan where Chinese oil companies are ‘in bed’ with the Sudanese state (Large, 2007:51-76; Patey, 2007:997-1016), and have reportedly backed state repression of local resistance and armed conflict in oil rich areas?

What are the prospects in the new phase of local resistance in the Niger Delta since 2005, marked by a transition to insurgent opposition, in an era where globalised oil has become the metaphor for the energy security of the world’s powers to be pursued by all means – fair and foul?

This article is organised into four parts. The introduction sets out its parameters of the issues related to resistance to oil globalisation in the Niger Delta. I then explore the role of the globalisation-resistance dialectic, particularly as it relates to the transnationalised relations of oil production, accumulation and distribution, and the role of the Nigerian state and petro-elite. The third section provides an analysis of the current form(s) of civic action and local resistance, focusing mainly on the politics and strategies of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which has recently emerged as the combative face of local resistance in the Niger Delta. Finally I explore the prospects for the future.

**Between Globalisation & Local Resistance in the Niger Delta**

Globalisation is a multifaceted but contested concept (Obi, 2007:95). However it is important to note that its integrative and transformative processes on a worldwide scale are widely acknowledged (Mittleman & Chin, 2005). Yet, within such transformation and integration there are embedded inequalities and injustices built into relations of dispossession and accumulation, domination and exploitation, wealth and poverty and widening gaps at the local, national, regional and global levels. It is also important to note that such inequities also spawn dialectic – counter hegemonic discourses and resistance movements by people(s) ‘whose modes of existence are threatened by globalisation’ (Mittleman & Chin, 2005:17).

Resistance is a dialectic response to the universalising and interventionist logic of capitalist globalisation. It is hinged upon the challenge to hegemonic global discourses based upon neo-liberal reforms: political and economic, and the inequities and predations linked to global accumulation and dispossession by globally integrated economic actors. It can be also located within ‘Antonio Gramsci’s concept of counter-hegemony, Karl Polanyi’s notion of counter-movements and James Scott’s idea of infrapolitics’ (Mittleman and Chin, 2005:17-27). These approaches focus on the class, everyday and individual forms of resistance to a dominant structure or locus of social power. Within the context of this paper, the approach will be eclectic and historical, drawing upon the experience(s) of local resistance as a social response to the adverse impact of oil globalisation on the Niger Delta. However, it is noted that Gramsci’s argument on the ‘ambiguity of resistance’ (Mittleman & Chin, 2005:17-27) is also relevant given the complexities and fluid dynamics of resistance in the Niger Delta. In this regard, I acknowledge that local resistance is complex, ambiguous and even contradictory, reflecting various strands and tendencies engaged in the push and pull between and within local forces, elites and the Nigerian petro-state.
Local resistance in the context of the Niger Delta refers to ‘a collective action directed at blocking further alienation, expropriation and environmental degradation. It represents a mass project of restitution and self-determination’ arising from the exploitation of the region’s oil by MNOCS backed by the Nigerian state (Obi, 2001, 2005b: 318). Recently the politics of local resistance has been couched in the rhetoric of ‘resource control’: the demand for local autonomy (within a federal state) and control of the natural resources of the Niger Delta by the indigenes of the region.

This does not mean the struggle for ‘resource control’ is exclusively a project of ‘revolutionary pressures from below’. The Niger Delta elite for example, a faction of the dominant national bloc also appropriated the rhetoric of popular pressure and has used it to demobilise local resistance. That has been done by co-opting youth leaders into its political agenda and reinforcing its waning legitimacy within the Niger Delta. That has taken place while leveraging its bargaining power vis-à-vis other factions of the national ruling class for a larger share of the ‘oil pie’. Indeed for some of the militant forces engaged in the on-going struggles, local resistance is no more than an opportunity for them to use violence as a modality of survival and enrichment by navigating between the spaces occupied by competing local elite interests, local opposition and popular/communal civic organisations, the MNOCS and the Nigerian state. Thus, local resistance in the Niger Delta could be ambiguous, contradictory and progressive, depending on existing exigencies and balance of forces.

It is therefore hardly surprising that local resistance found expression in Nigeria’s oil enclave. This was also a region of long standing agitation for ethnic minority rights that culminated in an abortive attempt at secession in 1966. Accounting for over 90 per cent of the oil produced in Nigeria and host to the oil super majors, massive oil fields, technological and administrative infrastructure of the oil industry, the Niger Delta is a site of global oil production, and resistance. In the 1990s the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) representing the Ogoni, one of the smallest ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta, blazed the trail of non-violent local resistance by presenting a Bill of Rights to the Nigerian government and waging an effective international campaign against Shell (Saro Wiwa, 1995; Obi, 2005b:318-327).

In spite of the execution of its leaders by the military government in November 1995 and the militarisation of the region, the Ogoni (MOSOP’s) example of resistance, was followed by the largest ethnic minority group in the Niger Delta, the Ijaw. Unlike the Ogoni who are have a small population, Ukiwo notes, ‘the Ijaw are arguably Nigeria’s fourth largest ethnic group and occupy the coastal fringes of vast sections of Southern Nigeria’ (2007:591). The Ijaw are also spread across the coastal states. Ijaw youth organisations such as the Chikoko Movement (CM) and the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) demanded resource control in the Kaima Declaration in December 1998. Nigeria’s return to democratic rule in 1999 did little to alter the inequitable social relations in the Niger Delta. Rather, the crisis in the region deepened as the state continued to repress protests against oil companies, contributing to the descent into violent resistance. This was both a response to the intensified exploitation of the region as well as the militarisation of its politics by the state, oil multinationals and the political elite (Human Rights Watch, 2005; Obi, 2006b; 2007:93-106). The contemporary militants are at some levels embedded in the discourses of the popular classes of the Niger Delta as a liberation movement, but at other times they sometimes collaborate with local elite factions. They also target an international
audience – sending emails and photographs of abducted expatriate oil workers to international and local media, and giving interviews to select print and television journalists (Junger, 2007; Ekwuruke, 2006; Shaxson, 2007). Since 2006, the targets for attacks have included the Nigerian state, military operatives in the region, oil multinationals, oil installations/pipelines, oil service operators and foreigners working for MNOCs, and in the context of this paper, Chinese oil corporations.

Under former President Obasanjo’s administration (1999-2007), the foreign investments in the oil, mining and wholesale trade sectors of the Nigerian economy were intensified. In relation to the Niger Delta, this took the form of the expansion of oil operations in the region which was further boosted by the arrival of ‘new’ oil corporations in the quest for oil. This contributed to the increased presence of government military troops in the region and the repression of local communities opposed to, or protesting against, the continued exploitation and despoliation of their lands by oil companies and neglect by the federal and state governments. The former president was often quick to dismiss the militants in the Niger Delta. He declared they were ‘criminals, rascals and rogue elements’, conspiring against the nation’s economic interests – to be crushed at all cost (Chiedozie, 2006, 2007; Onuorah, Etim & Ebiri, 2007). Yet, there were contradictions in the policy towards militants, including a mix of appeasement through pay-offs and offers of oil contracts to militant-related companies. There was also force with the establishment of a military Joint Task Force (JTF) to crush the militants. Also of note, was the involvement of local state officials in racketeering with state resources earmarked for buying off pliant militants or violent elements. On the whole, the policy has been more of the use of the coercive apparatus of the state to repress any opposition to transnational oil-based accumulation.

China & the ‘New’ Scramble for Oil in Nigeria’s Niger Delta

China’s rapid economic penetration of Nigeria is best understood in terms of its historical and growing trade, energy, aid and strategic interests in Africa (Wenping, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Alden, 2007; Large, 2008:45-61). As a rising global power, Chinese leaders and policymakers are of the view that a critical part of the country’s energy security lies in increasing its access to stable oil supplies around the world, including Africa. As the Chinese ambassador to South Africa, Liu Guijin put it,

*China is diversifying to secure its supply, and now imports energy from countries in Africa such as Angola, Nigeria and Sudan (IRIN News, 2006a).*

Chinese state oil companies have in the last decade entered into the highly competitive African oil sector, long the exclusive preserve of western oil multinationals, state corporations and independents. Its strategies for winning oil in Africa include: investing in countries where western companies have lost ground, or have been forced to withdraw as a result of the policies of their home governments towards host-states, as in the case of Sudan (Patey, 2007:997-1016) where the exit of western oil companies paved the way for the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) to buy (40 per cent) into the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPC). The GNPC commenced oil exports in 1999 and is the largest oil company in the country. Sudan (Africa’s third largest oil producer) exports between 50-60% of its oil and accounts for an estimated 7 per cent of China’s oil imports. On the whole, it is reported that China ‘presently imports 30 per cent of its oil from Africa, compared to 47 per cent from the Middle East’ (Chen, 2006).
With regard to oil investments in Nigeria, Taylor (2007: 636) points out that in late 2004, China’s Sinopec signed two agreements: with Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to develop five exploration wells, and another with the Nigerian Petroleum Development Corporation (NPDC) and the subsidiary of Italian oil company, the Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC-Eni) to develop the Okono and Okpoho oil fields. Mbachu (2006:79) also notes that in the same year, PetroChina signed an agreement with the NNPC for the daily supply of 30,000 barrels of oil to China for five years.

However, China’s ‘big break’ came, when the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) acquired ‘a 45 per cent stake in a Nigerian oil-for-gas field for US$2.27 billion and also purchased 35 per cent of an oil exploration licence in the Niger Delta for US$60 million’ in April 2006 (IRIN News, 2006a). The amount paid for the Akpo deepwater oil field included the ‘financing of NNPC’s 50 per cent equity stake in OPL 246 (Akpo oil-for-gas field) as well as South Atlantic Petroleum’s 10 per cent equity in the block’ (Oduniyi & Ezigbo, 2006; Alexander’s Gas and Oil Connections, 2006). This was after some initial controversy following CNOOC’s announcement of its acquisition of the Akpo or OML 130, an offshore oil field covering some 500 square miles in January 2006, following a deal with South Atlantic Petroleum Limited. However, SAPETRO’s ownership of OML 130 was revoked by the NNPC shortly after the deal, leading the former to head for the courts. SAPETRO’s action was fuelled by the fact that its owner, Nigeria’s former Defence Minister, retired Army General Theophilus Danjuma felt that the company’s oil license was revoked for political reasons. The CNOOC acquisition in Nigeria in 2006 was its largest in the world and guaranteed the company 70 per cent of the profits from OPL 246, while the NNPC would take 30 per cent of the profits and 80 per cent of the costs. Chinese oil companies also benefited from Nigeria’s sale of four oil blocks (two in the Chad Basin and two in the Niger Delta) to the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) in April 2006 following a visit to Nigeria by China’s President Hu Jintao.

The foregoing suggests that China is a catalyst in the ‘new scramble’ for Niger Delta’s oil. Reports in some Western media that Nigeria had turned to China for arms with which to fight Niger Delta militia after Washington had turned down an earlier request had sent alarm bells ringing in western capitals (Roughneen, 2006). Such fears were heightened by news that Nigeria had sealed a deal with China’s National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation to buy 12 Fighter jets (F-7NI) and 3 Trainer jets (FT-7NI) and ‘associated equipment’ valued at $251 million (The China Monitor, June 2007; Azaiki, 2006; Defense Industry Daily, 2005). Although some have argued that China is merely following the steps of Western countries that have plundered Africa’s resources over the centuries (a new imperialism), others claim that China’s policies in Africa provide support (money and arms) for dictatorial and corrupt regimes in complete disregard of the norms of good governance, respect for human rights and environmental standards (Large, 2007:52-57).

There is however, another school of thought. This argues that the Chinese threat to Western oil interests in Africa is overstated (Downs, 2007: 42-68). A further view is that Nigeria stands to gain from the new opportunities and increased revenues that China’s entry and ‘no-strings-attached’ development aid portend. However, it is clear that China is far behind long-established Western oil corporations that jointly account for most of the oil produced from the Niger Delta. The same holds true in
terms of the size of oil investments, and access to oil from the Niger Delta oil fields. Western interests in the Niger Delta’s oil have been framed both within profit calculations, and the broad post-9/11 US-led global energy security agenda for the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea (Obi, 2005a:38-41; Obi, 2006a:87-101). That is writ large in partnership programmes such as the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSTI), the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), the US-supported eight nation Gulf of Guinea Guard Force (GGGF), and the Africa Command (AFRICOM), expected to come on stream later this year, thus underscoring the militarisation/securitisation of (Africa’s) oil by the transnational Western alliance keen on the optimal exploitation and uninterrupted flow of oil and gas (Klare & Volman, 2004:226-231; Klare & Volman, 2006:297-309).

Local Resistance in the Niger Delta: MEND

It must be clear that the Nigerian government cannot protect your workers or assets. Leave our land while you can or die in it. Our aim is to totally destroy the capacity of the Nigerian government to export oil (part of MEND’s message to oil multinationals in the Niger Delta, statement cited by Howden, 2006).

MEND took Nigeria and the world by surprise when it attacked the EA oilfield off the coast of the Niger Delta on 11 January 2006 abducting four oil workers who were held for nineteen days. Four days later on 15 January, it struck again. It attacked the Benisede oil flow station, reportedly killing fourteen soldiers and two civilians (Howden, 2006). As a result of the attack, Shell was forced to shut-in an estimated 115,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd), while oil exports through the Forcados oil terminal was significantly reduced. This was followed on 18 February by an attack on a Willbros (oil service company) vessel laying pipes for Shell and the abduction of nine foreign oil workers whose photographs in the company of heavily armed men clad in camouflage fatigues, balaclava and masks were flashed across the world’s leading newspapers and media networks. The attack by MEND and its associated groups, particularly the Federated Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC), was partly in retaliation for earlier attacks by helicopter gunships belonging to the Nigerian military on Okerenkoko, part of the Ijaw clan in the western Delta, in February 2006, ostensibly to put an end to ‘illegal oil bunkering activities’ – large-scale theft of oil (James, 2006). According to reports in the local media, that attack seriously damaged houses and injured people in the impoverished community. The militant onslaught also involved an attack on Shell’s flow stations, pipelines and the Forcados oil tanker export platform, leading to a significant reduction in Nigeria’s oil production from late February 2006 up to the contemporary period. A history of local resistance and the cycle of attacks by government helicopter gun ships and reprisals by Ijaw militia in the western Delta in early 2006 marked the fiery birth of MEND.

The MEND phenomenon is the culmination of decades of neglect, militarism and injustice in the Niger Delta, and the subversion of democracy in the region by local elites linked to the hegemonic federal ruling bloc, since Nigeria’s return to elected civilian rule in May 1999. One of the earliest authoritative studies of MEND notes that ‘there is no such thing as MEND’. It clarifies this by pointing out that it is ‘not an organisation in the formal sense of the word’ (Okonta, 2006:9). In addition, Okonta explains that ‘it is an idea, a general principle underlying the slew of communal, civic and youth movements that began to proliferate in the Niger Delta, and particularly in the Ijaw-speaking areas in the wake of General Babangida’s failed
adjustment policies in the late-1980’s’ (Okonta, 2006:9). This view has been corroborated by Jomo Gbomo the leader and spokesperson of MEND. In an interview with Brian Ross of ABC News he noted that:

MEND is an amalgam of all arm bearing groups in the Niger Delta fighting for the control of the oil revenue by indigenes of the Niger Delta who have had relatively no benefits from the exploitation of our mineral resources by the Nigerian government and oil companies over the last fifty years (cited in Ross, 2007).

In another interview, Jomo noted that:

we are asking for justice. We want our land, and the Nigerian government to transfer all its involvement in the oil industry to host communities which will become shareholders in these oil companies (saharareporters, 2007)

It is clear that MEND is a metaphor of a decentralised broad alliance of local resistance groups in the Niger Delta. This is a heavily armed but elusive gadfly and a growing threat to the hegemony of the Nigerian federal state, the extractive interests of oil companies and the energy security of the world’s powers. In essence, by attacking the jugular of globalised oil-based accumulation in the Niger Delta, MEND seeks to seize ‘resource control’ and power over the oil in the region. In unambiguous terms, the object of its brand of resistance is to counter the hegemony of the transnational oil alliance. It is to:

continue to nibble at the Nigerian oil export industry until we think it necessary to deal it a final crippling blow. We have caused the oil companies and Nigerian government to pay more for our oil and eventually, it will be snatched right out of their grip (saharareporters, 2007; IRIN News, 2006b).

Okonta further makes the point that ‘MEND is deeply embedded at the local level of Ijawland and owes its strength and legitimacy to four factors. It successfully tapped into a 50 year old Ijaw quest for justice and widespread grassroots support, its nature as a loose coalition of fighting forces active in all parts of the Niger Delta, its familiarity with the difficult swampy terrain of the Niger Delta, and its astute manipulation of the mass media’ (Okonta, 2006:13). However, as a foreign journalist that visited one of MEND’s camps in the Niger Delta noted, MEND’s support also spans some members of the Niger Delta Diaspora (Junger, 2007:24). They tap into the globalised on-line network of local resistance to strategise, promote the cause, transfer information, resources and establish strategic contacts for promoting the cause. It has therefore been difficult for security agencies and consultants to check the attacks of MEND or penetrate and subvert the activities of the broad organisation.

Okonta aptly notes that the use of emails, photographs and hostage taking by MEND, is designed:

to focus the attention of Western governments and the world’s media on the Niger Delta, exploiting the blaze of publicity generated by hostage-taking to press their grievances and demands (Okonta, 2006:14-15).

In a dramatic case in December 2006, MEND emailed foreign news agencies that it was about to explode car bombs in the Niger Delta, then exploded the bombs at compounds belonging to Shell, and then Agip in Port Harcourt, and then decided not to explode a third device ‘to avoid human casualties’ (ABS CBN, 2006; BBC
As a result of the attacks, Shell relocated its staff from the compound and moved them to ‘more secure areas’ (Mail and Guardian, 2006). The point however was made to the international community that MEND could announce and then strike at oil company interests in the Niger Delta.

Towards the end of 2007, the temporary truce declared by MEND before the April 2007 general elections in Nigeria, and after, when the newly elected President set up the Niger-Delta Peace and Conflict Resolution Committee (NDPCRC) broke down. Amidst all this, Western anxieties about the security of its energy interests in the Niger Delta have continued to grow on the basis of the large number of oil expatriates being ransomed, attacks by armed groups and substantial oil production losses. A frightening picture of ‘state failure’ in the Niger Delta has been assembled. Citing a confidential survey Iannacone notes, ‘the five best-trained groups have a combined fighting force of 10,000 men and access to 25,000 weapons’ (Iannacone, 2007:2).

While the intention of such a report in magnifying the ‘security threat’ in the Niger Delta is not in doubt, it brings into sharp relief the biting effect of MEND’s attacks in 2007 which targeted Shell, Agip and Chevron. Those attacks led to a shut-in of 27 per cent or 675,000 bpd out of Nigeria’s estimated daily production of 2.4 million bpd, the highest levels of loss since the crisis began. A breakdown of the figures by mid-2007 for the shuts-ins in oil fields, destroyed pipelines and platforms and affected MNO Cs as provided by Swartz (2007), were as follows in barrels per day: Forcados Terminal and EA Platform – Shell, 477,000; Olero Creek – Chevron, 70,000; Agip – 15,000; Nembe Creek – Shell, 77,000 and Ogbainbiri – Agip, 36,000.

The evidence since late 2007 suggests that the MEND alliance has witnessed some factionalisation. These splits have been fluid and complicated as the various groups and factional leaders jostle over space and influence of the political agenda of the Niger Delta resistance. Although, the ‘coalition’ showed some affinity between FNDIC (with Bello Oboko and Government Ekpemupolo playing leading roles) and MEND in the early part of 2006, by 2007, it appeared the situation had shifted. MEND’s Gbomo Jomo, claimed in an interview that ‘MEND does not have a relationship with FNDIC in Warri’, while noting that ‘all units which fought under Asari have been co-opted into our structure’ (sahareporters, 2007). This referred to the alliance between MEND and Asari Dokubo’s Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force (NDPVF), another militia, led by an erstwhile ally of the politicians linked to the ruling People’s Democratic Party in Rivers state. It is also noteworthy, that some reports have identified affinity between the factions with each of the various states of the Niger Delta, particularly Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers.

Since 2006 other leaders of MEND’s affiliate groups have reportedly included ‘General’ Brutus Ebipadei, ‘General’ Tamuno, ‘General’ Tompolo, Soboma George of the ‘Outlaws’, and Farah Ipalibo of the Niger Delta Strike Force (NDSF), among others (Wellington, 2007), including Gbomo Jomo.2 At present, the groups like the Martyrs Brigade, the Reformed Niger Delta Volunteer Force (a breakaway faction of the Asari Dokubo’s Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force) and MEND operate as the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), led by Cynthia Whyte. There are also reports that some fighters involved in MEND’s operations are freelance – guns-for-hire individuals or mercenaries (Ebiri, 2008a). However, since September 2007, the MEND has split into two broad factions over differences on how to engage with the newly elected Nigerian government led by President Yar Adua. The new government had freed Asari Dokubo and former Bayelsa state governor Diepreye...
Alamieseigha from jail and these had been two of the requests included in MEND’s original list of demands. MEND was also unsure how to respond to the arrest of a factional leader Henry Okah, on allegations of gun running in Angola (Ashby, 2008).

The scenario has remained dire after the Ijaw Youth Leaders Forum and the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC) announced their withdrawal from the peace talks with government claiming ‘they had uncovered a covert plan by the Federal Government to employ the dialogue session to bring the militants together in order to weaken their ranks and destroy them’ (Guardian, 2007). In an email sent on 17 December 2007, to media houses and activists worldwide, Gbomo Jomo noted that MEND had ‘long suspected the insincerity of the Nigerian government, and the oil majors along with their collaborators’, citing ‘a secret memo leaked from the office of the Chief of Defence Staff’ to ‘plan an attack while at the same time pretending to talk peace’. Beyond withdrawing from the talks, MEND urged all its factions to unite and ‘wage war’ to ‘cripple the oil industry in Nigeria’. This suggests that the conflict will in the short to medium term, escalate, amidst efforts by the federal interventionist military Joint Task Force (JTF) to reign in Ateke Tom, the leader of the Niger Delta Vigilantes that reportedly claimed responsibility for attacks on police stations in which 16 people were killed (Ogundele, 2008; Ebiri, 2008b).

While some individuals, including Asari Dokubo (who had fallen out with Henry Okah), and groups like the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) have indicated their readiness to work with the government, the others, linked to Henry Okah, have insisted on his unconditional release for any talks with the government. They have called for unity within MEND’s ranks to ‘fight against injustice and criminality’ (Gbomo, cited in Eguzozie, 2008). However, the deportation of Henry Okah from Angola to Nigeria, and his arraignment on a 47 count charge including treason, terrorism, conspiracy and illegal possession of fire arms before a Nigerian court in Jos, central Nigeria on 3 April 2008 (Owuamanam, 2008), implies that those groups within MEND that support him will likely continue to push the militant resistance agenda. It is not clear what the balance of forces within MEND is given the fluid and expedient dynamics within it, and the elusive nature of its collective leadership, but it is clear that the crisis in the Niger Delta will continue to fester for some time to come.

MEND & Niger Delta Local Elite: More Questions than Answers?
MEND as a movement is more of a collective metaphor of resistance with varied and various factions and tendencies which engages the state and the dominant elite, at various levels, and varying degrees of penetration, opposition and collaboration. As renowned activist and scholar of the Niger Delta, Ike Okonta noted:

>MEND is still very much a movement in gestation. There are several currents each jostling for prominence; there are radicals, moderates, hardliners, etc. Also there are individuals embedded in mainstream elite politics, but there are also a core group struggling to maintain its hold on a policy of rejection of Nigerian politics as it is presently played out (2007).

This article suggests that the ‘core group’ of MEND lies at the heart of the latest phase of the politics of local resistance in the Niger Delta. It appears that Gbomo Jomo is the public face of this group, but the people involved place a lot of premium on remaining ‘faceless’. Ukiwo (2007:607) explains this as ‘part of the strategy of the group to keep the identity of its leaders secret in order to escape arrest or avoid compromise’. 
The core group of MEND is quite critical of Nigerian politics and the political elite of the Niger Delta. Responding to a question on his view of the politicians of the Niger Delta, Gbomo Jomo, the group’s spokesperson, responded,

Politicians of the Delta are no different from politicians elsewhere in Nigeria. The rot is right at the top and has spread right down (saharareporters, 2007).

In relation to the link between the nature of the political leadership and the struggle for freedom, he also noted that, ‘Nigeria will only be free when all citizens resolve to take drastic action to rid our society of these criminals who have imposed themselves as rulers over a helpless citizenry’. Thus, by raising the illegitimacy of the leadership of the Niger Delta and Nigerian political class that has forcibly imposed itself on Nigerians largely through the manipulation of elections and military repression and denied them their citizenship rights, Gbomo provides justification for the use of force in removing the illegitimate and exploitative political leadership that in his view is responsible for the decay in society.

In the same regard, it could be argued that the radical strand of MEND appears to have lost faith in formal political structures of governance and democracy in Nigeria. In response to a question on elections in Nigeria, Gbomo, was of the view that, ‘we are apolitical in structure and will not be concerned with the fraudulent electoral process. This process will not influence our actions in the Niger Delta.’ Yet, a few months later, the organisation imposed a unilateral ceasefire in the Niger Delta during and after the 2007 Nigerian elections. However, after expressing ‘increasingly frustration with the government’s unwillingness to address the core cause of agitation in the Niger Delta, our demand for ownership and control of our resources’ (The Port Harcourt Telegraph, 2007; Orere, 2007; Ndubuisi, 2007; Oraeki, 2007) and doubts about governments sincerity, MEND called off its ceasefire in December 2007. Yet, other groups previously associated with MEND have taken a stand different from Gbomo’s.

MEND has also been critical of other armed groups in the region with links to politicians, and has distanced itself from their narrow or criminal interests (Vesperini, 2006; Ukiwo, 2007:607-608). In the clashes between ‘armed cult groups’ in Port Harcourt in August 2007 in which many people were killed, and the military deployed ground troops and helicopter gunships to disperse armed gangs, while imposing a curfew on the city, MEND was quick to condemn all sides of the conflict. It blamed the military for siding with the state governor and attacking his perceived enemies and for adopting strong-arm tactics that resulted in civilian casualties (Ogbu, 2007; Ekeinde, 2007). More fundamentally, MEND noted:

The blame rests squarely on the shoulders of the state governor, who like his predecessors, patronised gangs to ensure victory in elections (Adelusi & Ogundele, 2007).

This line of thinking has been repeated in the local media, particularly in the Niger Delta, confirming the earlier position that local politicians had co-opted, armed and sustained some militants and violent gangs in the intimidation of voters and the stealing of the vote in the 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections in the region (Oraeki, 2007; Niger Delta Civil Society Coalition, 2007; Watts, 2007:647).

MEND has devoted a lot of its energy in fostering an image of credibility about its commitment to resource control in the Niger Delta. While it provides information about the timing, location and exact targets of its attacks and the identities,
nationalities and pictures of its hostages, it has also been quick to deny attacks by other groups not linked to it, but credited to MEND. At some point, in response to what it referred to as the activities of ‘government sponsored criminals’ in Delta state, MEND threatened to direct its resources ‘to attacks on facilities in Delta state and will arm and encourage all groups to do likewise’ (Ofili, 2007). It also warned:

*Any emails emanating from accounts outside of this should be disregarded. It is unfortunate that a few fraudulent self-serving Ijaws allow themselves be used as tools for the oppression of the majority of the indigenes of the Niger Delta.*

This appears to be a rather extreme measure, but it was calculated to discourage what was seen as a state-sponsored campaign to discredit MEND. Beyond this, the opportunity was used to reiterate the ideals that MEND was fighting for and its commitment to the emancipation of the people and resources of the region.

What flows from the foregoing is that while its radical core largely controls the media or public face of MEND, the group is itself a ‘loose coalition’, which (Okonta 2007, communication with author) is made up of ‘disparate groups with diverse goals and modus operandi’. The implication of this is often that, ‘there is no way of knowing when they are acting in their own political interest or pursuing the agenda of those who recruit them for a particular project’. This goes to the heart of the ambiguities that are embedded in local resistance as a counter hegemonic movement. It is relevant to the analysis of the implications of China’s entry into the Niger Delta as a site of global oil production.

### Local Resistance & Global Energy Security: A Globalised Perspective

The Niger Delta is critical to global energy, petroleum and natural gas supplies. Thus, its place in the West’s global energy security calculations is framed within the context of the larger West African oil gulf stretching from Mauritania to Angola (and possibly Namibia) that accounts for about 15 per cent of US oil imports which is expected to grow to 25 per cent in 2020 (Lubeck, Watts & Lipschutz, 2007:3). The Niger Delta with some of the most prolific oil and gas fields in Africa is important to transnational oil accumulation as a site of extraction and production. Since 9/11, the globalisation of the Niger Delta’s oil has gone side-by-side with its ‘securitisation’, in which global hegemonic forces see the oil as a vital ‘globally-needed’ resource, whose continued ‘uninterrupted’ flow along with the safety of (transnational) oil investments and oil workers must be protected at all costs, including military means.

In a succinct analysis of US perspective to its global energy security Klare (2007:1-7), argues that the US military has been transformed

*into a global oil protection service whose primary mission is to defend America’s overseas sources of oil and natural gas, while patrolling the world’s major pipelines and supply routes.*

In relation to the crises in the Niger Delta, the US government is concerned about the threats posed to American and western interests by the local militias operating in the region (Marquardt, 2006; Obi, 2006a:94). The US deputy assistant secretary of defence informed a forum in Washington in March 2007, that the US had ‘proposed a regional maritime awareness capabilities programme for the Nigerian navy worth $16 billion’ (Fisher-Thompson, 2007). Part of the concerns of AFRICOM is the rising security and strategic premium of the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea.
There is also ample evidence that at a regional level, the countries of the West African region have bought into the US-led globalised discourse on security, with Nigeria as the arrowhead. Accordingly, eight countries – Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and an unnamed country (with US support) have formed the Gulf of Guinea Guard Force (GGGF) (Olayinka, 2007). Given that the Niger Delta holds the largest oil reserves in the region, it is clear that both the United States and its regional allies are intent on ‘securing’ it to ensure unfettered transnational oil extraction and capitalist accumulation.

Conclusion: Enter the Dragon?

Evidence from available information suggests that given that Chinese oil companies have just arrived, and have not commenced full oil production in their concessions in the Niger Delta, there is no direct hostility towards them. Responses to questions posed to scholars and activists dealing with Niger Delta issues, and fieldwork-based interviews with some residents of Sagbama community in Bayelsa state where Chinese oil workers were kidnapped in 2007, confirm these views. In response to such questions, Nimmo Bassey of the Environmental Rights Action (ERA), a rights NGO active in the oil Delta, was of the view that the attacks took place because, ‘some people were afraid of competition’, noting further, ‘there would be no special threat to the Chinese. The scenario is the same for all interests foreign to the locality’ (Bassey, 2007, communication with author). This view resonates with Okonta’s position that,

> There is no coherent and systematic hostility to China in the Delta, at least for the time being. I would read this incident as a one-off, and not to be seen as consistent with the decades-old struggle against the Nigerian state and the western oil companies in the region.

His interpretation of the April 2006 attack is that:

> some business groups who lost out in the bidding war for oil acreage conducted by the Nigerian government in 2006 recruited some of the Delta militants to harass Chinese oil interests in Nigeria (Okonta, 2007b, communication with author).

Felix Tuodolo, the founding President of the IYC and Chair of the Ijaw National Congress (INC), Europe, repeated a similar view, noting that:

> the focus is not on any particular foreign national or business interest, but on all foreign oil interests. The incident at Sagbama and the earlier statement by MEND was a mere coincidence.

He went on to posit that a faction of MEND decided to insert the word ‘Chinese’ into their statement ‘because while other multinationals were jittery about continuing operations in the Niger Delta, the Chinese were signing new oil contracts with the federal Government’ (Tuodolo, 2007, communication with author). Also, the cross section of people interviewed in Sagbama, including the Pere of Kumbowei kingdom, King Jones Sufadon Akadah, noted that the Chinese were not specifically targeted, but rather, ‘every other expatriate worker found in the region’ (Adesi, Sagbama fieldwork reports).

The militarisation of local resistance has brought the chickens home to roost for the Nigerian state and foreign oil multinationals. This is because these various strands of the resistance driven by an amalgam of anger, the quest for self-determination,
opportunism and greed have ‘spun out of control’, further complicating the social conditions for oil extraction, and fomenting a full-blown crisis that has cost the MNOCs and the Nigerian state dear. Today, most of the oil companies, particularly the on-shore oil operators find themselves between a rock and a hard place – as a direct consequence of their oil-based ‘accumulation by dispossession’ in the Delta. For the forces of local resistance the stakes have climbed higher and the struggles have become more violent and complex – with groups operating fluid dynamics and entering into ambiguous coalitions, partly driven by exigencies and riding on the deep sense of grievance in the region.

What then are the Prospects for the Future?

For the oil multinationals, it is impossible to continue with ‘business as usual’ in their relations with the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta. While some are attempting to distance themselves from the ‘old ways’ by suggesting ‘mistakes were made’, their welding to the Nigerian state by the processes of transnational accumulation has limited any real gesture towards the transformation of the exploitative power relations in the Niger Delta. But it is clear that something would have to give. In the view of Tuodolo, the founding President of the IYC, the solution lies in addressing the demands of the people as laid out in the Ogoni Bill of Rights, the Kaiama Declaration and others by the Niger Delta ethnic minorities, which emphasise self-determination and resource control, rather than strong-arm tactics and attempts to buy out local leaders and opposition by the state-oil transnational partnership (Tuodolo, communication with author, 2007). On his part, Bassey is of the view that western MNOCs ‘should not be agents of environmental despoliation and human rights abridgements’, and ‘should avoid double-standards and not be a party to the multi-level corruption endemic in the industry’.

If the Chinese oil companies strike oil in huge quantities in their oil blocs in the Niger Delta, it is likely that they would remain and be confronted with the issues arising from transnational oil production and local resistance. A lot will depend on their ability to engage with the local people, demonstrate respect and concrete sensitivity to their plight and their demands, by building trust between and with the communities. Given that China is still grappling ‘with how best to manage strategic assets located in areas of conflict, but rights to which depend on a good relationship with government’ (Africa-Asia Confidential, 2007), as in Sudan, the Niger Delta is bound to pose great challenges for the contending transnational oil interests in the Niger Delta, not least the new and yet marginal Chinese entrants.

The prospects for the future of local resistance in the Niger Delta depend on the balance of forces within the groups themselves, and the response or non-response of the Nigerian state and the transnational oil alliance to local demands. In the short run the coming of the Chinese oil ‘dragons’ will not alter the nature of transnational oil politics or the forms of local resistance. Fundamentally, in the coming days and years, the resolution of the multiple crisis should depend not on the preponderance of the use of force but on a radical democratisation of oil power and the (re)distribution of oil for the benefit of the majority of the people of the Niger Delta within the context of a transformatory democratic, equitable and developmental Nigerian nation-state project. The real challenge is how China’s oil companies will define their role(s) in the slippery and volatile politics of oil in the Niger Delta as the stakes for the control of access to the region’s finite hydrocarbon resources climb higher.
Endnotes

1. They were kidnapped on 25 January and freed on 4 February 2007.

2. This is a pseudonym for a ‘faceless’ leader who articulates the ideology, demands and agenda of the MEND through emails.

3. There is some speculation in the media that this may be Gbomo, but in spite of Henry’s incarceration, Gbomo has continued to send emails to the media.

4. It is ‘unnamed’ according to the author of the news report, Olayinka. The GGGF is different from the current request for US assistance to contain the crises in the Niger Delta by Nigeria’s Vice-President to a visiting delegation of six US Congressmen led by the Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Relations, Howard Berman; see http://www.platts.com/Oil/News/8856889.xml for report. Full Reference, see Platts Oilgram News, ‘Nigeria seeks US assistance to curb spiraling oil theft in Delta’, 4 July 2008.

5. Akpoebi Adesi, assisted by Albert German, conducted fieldwork and interviews in Sagbama between 9-16, September 2007. A total of 8 people were interviewed including opinion leaders, the traditional ruler, and members of the Sagbama Community Development Committee.

6. Akpoebi Adesi, interview with HRM King Jones Sufadon Akadah, the Pere of Kumbowei kingdom in Sagbama.

Bibliography


Adesi, Akpoebi (2007), Sagbama fieldwork reports, 9-16 September.


(2006), ‘NNPC approves CNOOC’s $2.3bn stake in block OPL 246’, Vol. 11, No. 9, 4 May; http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news


Bassey, Nnimmo (2007), Executive Director, Environmental Rights Action (ERA), a Nigerian advocacy, non-governmental organisation founded on 11 January 1993 to deal with environmental rights issues in Nigeria; communication with author, 3 September.


Daly, John (2007), ‘Questioning AFRICOM’s intentions’, ISN Security Watch ETH Zurich, 7 July; www.isn.ethz.ch


Mail and Guardian online (2006), ‘Shell relocates staff in Nigeria after bomb blast’, 21 December; www.mg.co.za


Odunyi, Mike & Onyebuchi Ezigbo (2006), ‘NNPC Approves China’s $2.3bn Stake in OPL 246’, This Day, 21 April; www.thisdayonline.com

Ogundele, Bolaji (2008), ‘I will fight to the end – Ateke’, Nigerian Tribune, 3 January; www.tribune.com.ng


Owuamanam, Jude (2008), ‘MEND leaders face 47-count charge’, The Punch (Lagos), 4 April; www.punchng.com


The Port Harcourt Telegraph (2007), News Report, 15 August; www.thephctelegraph.com


Tuodolo, Felix (2007), Founding President, Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and Chairman of the Ijaw National Congress (INC) Europe, both groups involved in the struggle for Ijaw (ethnic minority) rights and the control of oil in the Niger Delta. Communication with author, 15 October.


Oil, Sovereignty & Self-Determination:
Equatorial Guinea & Western Sahara

Alicia Campos

This article analyses the role of the sovereignty principle for the oil industry and the implication this relationship has for development in Africa. It also looks at the transnational social movements around the exploitation of natural resources, comparing Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara. The main hypothesis is that international norms of self-determination and those developed for non-autonomous people in Western Sahara, allow us to raise questions and to make demands over mineral resources in a very different way than where sovereignty is not in question, as in Equatorial Guinea.

The History of Oil

Oil history in Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara is very short; in Equatorial Guinea, major export production started in 1995, whereas in Western Sahara the industry is still in an exploratory phase. Equatorial Guinea, with 500,000 inhabitants, is considered in international statistics as the third or fourth oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, after Nigeria, Angola and Sudan, with 403,600 barrels per day in 2005 (IMF, 2006). The oil is produced totally offshore in the Gulf of Guinea by large transnational companies, mostly with American capital, like ExxonMobil, Amerada Hess and Marathon Oil. Since 2006 Chinese, Spanish or South African companies have shown a growing interest in Equatoguinean oil, but Americans are still overwhelmingly the largest investors in the country. Oil companies operate through agreements with the government of the country, which, since independence in 1968, is controlled by one family which exercises its power in a very authoritarian manner.

The dealings between oil companies and government are carried out by individuals who are very close to President Obiang Nguema, and contain secretive and informal clauses as well as the depositing of money in personal bank accounts abroad in the name of the president and of some members of his family, which also include the payments for health and education expenditure. These payments seem to be compensation for agreements that are extremely beneficial for the oil companies (Abaga, 1999; Frynas, 2004; Campos, 2004; McSherry, 2006; Shaxson, 2007).

These agreements have provided the government with new mechanisms of personal enrichment and social control in areas such as labour and security. Relevant government officials own the labour agencies through which the oil industry hire Equatoguinean workers. These agencies retain part of the salaries, and ensure that dissidents and known opposition members are excluded from this new source of work. The land which foreign companies need is also provided by members of the
governing family, who are its proprietors - usually after forced expropriation from the original occupants.

In spite of high macroeconomic growth, most of the population endure a very low quality of life, and repression, co-optation and impoverishment constitute the main instruments of power (Campos & Micó, 2006). Violence against political dissidents and against the population in general is endemic, and there have been waves of detentions and harassment, with or without trials, almost every year (Amnesty International, 2007; Nord Sud, XXI, 2007). Migrants from the neighbouring countries (mostly Cameroon) are periodically raided and expelled from the country (Asodegue). Furthermore, oil companies are paying for the services of the security company owned by Obiang’s brother, a known torturer (Global Witness, 2004; US Senate, 2004). All of this contributes to the repressive engines of the political order.

Along with repression, co-optation has also been enhanced by money coming from the oil industry with President Obiang intensifying the politics of patronage and clientelism. Pressures to collaborate with the party in government to get a job or simply avoid police harassment are more intense since the discovery of oil. As a consequence, opposition has periodically suffered a process of fragmentation and absorption by the party in power, and during the last six years only one party stood legally against the government.

Most of the oil revenues remain in few hands, all of them members of Nguema’s family. In fact, oil has narrowed the group in power, but also led to periodical internal conflicts around oil distribution. The non-distribution of revenue among the population is part of the politics of impoverishment that explains the lack of basic sanitary equipment in hospitals and drinking water in cities, as well as a very deficient education system. Along with a favourable environment for big businesses, small local producers and entrepreneurs only find obstacles to their economic activity.

International pressures that were exerted after the Cold War on the dictatorship have decayed, because American oil companies have intervened in Washington’s relations with Obiang’s government. The elections in which the president’s party always claims more than 95 per cent of the vote, generates only minimal condemnation from international organisations and donors since the mid-1990s and is not considered ‘free and fair’. This has also been the case with late Legislative and local elections in May 2008.

In Western Sahara, the existence of oil, mostly offshore, at the beginning of the 21st century added another element in the conflict between the Moroccan government and the Polisario Front for the territory, in which natural resources such as phosphates and fisheries are central to political negotiations. In 2001 the Moroccan national oil company Office National de Recherches et d’Exploitation Pétrolières (ONAREP) signed two exploration agreements with private companies: Kerr-MacGee (US) and TotalFinaElf (French) (Afrol News, 24 January 2002; WarmAfrica.com, 16 October 2001; Marzo, 9 April 2006).

The peculiarity of this situation is that Moroccan government is not internationally recognised as the legitimate government over Western Saharan territory, a former Spanish colony that, in spite of general trends, did not acquire independence as a sovereign state. In 1975 the Spanish army was replaced by the Moroccan one (and
initially the Mauritanian one too). The claim is that before European colonisation the people living in that territory were subjected to the Sultan in Rabat. The situation since then has been one of occupation, in which the civil rights of the old inhabitants have been systematically violated with part of the population living in harsh conditions as refugees in the Algerian Hamada desert. The social situation of the Western Sahara territory has become more and more complex as people coming from Morocco have settled among the population.

Moroccan control of the territory is disputed by the Saharauwi nationalist movement around the Polisario Front, which bases its claims on the international law on non-autonomous territories, as well as its role as international intermediary of the 165,000 refugee population in Algeria. The war, as well as the government and distribution of international aid in the refugee camps in Tindouf, became the main activities of the Saharauwi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), proclaimed by the Polisario soon after the beginning of the conflict.

Since the end of the armed conflict at the beginning of the 1990s, the geopolitical situation has remained the same: the Western Sahara is dominated by the Moroccan Army except for an Eastern strip controlled by Polisario; the refugee camps survive thanks to humanitarian aid. The social situation has suffered some transformations in both spaces: in the refugee camps an incipient local economy based on small trade and international cooperation is developing (Gimeno, 2008). In the disputed territory a small window of opportunity opened, following the accession of Mohamed VI to the throne in 1999 and this intensified the human rights movement. However, during the last few years periodic youth demonstrations known as the ‘Saharauwi Intifada’ have been matched by intensified police harassment.

With the signature of oil agreements, apart from the search for economic benefits, Moroccan authorities have aimed to add new powerful economic groups to its cause, and to gain the support of French and American governments in its claim to the territory (Carrión, 2005a, b). On its part, the Polisario Front has denounced the Moroccan oil policy in Western Sahara in the United Nations. And in 2002 it adopted an unprecedented initiative by signing a technical and cooperation agreement with the exploratory company Fusion Oil & Gas, of Australian and British capital, and later with British Premier Oil.

These unorthodox agreements preceded the launch of exploratory activities and the eventual concession of exploitation areas, but only after the Saharauwi people exercised their rights to self-determination. These agreements turned oil companies into new international allies for the Polisario Front. In May 2005 the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) opened a new concession round in which eight oil companies participated (the contents of these agreements have not been made public) (Marzo, 2007). In January 2008, Kamel Fadel, Polisario representative in Australia, announced while in Texas, the launch of a second round of oil allocation for April 2009 (Sahara Press Service, 23 January 2008).

Oil, along with other natural resources of the territory, are almost certainly one of the ongoing issues discussed between the Moroccan government and the Polisario Front (Manhasset negotiations), fostered by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon since June 2007.
Denunciations & Campaigns Around Oil

The concurrence of oil activities combined with a harsh social and political situation in Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara has been denounced by different actors in a number of transnational fora. However, these denunciations have been made in very different languages, as we see in the next section.

Self-determination of People's & Natural Resources

The agreements reached by the Moroccan government and foreign companies promoted the articulation of a transnational campaign against oil exploitation, linked with the solidarity movements in support of Western Sahara (Fisera, 2004). Especially effective was the campaign initiated by the Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara against the seismic studies by the Norwegian company TGS-Nopec in the disputed area. The Norwegian campaign promoted the configuration of a network of jurists and solidarity organisations against the exploitation of Western Sahara oil and natural resources in general, which eventually became the Western Sahara Resources Watch (WSRW). This coalition has been in close contact with Polisario activists.

In spite of the situation of general fear, there have also been some mobilisation even inside the territory of Western Sahara. Human rights activists and political prisoners such as Ali Salem Tamek, have publicly demanded an end to the economic activities around oil (Tamek, 8 July 2004; Middle East International, 26 May 2005; Western Sahara Online, 16 May 2006; Alexander's Gas and Oil Connection, 6 February 2006). This demand, as well as the international campaign, have found a main instrument in internet sites such as www.arso.com and www.sahara-update.info, and recently in the WSRW website www.wsrw.org.

The essential disagreement between these campaigners and Moroccan officials is around property rights of resources and the question of representation to negotiate around them. Both the Moroccan government and the Polisario Front claims these rights, justifying them in a different political entity: the Moroccan nation or the Saharawi people. What both positions share is the idea that natural resources belong to those who hold sovereignty and that only the representatives of such sovereignty have a right to negotiate. The conflict around natural resources is expressed, therefore, in the language of statism and territorial integrity.

The argument in favour of the property of Western Sahara resources by the Saharawi people seems better founded in international law than the counter argument based on the consideration of the territory as part of the Moroccan state (Arts & Leite, 2007; Mariño, 2005). The norms developed during decolonisation since the 1950s questioned whether the forced integration of old Spanish Sahara into the Moroccan state after the Spanish withdrawal in 1975 could be considered an acceptable formula of decolonisation by the United Nations (Report by UN Visiting Mission to Western Sahara, 15 October 1975, Marino, 2005:153). The resolution 1514(XV) on the ‘Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples’, along with resolution 1541(XV) established the right of colonial peoples to self-determination, interpreted as the recognition of a sovereign state for the population living in a territory delimited by colonial frontiers. The integration in or association with other states was only valid as a decolonisation process if they were approved in a referendum by the population of the territory.
In a Consultative Opinion of 1975, the International Court of Justice rejected the Moroccan interpretation according to which the precolonial juridical relationships between the old Saharaui population and the king of Morocco were the basis to integrate them in modern Morocco (Mariño, 2005). This opinion was, nevertheless, subject to divergent interpretations by the conflicting parties. Finally, the United Nations (GA Resolution 35/19, 1980) and the Organization of African Union, recognised the Polisario Front as legitimate representative of Western Sahara.

Based on this juridical framework, Western Sahara Resources Watch claims that the rights of the Saharaui people to ‘freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources’ according to Resolution 1803(XVIII) and Article 1 of International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights of 1966, is part of their self-determination principle (www.wsrw.org); that the oil found in the territory and its adjacent sea belongs, therefore, to the descendants of the inhabitants of the old Spanish colony and no government will be able to manage it before that population exercises their rights to self-determination.

A similar interpretation was expressed by the UN Under Secretary General for Legal Affairs in a report of 29 January 2002 on the oil agreements signed by Morocco, after the demands posed by the Polisario Front (UN, 2002). Hans Corell stated that according to the principle of the ‘permanent sovereignty of natural recourses’, the effective production of oil would be contrary to the norms on peoples living in non-autonomous territories if they were carried out ‘in disregard of the needs and interests of the people of that Territory’. Controversially, he considered that the initial activities of evaluation and exploration acceded in the agreements were not illegal in themselves.

The campaigns based on these arguments contributed to the withdrawal of oil companies working in Western Sahara. The first success was the retirement of TGS-Nopec from Saharaui waters in 2003, though only after delivering the results of its explorations (Riché, 2004; Marzo, 2006). TGS-Nopec in 2004 Total (old TotalFinaElf) did not renovate its contract, and Dutch seismic Fugro followed the steps of TGS-Nopec. A new agreement of technical analysis between ONAREP and Wessex Exploration provoked successful complaints by the British Western Sahara Campaign in May 2004 (Fisera, 2004; Soroeta, 2005, n. 44; campaign website www.arso.org/wessex04.htm). Finally, Kerr McGee also renounced to its interests in Western Sahara in April 2006 after losing more than $80 million due to the removal of capital by politically conscious shareholders (Morgan, 2 May 2006; Afrol News, 2 May 2006, WSRW, 28 April 2005). One of its minor partners, Pioneer Natural Resources, withdrew later (Afrol News, 5 May 2006).

In December 2006, Morocco (and its new Office National de Recherches et d’Exploitation Pétrolières, ONHYM) found a new counterpart in an Ireland-based company, Island Oil & Gas PLC, with whom to sign a new exploration agreement, this time onshore, which has already been subject to a protest action by the WSRW (Riché, 2004; Wilson, 2006; Afrol News, 14 December 2006). Kosmos Energy, a Kerr McGee minor partner, has inherited the licences in the so-called Bojador block, though it is considered too small a company to effectively operate it on its own (Afrol News, 14 December 2006).

A further success of the campaign around Western Sahara resources has been the withdrawal by the Spanish energy company Iberdrola, of a wind power project.
which had been negotiated unilaterally with the Moroccan government (Mesa, 20 July 2007; Rebelión, 27 July 2007). However, the Fish Elsewhere campaign against the UE-Morocco fisheries agreement which included Western Sahara waters did not prevent it being signed in 2007 (Sherpa, 2006; San Martín, 2006; UE, 12 March 2007; www.fishelsewhere.org).

Claims for Transparency in the Extractive Industries

In Equatorial Guinea, the agreements on the production of oil between the government and multinational companies were denounced on totally different grounds (Campos & Mico, 2006). Opposition parties such as Convergencia Para la Democracia Social (CPDS), and more recently transnational campaigns in favour of transparency in the extractive industries, have pointed out the mismanagement and the misappropriation of oil revenues by the ruling family. These corrupt practices are identified as the main reasons for the poverty of the majority of the population, in spite of dramatic economic growth.

In March 2004, London-based Global Witness published a report, ‘Time for Transparency: Coming Clean on Oil, Mining and Gas Revenues’, on the effects of oil, gas and mineral extraction in five countries, including Equatorial Guinea (Global Witness, 2003/2004; Silverstein, 2003). In Equatorial Guinea it particularly condemned the unclear line between state revenues and the governing class’s personal finances. That followed the discovery of a multi-million dollar account in the Washington, DC Riggs Bank and the dire state of the country’s accounting procedures regarding oil revenues, often referred to by the regime as ‘secrets of state’. As stated in the report:

> the questions about the government’s handling of oil revenues are far from theoretical, given that these revenues help to empower a political regime that has been characterised by reports of extreme brutality towards its own people and accusations of involvement in drug trafficking (Global Witness, 2003:59).

In July 2004, following the Global Witness report, the United States Senate Permanent Sub Committee on Investigations issued a report on the Riggs Bank, confirming that it had violated the anti-money laundering obligations by opening more than 50 accounts for senior government officials of Equatorial Guinea and their family members. The bank also provided loans and managed scholarships for the governing class and their families. The report stated that:

> Oil companies operating in Equatorial Guinea may have contributed to corrupt practices in that country by making substantial payments to, or entering into formal business ventures with, individual officials, their family members, or entities they control, with minimal public disclosure of their actions (US Senate, 2004:8).

Equatorial Guinea has also been the focus of attention by the Publish What You Pay (PWYP) coalition, comprising more than 300 NGOs, including Global Witness, Open Society, CAFOD, Oxfam, Save the Children, Transparency International and many other local ones in Africa. They call for multinational oil, mining and gas companies, and governments, to disclose their transactions. According to PWYP, a requirement for transparency about a country’s resource income and expenditure should become a standard condition for credit, development and technical support programmes in all international financial dealings with these governments. The underlying conviction is that when properly managed these revenues should serve as
a basis for poverty reduction, economic growth and development. But this is only possible if citizens of resource-rich, but poor countries, have the means to demand from their governments responsible policies on the basis of transparent information on these revenues.

These demands, although more modest than the dramatic exigency of ceasing the exploratory and extractive activities in Western Sahara, lack the international norms that support them. In fact, one of the objectives of transparency activists is precisely the creation of an international normative framework that makes the publication of economic transactions imperative in the extractive sector. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the main focus of this campaign to the present, was launched in 2002 by the British government inviting all governments, multinational companies and civil society organisations to join in a voluntary process of disclosure of payments and revenues (www.eitransparency.org). International Financial Institutions have also assumed the new language of transparency in many of their documents and programmes and the World Bank is strongly funding the EITI (see ‘Report of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)’, London Conference, 17 June 2003).

The first reaction by the Equatorial-Guinean governing class to these pressures has been a public-relations exercise to improve their international ‘image’, adopting a language of transparency in the management of the state’s resources (Jeune Afrique / L’Intelligent, 20-26 February 2005). In order to do this, it has sought IMF’s technical advice, which had suspended its agreements with the country in 1996. IMF issued a Report in April 2005, on the ‘Observance of Standards and Codes-Fiscal Transparency Module in Equatorial Guinea’, as the basis for future conversations with the government. This Report explained clearly that the Government lacks a fiscal policy framework for management of petroleum wealth, transparency in reporting and reconciliation of oil revenue flows and firm budget constraints as well as corporate governance of GEPetrol (IMF, 2005).

While the Equatorial Guinean Government has shown interest in joining the EITI and participated in the summits held in London, Oslo and Berlin in 2005, 2006 and 2007, one of the Initiative’s minimum criteria is that ‘civil society is also actively engaged as a participant in the design, monitoring and evaluation of this process and contributes towards public debate’. Yet in Equatorial Guinea, the individuals and organisations with the information and the courage to promote this campaign on the issue of oil management vis-à-vis the government are almost non-existent.

The government has done little either in fostering a public debate on the management of petroleum wealth or in allowing the activities of independent social organisations in the country. However, in 2007 backed by American companies such as Exxon-Mobile, in 2007 it approved several norms regarding transparency and appointed a ‘national co-ordinator’ for the EITI. Just before the Berlin summit in December 2007, the Government tried abruptly to organise a seminar with those companies and several local NGOs in order to be admitted as a candidate country in the EITI; the vacuity of the seminar was denounced by the PWYP coalition, but the government strategy achieved its goal (Asodegue, 9, 16, 20, 23 November and 11 December 2007).

While it is still too soon to see the real effects of the international campaigns and initiatives on the management of oil riches in Equatorial Guinea, the monitoring of these issues will continue.
Implications of Sovereignty

The comparison between Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea has shown us how there is little support within international law for a better and more democratic management of mineral resources when the sovereignty is not in question. In the case of Western Sahara, the interests of the population constitute a juridical argument for campaigns against situations similar to colonialism, up to the point of demanding (with some success) the interruption of extractive activities. Whereas in the case of Equatorial Guinea, it seems only possible to refer to more general principles, in the hope that such principles become imperative norms in the future.

Decolonisation generated a language and some juridical institutions around state sovereignty, which allow anti-colonial movements to demand the conservation of natural resources and the participation of the population in their management. Once independence has been obtained according to the principles consolidated during that historical process, the sovereignty principle becomes an instrument of empowerment of governments, whose capacity to act on behalf of the population is presumed. According to a much extended interpretation of the sovereignty principle, the abusive exploitation of resources, their appropriation for the personal benefit of state officials, or the absence of redistributive politics, became internal affairs of each state, to which the principle of non-intervention is applied.

Among the state prerogatives, the right to represent the population in the exploitation agreements around natural resources such as oil seems to be more broadly assumed and respected than the obligation to promote the effective welfare of that same population. It is true that after the World War Two, sovereignty has rarely been considered an absolute vis-à-vis human rights, and it has lately suffered limitations with the recognition of the principle of the states’ responsibility to protect their citizens, approved by the UN General Assembly Resolution R2P. However, this principle has been conceived as applicable in the context of armed conflicts and the humanitarian intervention of the 1990s and 2000s, but not to guarantee the democratic or redistributive policies of a government.

On the other hand, and despite some recent proposals and developments, corporate legal responsibilities are even less regarded by international law which has been very reluctant to consider other actors other than the state as holders of rights and obligations (ICHRP, 2002). The possibility of companies affected by human rights laws is a growing claim posed by activists and some jurists, but despite the Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights, approved by UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, in 2003, they have failed to promote a change in international law (UN, 2003; 2007a).

State sovereignty as a principle and an institution is essential to understand the way in which the oil industry works, the effect it has on the population, and the way in which power is exercised (Reno, 2000/2001); it is crucial to our case. It is not only that most national legislation backed by international law, establishes state property of resources (under the soil and the continental waters); it is well known that mining activities carried out in times of war and conflict often benefit not the state, but armed and other private groups. But oil extraction has special features that make the role of the state especially relevant. If other extractive activities, such as diamond or copper mining, can develop through craft methods and informal networks before big companies can distribute them in distant markets, oil requires...
huge capital investment from the very beginning of production. These investments can only be made by big national or private companies, or more usually a consortium of companies, whose direct and legal relation with recognised governments appears to be a permanent element in the oil industry.

This is independent of the regulatory capacity of the government over their population, or of its social legitimacy, especially when, as in the case of Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara, all the production is offshore, far from the possible disturbing consequences on land as exemplified for example in Sudan or the Niger Delta. The key issue here are the conventions that establish state property of mineral resources found inside national territory and ensuring that those within government are tasked with representing the peoples’ interest with the multinational companies. Only the government can guarantee the investments according to the norms and uses of international trade and the legality of the company’s mother country.

Oil extraction thus requires the very same institutions that are behind the emergence and maintenance of the post-colonial order. Both companies and governments take advantage of institutional sovereignty, for it allows them to participate in international markets, and provides enough external resources to politicians to maintain exclusionary and repressive forms of power.4

Therefore, the relevance of President Nguema’s family for the extractive industry in Equatorial Guinea is not based on the former’s actual and military control of offshore oilfields, which does not exist, but on their control of the government and the international conventions that establishes state property of natural resources, and the representative and legal capacity of governments to negotiate about them. And if in Western Sahara the oil industry is almost paralysed, it is precisely because the question about sovereignty and who is the legal representative of the population has not yet been established.

We can conclude that the conflict in Western Sahara developed around sovereignty and an uncompleted decolonisation, helps a political interpretation of oil exploitation by social activists (Ferguson, 1994, 2006). Even if the sole recognition of the right to self-determination does not guarantee its effective application for Saharauis people, it facilitates the Polisario Front to find numerous and sustained sponsors abroad, and to condemn the Moroccan government in multiple international fora. Conversely, in these fora the inequality and disempowerment in Equatorial Guinea are regarded more as situations of development and institutional (or governability) deficiencies, than as a consequence of illegitimate agreements between an unacceptable government and oil companies. Unlike colonialism, the highly authoritarian political order that this situation creates is not considered illegal by international law.

**Pushing the Boundaries of Sovereignty?**

The politics of oil in Western Sahara and Equatorial Guinea show the importance of the institution of sovereignty for extractive activities. It also helps explore the limits of social campaigns in contexts where sovereignty is not in question. This section tries to see how the different approaches to the distribution and the beneficiaries of natural resource extraction that we have seen, can inform each other.
On the one hand, the strategies followed by the Polisario Front and the solidarity movements around natural resources in Western Sahara could include their participation in the campaigns in favour of the transparent and fair management of those resources, such as PWYP. In this way, the struggle for the rights of the Saharui population could win a new transnational arena of expression, and at the same time would incorporate new languages, such as the one around transparency, with which a number of social actors try today to approach questions of democracy and social justice. Currently only the British Western Sahara Campaign and War on Want (UK) participate in both kind of campaigns.

All this would imply the adoption by the Saharui political elite of transparency and the fair management of resources principles in an independent or autonomous Sahara. But it could also affect the alternative agreements signed between the SADR government and the oil companies which have not yet been published. Saharui activists might consider problematic the inclusion of transparency among its demands to the Moroccan government, as it could be seen as legitimating the actual exploitation of phosphates, fisheries and possibly oil. However, activists should consider the risks that a too exclusive focus on independence may neglect other interests and values, such as the conservation of mineral and fishery resources.

On the other hand, campaigns around Western Sahara resources have much to say to activists in other parts of the world. The argument according to which natural resources should not be exploited without the consent of the population living in the territory seems to have more power in relation to people under colonial rule, to which international law recognised a well established set of rights in respect of all states.

However, the argument could be used for cases beyond the issue of colonialism per se. In fact, it is used for the category of indigenous peoples. In recent times, there has been an important development of international norms that includes the right to own and dispose of natural resources in their territories. Obviously, this option is only accessible to some populations, those who can demonstrate the normative conditions to be considered as indigenous people.

The question is, how to extend these rights over natural resources to the population with independence of their consideration or not as colonial or indigenous. Are there not normative or semi-normative texts that could accept this kind of interpretation? Resolution 1803(XVIII) of the United Nations General Assembly, approved as a complement to the right to self-determination, establishes that:

*The right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the State concerned.*

This principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources has been reiterated by other texts, like General Assembly Resolutions 1314-XIII (1958) and 2158-XXI (1966), and most importantly article 1.2 of International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights of 1966, which establish that:

*All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.*
The terms in which these texts are written distinguish between *peoples* and *states*, and conclude that as a people they are entitled to *permanent sovereignty over natural wealth*. That would mean, according to Antonio Cassese (1995), that governments would have the obligation to guarantee that the exploitation of natural resources of the territory is made for the benefit of the population. On these grounds, transnational campaigns could claim an international mechanism that would evaluate if the sovereignty over natural resources is effectively exercised in the interests of the ‘welfare of the population’. This then would permit the denunciation of the extractive industries sector that do not adhere to the principles in favour of ‘national development’ as in Resolution 1803.

These arguments fit well with the proposals in dealing with questions of poverty and inequality from the language and the perspective of *rights*. There now exists a growing demand in interpreting and developing human rights international norms so that their respect is also demanded of multinational companies (ICHRP, 2002; UN, 2003; UN, 2007a). For Pierre Sané (2005), the possibility of declaring poverty contrary to law would provide levers of effective action to all those who endure such situations, as in the case of the illegalisation of colonialism. The possibility of using article 1.2 of the International Covenants to demand a social use of natural resources would constitute one such lever. Ultimately, these arguments contribute to the questioning and decomposition of an institution, sovereignty in its external version, that constitutes a real juridical veil over situations of oppression and inequity.

*Alicia Campos* is in the Grupo de Estudios Africanos, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain. Thanks to Juan Carlos Gimeno, Fernando Mariño, Cyril Obi, Frederick Cooper and Ramon Sarró for their help and inspiration in writing this paper; e-mail: alicia.campos@uam.es

**Endnotes**

1. These companies are Europa Oil & Gas, Maghreb Exploration, Osceola Hydrocarbons, Nighthawk Energy, EnCore Oil, Comet Petroleum, Ophir Energy y Premier Oil.

2. Among the more than 20 organisations that take part in WSRW: Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara, Western Sahara Campaign-UK, Associations des Amis de la Republique Arabe Saharau or Coordinadora Estatal de Asociaciones de Amistad y Solidaridad con el Pueblo Saharau de España; letter to FUGRO President and Chief Executive http://www.arso.org/fugro300604fr.htm/ See also the WSRW contact list at http://www.wsrw.org/

3. The concept of responsibility to protect was set forth in the International Conference on Intervention and State Security, celebrated in Canada 2001. I am grateful to Itziar Ruiz-Giménez and the anonymous referee for calling my attention to the relevance of this question to my argument.

4. The idea of *extraversion of power*, as conceptualised by Jean-François Bayart (2000), and that of *gatekeeper state*, which survives as privileged intermediary between world markets or international institutions and population, proposed by Frederick Cooper (2004), can help us understand post-colonial forms of power dealt with here.

5. The main international norm is the International Labour Organization 169 Convention, and in September 2007 the UN General Assembly approved the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
Bibliography


Middle East International (2005), ‘Oil and fish’, No. 751, 26 May.


UN (2002), Security Council, Letter dated 29 January 2002 from the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, addressed to the President of the Security Council, (S/2002/161);

(2003), Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, UN Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Regard to Human Rights (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/38/Rev.2);


UN Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (2004), Money Laundering and Foreign Corruption: Enforcement and Effectiveness of the Patriot Act.


Uranium Goes Critical in Niger: Tuareg Rebellions Threaten Sahelian Conflagration

Jeremy Keenan

The article analyses the causes and implications of the ongoing Tuareg rebellions in Niger and Mali. While the larger and more widespread rebellion in Niger is generally attributed to the Niger Tuareg’s demands for a greater and more equitable share of the country’s uranium revenues, the article reveals that both rebellions, while centering on grievances associated with marginalisation, indigenous land rights and the exploitation of mineral resources, are far more complex. Other key elements are the continuing impact on the region of the global war on terror; competing imperialisms and sub-imperialisms; the associated interests of multinational mining companies; environmental threats and the interests of international drug-traffickers. The article also details the human rights abuses inflicted on the civilian populations in both Niger and Mali by the recently US-trained militaries.

Introduction

On 14 February 2008, the US State Department issued a travel alert, warning US citizens of armed conflict, kidnappings, armed robberies and the presence of land mines in Northern Mali, especially the Mali-Niger and Mali-Algeria border areas, the Kidal region, areas north of Timbuktu and the city (town) of Tin Zaouatene. It advised them to avoid travel in the area and emphasized that the US-designated terrorist organisation *Al-Qaeda in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb* (AQIM), the recently re-named Algerian *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPC), and other armed groups presented dangers to travelers. Americans planning to travel in these regions were advised to register with the Department of State or US Embassy. The Americans clearly wanted no prying eyes, for in the same week I received three separate communications from inhabitants of Tin Zaouatene. Their messages were that the Malian army, accompanied by US forces, had ransacked and looted the town, which was now empty and abandoned having driven its inhabitants into the surrounding desert. The incident was given a total media blackout, which is unusual in that this part of the Sahara has, since 2003, been the focal point of the Bush administration’s ‘second front’ in its war on terror in Africa.

Four days later, General William (Kip) Ward, Commander, US Africa Command (AFRICOM) and Theresa Whelan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, desperate to sell AFRICOM to those prepared to listen, addressed a packed conference on *AFRICOM and US-Africa Security* at the Royal United Services Institute.
(RUSI) in London. The General and Ms Whelan denied the presence of US forces in northern Mali. The following week, General Ward was in Bamako reassuring the Malian government and the international media that the US was committed to helping Mali maintain the security of its northern regions.

Two days later, a month or so after the Malian-US sweep through Tin Zaouatene, a rebel force of Malian Tuaregs, led by Ibrahim ag Bahanga, undertook a devastating attack on a Mali military convoy 11 miles south of Tin Zaouatene. That was followed by almost a week of continuous rebel action against Mali’s military, including an attack on the desert town of Aguelhok. The rebels seized eight army vehicles, killed at least three Malian soldiers, wounded many others and took a further 33 captive. Representatives of the rebels confirmed that their action was to revenge the Malian-US assault on Tin Zaouatene.

On 25 March, Bahanga’s rebels were reported by a Western military source to have moved their 33 captured soldiers across the border into Niger where they were being guarded by members of the Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice (MNJ), a movement of Nigerien Tuareg who had also rebelled against their government. A leader in an Algerian newspaper noted that, ‘What all the countries in the region had been dreading, namely a linking up of the various Tuareg rebellions has happened’ (Abdelkamel, 2008). The Sahelian-wide conflagration that I have predicted in ROAPE and other publications over the last four years is now a reality (Keenan, 2004; 2007; 2008 forthcoming). The Atlantic and Indian Oceans are now linked by a geographical zone of conflict from Mauritania in the west, across Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan and Ethiopia to Somalia in the east. The conflagration of which Mali and Niger are now the foci has direct political, and perhaps also military, ramifications for Algeria, Libya, Chad, Mauritania and Nigeria, not to mention the hegemonic interests of France, China and the USA.

The Tuareg rebellions in Niger and Mali have escalated since the spring and summer of 2007. They have taken on the appearance of a pan-Tuareg rebellion. However, while both rebellions share a number of common grievances and features, any attempt at analysis is complicated by the fact that both rebellions are being driven at the local level by a range of not just complex but often quite different political and social issues.

While Bahanga’s rebellion in Mali has latterly (March-June 2008) been receiving more media coverage as a result of a number of high profile military engagements, the situation in Niger, where Niger’s US-trained army now stands accused of genocide,1 has and remains likely to be far more serious in terms of humanitarian consequences. Since the beginning of the Tuareg rebellion in Niger on 8 February 2007, Niger’s armed forces (Forces Armées Nigériennes – FAN) have been unable to match the rebels in open combat. They have therefore wreaked their frustration and vengeance on the civilian population. As far back as August 2007, a report commissioned by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (Keenan, 2007) warned that Niger’s President, Mamadou Tandja, was likely to unleash his armed forces on the civilian population. By December, two International Human Rights Organisations, the UK-based Amnesty International (2007) and the US-based Human Rights Watch (2007) had denounced Niger’s armed forces for committing war crimes, including summary executions of the civilian population.

While Mali’s army was suffering at the hands of Bahanga’s rebels, Niger’s army was concentrating its fire-power on the inhabitants of the villages along the old road that
runs north of the regional capital of Agades through the south-west foothills of the Aïr Mountains. On 20 March, as Bahanga attacked the Malian military convoy re-supplying the Tin Zaouatene garrison, MNJ forces were engaging the FAN in the Tamazélak valley, 100 km north of Agades. Four army vehicles were destroyed with their occupants almost certainly killed or wounded. The army called for reinforcements from Agades. However, rather than engage the MNJ, the FAN reinforcements directed their wrath on the inhabitants of Tamazélak. Having set fire to the hamlets, destroying seven homes completely and the vehicle of a local trader, they cold-bloodedly assassinated two children: Liman Houdane and Toukane Assale. From there the soldiers headed back south, stopping first at the settlements at Sakafat, which they looted before burning down ten huts, executing two villagers and ‘disappearing’ another, and then at Tidene where they proceeded to execute two more villagers and ‘disappear’ four others. One gardener had his legs broken as a form of torture while watching his garden being fired. Before leaving, the soldiers burnt down seven more huts and scattered land mines.

Two days later, an MNJ contingent caught up with the FAN militia south of Tidene killing at least 15 of them and destroying two of their vehicles. The FAN survivors, although harassed by the pursuing MNJ, nevertheless found time to exact vengeance on the village of Dabaga before retreating to the safety of their base at Agades. The toll was devastating: two villagers were executed and two more ‘disappeared’; 43 houses were looted and destroyed by fire; one vehicle and twelve motorcycles belonging to gardeners were burnt; the village produce store was destroyed by fire, as was the women’s cooperative; six gardens were completely destroyed and 60 animals slaughtered.

The above exactions are verifiable and eye-witness reports suggest the atrocities committed by the FAN on the civilian population have been considerably greater. But what is less clear is what has led to the latest Tuareg rebellions and their escalation into what has effectively become a Saharan-Sahelian conflagration?

The Onset & Escalation of Rebellion
The incident that precipitated the latest Tuareg rebellion in Niger was an attack on the village of Iferouane in northern Aïr on 8 February 2007 by three heavily armed Tuareg and a handful of followers. Over the next three months, the emergence of a new rebel movement, the MNJ, followed by a number of small military engagements, including an attack by the MNJ on a base of the French uranium company, AREVA, led the Niger parliament to approve more than $60 million in extra budget funds to confront the attacks.

By the end of June 2007 the rebellion had escalated. The most serious military engagement was an MNJ attack on the FAN at Tazerzait (N. Aïr) resulting in at least 15 soldiers killed, 43 wounded and 72 taken hostage. Despite the deployment of 4,000 government troops, MNJ attacks continued with further significant actions on the coal mine at Tchighozerine, which provides power for the uranium mines at Arlit, strategic installations in and around the regional capital of Agades, including the airport, as well as more attacks on FAN convoys and emplacements. The government was further embarrassed by the MNJ’s hostage-taking (and subsequent release) of an executive of the Chinese uranium company, Chino-U, and the defection to the MNJ of a significant number of men from both the FAN and the Force National d’Intervention et de la Sécurité (FNIS). By the end of July, Tuareg in north-east
Mali had also taken up arms, with several attacks against military personnel and positions in the Tin Zaouatene region.\(^3\)

On 24 August, Niger’s government declared a State of Alert, effectively placing the region under martial law and sealing it off from the outside world. An Agades resident described the hitherto bustling regional capital as a ‘ghost-town’. In spite of these draconian measures, government forces have not fared well: by the autumn, at least 45 and possibly as many as 60 soldiers had been killed, dozens wounded and many more taken hostage. Since then FAN casualties have mounted. Indeed, the MNJ’s fighting ability, their knowledge of the region and their strategic use of land mines have effectively confined government forces to the immediate vicinities of their barracks and a number of temporary base camps around the region. Pinned down and unable to deal any telling blows against the rebels, government forces have used the cover of the ‘state of alert’ to wreak their vengeance and frustration on the civilian population. In fact, the FAN’s harassment of the civilian population has been the cause of widespread grievance and complaints since before the outbreak of the rebellion. However, as the rebellion has escalated there have been an increasing number of authoritative and mostly verifiable reports of civilian harassment and abuse by government forces. International bodies, such as Amnesty International, have accused Niger’s security forces of using the State of Alert to arbitrarily arrest and torture civilians. For example, on 2 June 2007, FAN soldiers killed three civilians, one of whom was a cripple and the other two aged over 80. A further nine pilgrims were subsequently reported murdered by FAN soldiers. By the end of the year, the MNJ claimed that at least 250 people had ‘disappeared’. Amnesty International claim that the government was detaining and torturing civilians. Two further massacres of Tuareg civilians by government forces in the first week of October led the local population to fear that President Tandja was about to embark on a policy of genocide. The first took place in the Toussasset area near the Algerian border east of Assamakka. According to eye-witnesses, five vehicles were stopped by the FAN, with the 12 Tuareg being separated from the other travellers and shot. The second took place on the following day when soldiers rampaged through nomadic camps near the road between Arlit and Assamakka killing 20 Tuareg in their tents (Society for Threatened Peoples, 2007).

The Causes of the Rebellion(s)

As the rebellions have developed so they have taken on a new agenda and explanations for their origins have varied. While the MNJ states that the main cause of the Niger rebellion is the exploitation of Tuareg lands by uranium mining companies, a more nuanced analysis shows that both rebellions have been ‘over-determined’: although there has been more than enough ‘sufficient’ cause to determine the outcome – the rebellions are ‘multilayered’. Yet when we look at each ‘cause’ or ‘layer’ we are left with a perturbing question. Although each single ‘cause’ was the basis of justifiable grievance and at AREVA’s uranium mines, even resistance, were any of them on their own actually sufficient to precipitate a rebellion? The answer to this question is no, especially when we consider it in the context of two further facts. First, with the memories of the 1990s rebellion and the way it was crushed still fresh in their minds, the vast majority of the local population had no desire for another rebellion. Second, none of the three Tuareg responsible for the Iferouane attack had any credibility as either a popular or legitimate rebel or political leader. All three had known criminal records. The ringleader Aboubacar ag Alembo, was regarded by many who knew him as a psychopath who had already
brought shame on his people. Indeed, it was because of his dastardly and shameful behaviour that senior Tuareg, with the blessing of the government, had unsuccess-
fully arranged his ‘elimination’ four years earlier. In other words, while the Tuareg of Niger had many legitimate grievances, we have to face up to the possibility that the rebellion, like those of 2004 in Air and 2006 in Mali, may have been initiated and orchestrated by external forces.

But first, before we consider either what those external forces might have been, or analyse how and why the rebellion came to take on a momentum and dynamic of its own, we need to understand the grievances that have built up amongst Niger’s Tuareg over the last few years. At least three major issues can be identified.

1) Anger at the Fabrication of a Sahara-Sahel Front in the US global ‘War on Terror’

The latest Tuareg rebellions are the product of the increasing destabilisation of the southern Sahara-Sahel region since 2003. The underlying cause of this has been the Bush administration’s fabrication of a Saharan-Sahelian front in its global ‘war on terror’. The epicentre of this has been the Tuareg regions of northern Niger and northern Mali. The primary purpose of this deception was to create the ideological conditions for America’s militarisation of Africa (Keenan, 2005; 2007). While Washington’s main ally in this strategy has been Algeria, Niger has played a significant role.

The most widely publicised incident in this deception was the abduction of 32 European tourists in the Algerian Sahara in 2003 by Algeria’s Islamist (‘terrorist’) Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC), renamed in 2006 as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), under the leadership of Saifi Amari, known as El Para. The hostages were released in NE Mali after six months, following the reported payment of a 5 million euro ransom. El Para and his 60 or more accomplices were then allegedly chased by a combined military operation of US Special Forces, Malian, Algerian and Nigerien forces across Mali and Niger to Chad, where 43 of them were reportedly killed in an engagement with Chad regular forces in March 2004. Subsequent research has revealed that El Para was almost certainly an agent of Algeria’s secret military intelligence services, the Direction des Renseignements et de la Sécurité (DRS), and that the alleged pursuit across the Sahel simply did not happen. The result of this fabrication is that the US has been able to label the northern parts of Mali and Niger as a ‘Terrorist Zone’, the domain of Al Qaeda training bases lurking deep in the Sahara and threatening both Europe and the oil-rich regions of Africa. Indeed, the main ideological prop of the US’s subsequent imperialist counter-terrorism strategies and militarisation of the rest of the continent has been the threat presented by this false, over-hyped, US-constructed narrative of ‘terrorism in the Sahel’.

The fabrication of the El Para incident and the US’s subsequent labelling of their region as a ‘Terror Zone’ have not only done immense damage to the local tourism industry and associated livelihoods, but angered the Tuareg populations of southern Algeria, northern Mali and northern Niger who resent their region being labelled as a ‘Terror Zone’ and manipulated to fit the US-authored global picture of terrorism. Their anger, however, has been directed as much at the US as at their own governments, which have used the ‘War on Terror’ as a source of rent and for branding legitimate opposition, minorities and other recalcitrant elements of their populations as ‘terrorists’ or, to use Washington-speak, ‘putative’ terrorists.
Niger’s government has been no exception. In 2004, President Tandja attempted to provoke the Tuareg into actions which could be portrayed to the Americans as ‘former rebels turning to terrorism’. He arrested and gaoled Rhissa ag Boula, the former leader of the rebel Front de Libération de l’Azawak et de l’Air (FLAA) and its signatory to the 1995 Peace Accord and subsequently a government minister, on a trumped up murder charge. He was released without charge after 13 months, but not until a number of Tuareg had been provoked into taking up arms. That enabled the government to send some 150 of its newly US-trained troops into the Tuareg stronghold of the Air Mountains, where they were easily ambushed by the Tuareg. At least one soldier was killed, four wounded and four taken hostage. Rhissa’s brother Mohamed ag Boula claimed responsibility for the ambush. He said that he was leading a 200-strong group that was fighting to defend the rights of the Tuareg, Tubu and Semori nomadic populations of northern Niger.

2) The Exploitative Practices of Foreign (uranium) Mining & Oil Companies

The MNJ’s major area of grievance and demands, relates to the current huge expansion of both uranium mining and oil exploration in the Tuareg regions of northern Niger. The MNJ’s concerns relate to three main issues: the exploitative nature of these enterprises, the threat of an impending ecological disaster and the abuse by both the government and foreign companies of the Tuareg’s indigenous rights. To take each of these in turn:

(a) Uranium Mining & Oil Exploration: Niger has long been a major source of uranium and is currently the world’s third-ranking exporter after Australia and Canada. Annual production of some 3,300 metric tonnes accounts for around 72% of Niger’s export revenue and approximately 10% of global uranium mine supply.

Uranium was first discovered in 1957 by the Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières near the current mining town of Arlit in northern Niger. Further discoveries were made at numerous sites in the adjoining Tamesna region during the late-1950s and 1960s, with the Société des Mines de l’Air (Somair) beginning open caste mining near Arlit in 1971. The Compagnie Minière d’Akouta (Cominak) began underground mining at the nearby Akouta deposit in 1974. Today, the two mines, at Arlit and Akokan, are controlled by a consortium led by the giant French corporation, AREVA. The uranium concentrates, known as yellow-cake, are transported overland to Cotonou and then taken by ship for conversion, mostly to Comurhex /Tricastin nuclear site in France.

With the world energy crisis giving nuclear energy a new lease of life, the price of uranium has risen from scarcely $10 a pound (543 grammes) at the beginning of 2003 to $45 by mid-June 2006 and to a record $136 in June 2007. The average weekly price in 2007 was $98.55 a pound. With rising supplies, mainly from Kazakhstan, but also from Canada and Namibia, the average mid-range spot price for 2008 is expected to be around $107 and $92 in 2009. Not surprisingly, there has been a scramble by foreign corporations to acquire exploration rights and to expand uranium production in Niger.

The first to get in on the act was AREVA (then called Cogema Niger) who signed an agreement with the government in 2004 to expand its exploration. This was followed in 2006 by an agreement to develop the large Immouraren deposit about 60 km south of Arlit.
France no longer has a monopoly on Niger’s uranium. In 2006 Niger awarded licenses to a group of Chinese companies led by the China International Uranium Corporation (SinoUranium), a unit of China National Nuclear Corporation, to explore for uranium at a number of sites in the Agades-Tamesna region. With the Niger government now targeting a three-fold increase of uranium production to 10,500 tU/yr (tonnes Uranium per year) ‘in the next few years’, the Niger government had granted by October 2007 around 90 mining exploration permits for the northern desert region with a further 90 or so under consideration.

Northern Niger has become the focus of a global scramble for uranium as companies from France, China, Canada, Australia, South Africa, UK, India and elsewhere hope to strike it rich. But this scramble comes against a background of increasingly widespread and organised opposition and resistance to both foreign political interventions, notably that of the US, and the practices of foreign mining and oil corporations. Prior to the current rebellion, resistance to foreign corporate exploitation had been directed almost exclusively at AREVA, with the Chinese National Petroleum Company (CNPC) also becoming the object of opprobrium since it began oil exploration in the Tenere region some four years ago.

Working conditions at AREVA’s two uranium mines were so bad that the mines’ employees established a local workers’ NGO in 2003. Almoustapha Alhacen of Aghirin’man (aghirinman.org) drew attention to a number of health issues associated with environmental degradation and the company’s disregard of health and safety measures. It requested the CRIIRad (Commission de Recherche et d’Information Indépendantes sur la Radioactivité) to undertake overdue scientific investigations. However, CRIIRad’s attempts in 2004 to undertake the research were blocked by the Niger authorities on behalf of AREVA and the French government. Aghirin’man did, however, succeed in having samples of Arlit’s drinking water analysed by Sherpa and the CRIIRad. The analysis revealed that the indices of both alpha and beta radioactivity in the water samples were above the limits set by the World Health Organisation, meeting neither EU directive standards nor French regulations. This put in doubt AREVA’s press statement in February 2004 that its water analyses ‘showed an absence of contamination’. Public demonstrations against AREVA in May and November 2006 so rattled the company that its President, Mme Anne Lauvergeon, visited Niger from 30 November to 1 December 2006 in an attempt to calm the situation and stabilize AREVA’s position in the country. AREVA’s track record of corporate irresponsibility underpinned contemporary resistance to foreign exploitation of the region (www.dissident-media.org/infonucleaire/niger2.html; www.sortirdunucleaire.org/actualites/presse/affiche.php?aff=1660 and ‘Arlit, deuxième Paris’ www.newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0180). Not surprisingly, it fuelled local anger towards both AREVA and the French government. Indeed, shortly after the Iferouane attack, the French ambassador visited the region only to be given an exceptionally strong rebuke by the local community being informed that France had lost all respect and credibility in the region and that he should leave.

In the case of the CNPC, the company’s lack of respect for local people and their cultural practices has also caused widespread anger and hostility. Strikes and labour absenteeism are common. It is not surprising that both the CNPC and SinoUranium have received threats from the rebels. There is also a growing awareness amongst local people, especially the rebels, of what they regard as
'corrupt' relations between the Chinese companies and the Niger government in the form of financial contributions to President Tandja's election campaign. More serious from Beijing's perspective is the growing belief amongst the rebels that China is giving military support to President Tandja to help crush the rebellion. The Chinese companies operating in the region have been warned by the rebels that they face severe repercussions if evidence of such support materialises.

(b) Fear of an Impending Ecological Disaster: Aghirin'man sees the current expansion of uranium mining as the continuation and acceleration of what it refers to as 'Niger's economic, social and environmental tragedy'. The particular environmental tragedy to which it is referring is the impending ecological catastrophe facing the Talak and Tamesna regions.

Local people are anxious that the expansion of uranium mining across Talak and Tamesna will lead to an extension of the pollution, disease and ill-health that has characterised uranium mining at Arlit. They see the expansion of the present system of unregulated uranium mining around Immouraren, Sekret, In Gall, the Ighazer valley and elsewhere as a major and extremely serious threat to the region's unique complex ecosystem, which plays a pivotal and very complex socio-ecological role in the livelihoods of tens of thousands of pastoralists. The people threatened by this impending ecological disaster are not just the 100,000 or so Tuareg who inhabit the Air and adjoining plains of Talak and Tamesna, but Tuareg and other nomadic peoples, such as numerous Fulani nomads to the south, as well as Tuareg from as far north as the Ahaggar and Tassili-n-Ajjer regions in Algeria.

(c) The Abuse of Indigenous Rights: The US intervention in the Sahara-Sahel outlined above has done much to raise the conscientisation and politicisation of local peoples. This increased awareness of the international political scene is nowhere more acute than in the complex international politics of 'indigenous rights' issues. For example, in July 2006, within a matter of days of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Tuareg of Niger lodged a formal complaint about the US presence and its activities in Niger with the UNWGIP (UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples).

The Tuareg are very aware of their indigenous rights to the Air-Talak-Tamesna region and this poses a challenge to uranium mining companies. Few places in the Tuaregs' extensive domain are perceived as being more indigenous, almost 'sacred', than Tamesna. These sentiments are deeply rooted and go beyond the bounds of this paper but suffice it to say that with Niger's independence in 1960, Tamesna became a sort of no man's land, a 'Tuareg reserve', legally part of Niger but effectively beyond the reach of either the Nigerien or Algerian administrations. It became a uniquely Tuareg area in which traditional pastoral rights and practices were largely retained. It was the region to which Tuareg went, both from Algeria and Niger, when they 'wanted to get away from government.'

International mining companies, the Niger government and Tuareg political leaders, are all fully aware of both the attempts to recognise and protect indigenous rights and the current legal status of the UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights. Although the Declaration, which would give some degree of international legal protection to the Tuareg's attempts to protect their domain from international corporations is still awaiting adoption by the UN, its moral weight is indisputable.
3) Government’s Failure to Adhere to the 1995 Peace Accord

The extent to which the Niger government has adhered to or fulfilled all the conditions and agreements of the 1995 Peace Accord is debatable. In the government’s defense, many of the Tuareg rebels were integrated into the FAN and the FNIS. There has also been some devolution of government, especially at the local and regional levels. It can also be said in the government’s defense that it has not had the resources to undertake many of the 1995 development proposals as it might have desired. However, the MNJ’s claims that the government has not delivered on what the Tuareg regard as the biggest issue, namely a say in the management of the region’s resources, notably uranium, hydrocarbons and other minerals, and an equitable share in their development are quite true. The Niger rebellion is rooted in this growing resentment at the rapacious exploitation of their lands and their exclusion from its benefits. Indeed, the financial terms and operating practices of these companies, sanctioned by the Niger government, are in complete contravention of the 1995 Peace Accord as well as the many global declarations and conventions on the exploitation of indigenous land rights. In short, the way in which the region’s mineral and hydrocarbon resources have been, and still are, being exploited is seen by local people as bringing no benefit to themselves or their communities.

The Role of National & External Interests in the Causation & Escalation of the Rebellion

I suggested at the beginning of this article that the present rebellion, like those of 2004 in Aïr and 2006 in Mali may have been initiated and to some extent even orchestrated by external forces. In the early stages of the rebellion, the external parties deemed most likely to be involved were France and AREVA, followed by Algeria, the USA, Libya, international oil and mining companies, Islamists, drug traffickers and, nearer to home, the ruling elites and governments of both Niger and Mali. However, as the rebellion has escalated and dragged on, not only have these interests changed but a more complicated picture has emerged.

France & AREVA

France jealously guards her economic and political ties with la francophonie, especially Niger, whose substantial uranium deposits have supplied France, via AREVA, with a secured source of energy and a guarantee of nuclear independence. Not only does France need Niger’s uranium to run her own reactors, but AREVA is currently the world’s leading builder of nuclear reactors, a position which is helped in no small measure by being a leading marketer of uranium. She is thus able to deliver turnkey systems: the nuclear reactor package as well as the fuel to run them. This position was assured until Niger decided to place its own self-interest ahead of that of France/AREVA by opening its mineral rich north to international competition. France was then faced with the reality of international companies from China, South Africa, Canada, Australia, India, Nigeria, Algeria, the UK and elsewhere helping themselves to what she had hitherto taken for granted as her own national energy supply.

It is therefore not surprising that there have been rumours and suspicion from the outset that France/AREVA instigated and financed the rebellion in order to frighten off foreign, especially Chinese, competition. The Niger government went so far as to accuse AREVA of financing the rebels. Although denied, and without any solid
evidence being provided. Niger expelled AREVA’s head of operations in July 2007 in a move that provoked the direct intervention of President Sarkozy and high level Franco-Nigerien talks in Niamey between Jean-Marie Bockel, France’s cooperation minister, and President Tandja.6

France certainly has the means to initiate Tuareg unrest in Niger. Its own security agents, for instance, have long maintained close surveillance of the region, while AREVA management has close ties to both the MNJ leadership and other parties in the region. The president of the MNJ, for example, Aghaly ag Alembo was formerly the sous-préfet at Arlit where his business was as much to meet the needs of the uranium producer as to administer the mining town and its environs. However, if France/AREVA was behind the rebellion two points should be made. The first is that if France intended to create a bush-fire in the region, it appears to have got dangerously out of control. The second is that if this was France’s intent, she would be more likely to operate through the more covert channels of her own foreign intelligence service, the Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE), which has especially close ties with Algeria’s Direction des Renseignements et de la Sécurité (DRS) which, more than anyone, has the means to trigger such a chain of events.

Algeria

Evidence suggests that through its counter-intelligence service, the DRS, Algeria may well have been involved in the instigation of the rebellion. The evidence for this is as follows:

(a) The three Tuareg who carried out the initial attack on Iferouane, Aboubacar ag Alambo, Kalakoua and Al Charif (Acheriff Mohamed), were known to the DRS. Aboubacar (reported dead, killed 22 June) and Kalakoua both have criminal records, while Al Charif was a former rebel who had subsequently deserted the Niger army. The leader of the attack, Aboubacar, came on the political scene in 2002 after deserting from the Niger army and killing two policemen. Since then he has been responsible for numerous acts of banditry, being described by his former comrades in the 1990s rebellion as ‘psychopathic’, enjoying ‘violence’ and always being entrusted to do the ‘dirty work’. More significantly, he was well connected through a complex network of kinship ties to influential members of the regional governments on both sides of the Niger-Algeria border. For example, his brother Aghaly ag Alambo was formerly the sous-préfet at Arlit, while a cousin is the Commandant of Niger’s Force National d’Intervention et de la Sécurité (FNIS), which, amongst other things, is responsible for the protection of foreign companies, such as AREVA and the Chinese oil and uranium companies, in the region. Another cousin is reputedly the director of security for Algeria’s Tamanrasset wilaya. Since 2002 he has been protected and used by the DRS. There is also evidence that the vehicles and arms used in the Iferouane attack came from northern Mali and may have been provided by connections with the DRS. This is particularly significant as the DRS was instrumental in promoting the short-lived Tuareg rebellion at Kidal on 23 May 2006. This clandestine operation was supported by 100 US Special Forces who flew from to Tamanrasset (Algeria) from Stuttgart on 15-16 February 2006 and progressed overland into northern Mali.

(b) Algeria has been the main agent in assisting the US in its policy of creating a ‘Zone of Terror’ across the Sahel since 2003. This has involved the fabrication of numerous ‘terrorist’ incidents in the region; countless media disinformation reports;
the provocation of unrest in the region and exaggerated (or fabricated) reports of armed engagements between Tuareg, DRS-supported rebels and GSPC elements in northern Mali in the period September-November 2006.

(c) Algeria has political and economic hegemonic designs on the Sahel, most notably in NE Mali (the Kidal region) and northern Niger. Precisely how the MNJ rebellion might further these interests is not at all clear. However, some local people believe that Algeria sees the ongoing destabilisation of the Sahel (Mali and Niger) as playing into its own long-term interests, perhaps by making the region less attractive to foreign exploitation, or by enabling it to play the role of ‘peace-maker’ and thus strengthen its political influence in the region. This relates especially to the challenge posed to Algeria by similar Libyan interests in the Sahel. For instance, Algeria’s orchestration of the Kidal (Mali) revolt on 23 May 2006 was designed to discredit Libya’s presence in the region (Keenan, 2006). Libya’s involvement in northern Niger, especially the Agades region, has been far more invasive than in northern Mali. Therefore, at the outset of the rebellion, it was possible to think that there was a replay of Algeria’s Malian strategy: to engineer a Tuareg ‘rebellion’ and blame it on the Libyans. This, however, now seems less likely. That is because Algeria has become increasingly anxious that the Niger and Mali rebellions will spread into Algeria where the bulk of the country’s population, not least the Tuareg, are increasingly discontented with Algeria’s domestic economic conditions for which they blame their corrupt and repressive government. For instance, when a group of discontented Tuareg youths carried out a high profile but ineffective attack on Djanet airport of 11 November 2007, the government could not move fast enough to attribute it to al-Qaeda.

The Niger Government

As the rebellion has developed, the role of President Tandja and his government has become the major cause of its prolongation and escalation. Since the US launched its global war on terror in the Sahara-Sahel in 2003, every country in the region, without exception, has provoked unrest amongst sections of their populations (usually minority, marginal groups) to exact ‘rent’ from the US in the form of further military and financial largesse. Niger, the world’s poorest country, has punched far above its weight in this regard.

Following the Iferouane attack of 8 February 2007, local Tuareg believe that the government used what they call ‘The List’ to deliberately provoke armed unrest. This was a list of several dozens, perhaps hundreds, of former rebels whom the government was allegedly planning to detain. Irrespective of whether this was an act of retribution or provocation by the Niger government, it was enough to persuade many of the former rebels, several of whom had since become responsible local community and political leaders, to take to the mountains with their arms. It is estimated that as many as 200 former rebel fighters, having sent their wives and families into hiding, converged on Tamgak, a near-impregnable massif approximately 150 km in perimeter and over 2,000 metres high a few miles east by north-east of Iferouane. The number of fighters has now increased to at least 1,000 and possibly as many as 2,000.

Having used AREVA’s alleged involvement in the rebellion to help break its monopoly on uranium production in Niger and thus gain a greater revenue stream by creating an expanded, internationally diversified and competitive market, there
is no obvious strategic benefit to Niger in prolonging the conflict. Indeed, the country is already on the brink of deterring rather than attracting foreign investment. Further rents from US counter-terrorism are also limited.

Almost from the outset, the rebels have argued that President Tandja is hell-bent on an ‘ivoirianisation’ policy of exclusion against the Tuareg. They believe that he has longstanding personal grievances against the Tuareg, stemming from the time when, as Minister of the Interior, he was responsible for the Tchin Tabaradene massacres that precipitated the 1990s rebellion. There are now an increasing number of Tuareg, rebels and civilians, who believe that the successful pursuit of this policy, manifesting itself through what they regard as genocide, will enable him to avoid recompensing the Tuareg for the exploitation of their indigenous lands, as agreed in the 1995 Peace Accord.

Now that Niger as a member of the TSCTI falls under the US security umbrella, and with the EU, France, China and Niger’s more powerful neighbours having little immediate incentive to see the restoration of zonal stability, President Tandja can rest reasonably assured that his ‘low-key’ genocide policy will invoke little external intervention.

The USA

The USA, with its overarching ‘security’ interests in the region, is the one party with sufficient clout to point President Tandja in the direction of peace talks and a negotiated settlement. The fact that it has not done so suggests that in terms of Washington’s perceptions of its national strategic interests in Africa, the ‘pros’ of Sahelian instability outweigh the ‘cons’. In fact, this is probably becoming an increasingly marginal call. On the ‘pro’ side, the USA (along with other western powers) is still getting mileage from its al-Qaeda game in the Sahara-Sahel. This is a game to persuade the international community that putative terrorists are active in the region. Claims that al-Qaeda affiliates are active and that ‘ungoverned spaces’ are havens for terrorists provide the ideological legitimacy to pursue Washington’s militarised ‘development-security’ discourse and the need for AFRICOM.

On the downside, the Tuareg rebellions are taking the Bush Administration towards two major pitfalls. The first is not so much that these rebellions are a product of Washington’s post-9/11 intervention in the region, but that they are absolutely nothing to do with the threat of ‘Islamism’, ‘Islamic extremism’ or ‘Islamist terrorism’ that the US claims has mushroomed in the region over the last five or so years. With Algeria accusing Washington of exaggerating the terrorist threat (L’Expression, 18 November 2006 and 4 December 2006; L’Express, 17 November 2006; Liberté, 18 November 2006) and detailed field research revealing that nearly every supposed ‘terrorist’ incident in the region over this period has been fabricated (Keenan, 2006), the current Tuareg rebellions are simply exposing the US enterprise in the region as a grand deception. Second, the major prop used by the US to sell AFRICOM to an unconvinced world is its claimed success of its Pan-Sahel and Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiatives, notably the training the US has given to the security forces in these countries in combating terrorism. That success is declared in the training the US has given to the security forces in the countries combating terrorism and securing their borders. And yet, what we are now witnessing in Mali and Niger is how these US-trained militaries, far from bringing security to their citizens or their borders, are accomplished in little more than the
criminality of harassing innocent citizens (Mali) and conducting genocide (Niger). As the truth of what the PSI and TSCTI have brought to the peoples of the Sahel permeates across Africa, AFRICOM will become an even harder sell.

Other External Interests

China

Chinese companies in Niger are now at the centre of the rebellion. However, they will argue that they have been sucked into the conflagration and had no part, at least wittingly, in what was happening in its early stages. However, the MNJ believes China is giving military support to President Tandja and has consequently warned Chinese companies that they face severe repercussions if evidence of such support materialises.

Recent actions by the Chinese uranium company Sino-U have now severely prejudiced China’s interests in the region. Around the beginning of March 2008, Sino-U, accompanied and protected by Niger’s security forces, began denying local pastoralists access to their wells. Sino-U explained incorrectly to the local pastoralists that as it had paid for the land (through its uranium concession) it also had acquired the right of sole usage of the wells. The pastoralists most affected are those in the Talak region, the rich pastoral zone between Air and Tamesna. After several days of armed stand-off, the Chinese found a temporary solution by agreeing to build a concrete drinking trough by the wells. However the FAN have regularly slaughtered Tuareg livestock as part of their ‘genocide’ policy, and with reports (as yet unverified) that Chinese have been accompanying the FAN on these missions, armed confrontation with both the Chinese mining companies and the FAN over the pastoralists’ rights of access to their wells cannot be ruled out.

Libya

Libya’s recent designs on the Sahel have been reflected in Mouamar Ghadafi’s many pronouncements on some sort of ‘Tuareg political entity’ or ‘Saharan state’, which at one point he envisaged as stretching ‘from Mauritania to Iraq’.

Libya’s primary role so far has been as a potential peacemaker. However, this role should be seen as part of the regional competition for influence in the Sahel being played out between Algeria and Libya.

Mali

Although the Tuareg of Mali are not yet suffering the same sort of invasive exploitation of their lands by mining companies as is happening in Niger, the Mali rebellion has certain key similarities with that in Niger. These are the perceived failure of the Malian government to fulfil the agreements reached at the end of the 1990s rebellion and the abuse and harassment of the Tuareg civilian population by the Malian army. The first act of rebellion by Bahanga, namely his attack on a police post near Tin Zaouatene and the killing of two policemen in May 2007, was provoked by the violation of Tuareg women by Malian soldiers. At the same time, there were disturbing indications that the Mali government was moving in the same
direction as that of Niger by encouraging the resuscitation of the Ganda Koy, a Songhai-based militia that was responsible for many of the attacks on Tuareg civilian populations in the 1990s Tuareg rebellion. Although denied by both Malian rebels and the MNJ, they met on 20-22 July to discuss a common strategy and formed what they called the **Alliance Touareg Niger-Mali** (ATNM). After a series of attacks on the Malian army at the end of August and through September and the mining of many of the routes around Tin Zaouatene, a tenuous peace held through the month of Ramadan. It was broken in March as a result of the atrocities committed by the Malian and US forces at Tin Zaouatene. In other words, both the initial act of rebellion and its subsequent escalation, as in Niger, were in response to the commitment of atrocities by the security forces against the Tuareg civilian populations.

**Drug Traffickers**

The governments of both Niger and Mali assert that the rebels are simply criminals and drug traffickers fighting to get more control over the lucrative trans-Saharan drug trafficking business. This claim is nothing more than the Malian and Nigerien governments’ attempts to divert international attention from the real political problems associated with the Tuareg in their countries. This is especially true of Niger, where the Tuareg rebellion is directly associated with the exploitative behaviour of international mining companies and increasingly the genocide being perpetrated by its security forces.

This perversion of the truth is assisted by international agencies, notably the UN Secretary General’s representative (and other UN officials) in West Africa, Said Djinnit, who has explained the renewed tension in the Sahel as the result of a combination of factors. ‘There are the old rebellions,’ he said, ‘on which have been added the new phenomena of terrorism, which is present in the region, but above all the drug trade and organised crime, which have grown dramatically’. As I have already explained, the terrorism to which Said Djinnit refers was fabricated by the US and Algeria as part of the ‘war on terror’ and has subsequently become a ‘mythologised’ element of the region.

This is not to deny that drug trafficking across the Sahara is on a massive scale, or that some Tuareg, especially now that the US war on terror has deprived many of them of their livelihoods, are involved as drivers and low-level operatives. There is also good reason to believe that both rebel forces are cashing in on the drug trafficking to finance their rebellions. Drug trafficking, however, is not the cause of the rebellions in the way that the governments of the region and the UN are speaking. Drugs trafficking across the Sahara may be major business but it is run by international organisations in association with rogue elements within the North and West Africa’s political-military elites. It is not run by the Tuareg rebels. In fact, the key element in controlling the trans-Saharan part of the business is largely in the control of what is euphemistically referred to as ‘the sons of the generals’, that is the families of some of Algeria’s powerful generals who comprise the power (**le pouvoir**) at the core of the Algerian state. These elements want to secure more control over north-east Mali, the ‘funnel’ through which much of the drugs traffic enters Algeria. It is this desire by elements within the Algerian military to secure more control over north-east Mali that is being challenged by Bahanga’s forces.
Conclusions

Although it may be too early to make definitive pronouncements, we can offer some pointers relating to the pressures on the western half of the Sahel and some of the consequences of securitisation in the region.

Uranium Mining

Apart from an attack on AREVA’s Immouraren Base in April 2007 and the abduction of a Sino-U executive for five days in July, the MNJ has refrained from any direct attacks on the uranium mines or the yellow-cake convoys. However, on 31 January 2008, Rhissa ag Boula, speaking from Paris, announced the launch of an offensive against the uranium mines, works and convoys (Le Nouvel Observateur, 31 January 2008). The announcement caused much anger amongst the MNJ rebels in Niger, largely because Rhissa is not a member of the MNJ and was not speaking on their behalf. Nevertheless, on 14 March gunmen attacked a yellow-cake convoy south of Arlit, killing one civilian and wounding another. Although the attack is presumed to have been undertaken by the MNJ, the attackers have not yet been identified. Indeed, some Tuareg in the region say the attack was not undertaken by the MNJ but by one of the many groups of ‘troublemakers’ who have moved into the region. Since March, there have been no further attacks on the uranium industry. Whether the MNJ will respond with more attacks against the uranium industry remains to be seen. It seems unlikely that the MNJ under Aghaly ag Alembo will launch such attacks but, if new rebel factions emerge, as discussed below, an offensive against the uranium industry cannot be ruled out.

The uranium industry is Niger’s economic jugular. If the conflict escalates and the industry is targeted more directly, it will have serious effects on uranium mining: foreign investment may be deterred if security costs escalate. As it is, the rebellion has already placed the industry in Niger under the spotlight. Irrespective of whether AREVA was involved in the instigation of the rebellion, the reported presence of French military advisers in Agades will make it very difficult for both France and AREVA to distance themselves from the genocidal actions of the FAN. Quite apart from its long history of labour exploitation, not least its appalling health and safety record, it will be extremely difficult in the future for the company to develop good relations with a local workforce. Neither can most other international companies afford to be tarred with the ‘genocide’ or ‘war crimes’ brush. Western companies, however, are more susceptible to share-holder concerns. For example, if Electricité de France (EDF) should proceed with a bid for the UK government’s 35% holding in British Energy (BE), BE’s advisor, as part of its defence, might well start asking awkward questions regarding AREVA’s guarantees of uranium supplies, while the Labour government, which not so long ago had an ethical foreign policy, might find it awkward selling its stake to a company associated – if only through its government’s military assistance to the FAN – with genocide.

It should be noted that the Tuareg are not opposed to mining in their region per se. They want a fair share of the revenue and better controls and regulation of the mining process to protect their environmental interests and concerns.
Factional Splits in Niger

On 31 May, a new rebel group, the Front des forces de redressement (FFR), announced its split from the MNJ. The FFR is led by Mohamed Awtchiki Kriska, who only joined the MNJ in November 2007. He was a spokesperson for the Tuareg rebel forces in Niger in the 1991-95 rebellion and is believed to be close to Rhissa ag Boula. With little love lost between the present MNJ leadership and Rhissa ag Boula, this split, if it gathers strength, could have serious implications for both the local Tuareg and the course of the rebellion. It is possible that the FFR, because of certain familial and other ties with Libya, might get more support from Tripoli. With Alembo’s MNJ forces currently receiving sympathetic support, such as hospitalisation for their wounded in Tamanrasset, from the Algerians, such a development could increase tension between Algeria and Libya.

US/AFRICOM

The US has given a huge amount of publicity to the success of its PSI & TSCTI military initiatives in the Sahel, above all the military training of Niger’s and Mali’s armed forces. When the rest of Africa digests how the product of this training, in reality, is little more than uniformed gangs of looters, arsonists, torturers and murderers of innocent civilians (aka the FAN), the US should not be surprised to find even less enthusiasm for its AFRICOM. Indeed, these words may be fortuitous: on 1 June 2008 the Pentagon announced, in what may be interpreted as the beginning of the US retreat from Africa, that it was scaling back its ambitions in Africa and that AFRICOM will be based for the foreseeable future in Stuttgart.

Widening the Conflagration

During the course of writing this article, events in Mali have changed significantly. Following the rebel attacks on the Malian army in late-March 2008, Mali government delegates and representatives of Bahanga’s rebels met for peace talks in Libya. A peace deal, which was to have been entered into at 12.01 a.m. on 3 April, was delayed for 24 hours. In the intervening day, the Malian army had called in air support. For the first time it attacked the rebels using Russian-made Mi-24 helicopters. The initial, unverified reports suggest that as many as 60 rebels could have been killed. While this action might have been seen by the government as a way of putting an end to the rebellion, it has merely led to an intensification of hostilities.

There have been two significant developments in the middle of 2008. One has been sweeping changes in the command of Mali’s armed forces. This has led to the army going much more on to the offensive, turning north-east Mali into little less than a ‘war zone’. And it then led to the second development, namely the flight of civilians from the region and at least 1,000 refugees were reported in Burkina Faso in June 2008 and 80 families’ were reported to have sought refuge across the Algerian border. While this number is small in comparison to the estimated 150,000 who fled Mali in the 1990s rebellion, it could increase rapidly if peace is not achieved soon.

The Mali government is committed in principle to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, but Niger is still insisting on a military solution. It says there will be no peace talks until the Tuareg lay down arms. For their part, the MNJ believes it can maintain the rebellion indefinitely, while at the same time hoping that the UN will intervene and mediate a peaceful settlement. At present, it is President Tandja’s refusal to countenance a peaceful settlement that threatens a more prolonged and widened conflagration.
Questioning the Legitimacy of States & State Borders

The rebellions have led many Tuareg, especially the younger generation, to question the legitimacy of their states’ borders. They argue that the borders of the states that encompass Tuareg lands are a product of the colonial era. But, as colonialism is now ‘dead’, so too, they argue, should be its borders. The more the conflict escalates, spreads or just drags on, the more likely younger Tuareg will challenge not merely their state borders but the legitimacy of their states themselves. Indeed, it is perhaps significant that a new website, believed to be run by young Tuareg rebels, emerged on 19 September 2007 proclaiming the founding of the Tuareg ‘Republic of Toumoujagha’ (http://toumoujagha.blogspot.com/). Toumoujagha comprises most of the northern half of Niger and all north-east Mali, with its northern limit being the border with Algeria. More recent modifications to the website show Toumoujagha incorporating the traditional Tuareg lands of southern Algeria and southwest Libya.

The idea of a Tuareg state has been aired in the past although never very seriously. The first is believed to have been in 1957 within the context of the OCRS (Organisation Commune des Régions Sahariennes), which was France’s futile last-gasp attempt to control the Sahara’s recently discovered oil resources. The most recent has been Gadhafi’s advocacy of such an entity on several occasions since April 2005. Indeed, as the rebellions have spread and seemingly linked up, the idea of a Tuareg state has gained ground. That worries Algeria. The DRS is rumoured to have done a deal with the rebels in Niger and, it is believed, in Mali: this is that neither the Algerian military nor its DRS will intervene against the rebels south of the Algerian border, as long as the rebels ensure that their rebellions do not spread north of the borders. The other side of this deal is that Algeria hopes that its sympathetic ‘humanitarian’ support for the rebels, especially in Niger, will ultimately bear fruit by increasing Algerian influence south of the border.

Jeremy Keenan, e-mail: jeremykeenan@hotmail.com

Endnotes

1. UN formally notified by Tuareg representative on 29 March 2008.

2. Tuareg rebellions broke out almost simultaneously in Niger and Mali in 1992 and continued throughout much of the decade, especially in Niger. In 2004, the Niger government attempted to provoke a further Tuareg uprising (see text), while the Algerian counter-terrorism intelligence services played a key role, along with US Special Forces, in orchestrating a rebellion of Tuareg in Mali on 23 May 2006.

3. These were under the leadership of Ibrahim ag Bahanga. His first attack was on a police post near Tin Zaouatene on 11 May 2007. In late August he kidnapped some 50 soldiers in a series of attacks on military convoys and positions, before the Malian army, assisted by the US, recaptured the Tin Zaouatene positions in late September. At least 16 civilians were killed by land mines with a handful of soldiers being killed in the skirmishes.

4. At the end of 2005 Niger’s Reasonably Assured Resources were 173,000 tonnes of uranium oxide at less than $40/kg, and a further 7,000 tonnes (tU) at up to 80/kg. Inferred resources are 45,000 tU at up to $80/kg.


7. The term ‘ivoirité’ – ‘Ivoirian-ness’ – was coined in 1994 by President Henri Konan Bédié of Côte d’Ivoire in his campaign to exclude and disenfranchise politicians and potential voters from the north of the country, in particular presidential candidate Alassane Oattara and his supporters, on the grounds of parentage in neighbouring countries, especially Burkina Faso. The term – and the policy of exclusion – has continued under President Laurent Gbagbo.

8. His first such proclamation was made at Oubari (Libya) in April 2005; then subsequently in a speech at Timbuktu on the occasion of the festival of the birth of the Prophet in April 2006.

Bibliography


Mining Investment & Community Struggles  
Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through 'boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;

- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;

- Payment of Income tax;

- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);

---

**Figure 1: Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana**

![Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana](image-url)
• Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont's Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

• Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts

One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

• Social disruption;
• Capital flight;
• Displacement of communities;
• Resettlement/Relocation problems;
• Low compensation;
• Land use conflicts;
• Loss of biodiversity;
• Environmental degradation;
• Increased diseases;
• Pollution of water bodies;
• Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
• Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
• Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies

• Creation of ghost towns;
• Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
• Acid mine drainage;
• Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
• Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy

• The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
• Lack of organisation for mining communities;
• The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
• Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
• Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
• Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
• Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
• The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
• Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
• Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/ violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A. Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe

Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up ... It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be ... a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years. The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411156
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’ Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’État in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

Background & History

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP politico-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results: Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term lêve-lêve (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

Anticipation

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’etat and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set-up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imaginations of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo-mean national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180

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.

See also, Association of Concerned African Scholars at http://concernedafricascholars.org

Founded in 1979, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of Africa and US government policy, developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States, and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;
2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;
3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and
4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

**Spinning Controversy**

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbach – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared *persona non grata* by the DRC government in July 2007.

The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest. The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwean tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

China in the D.R. Congo

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate.9

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

Henry Kippin, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC),
by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards
necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing
them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed
the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support
and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can there-
fore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to
some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of no-
where. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes
which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven)
strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern Afri-
can region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing
alienation of the South African government (although not the African National
Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist
Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as
well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenu-
ous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity
amongst trade unions and social move-
ments in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused
on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has
enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as
the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour,
women’s and church-based organisa-
tions – have steadily built cross-border
links that bore fruit in this campaign.

Timeline of Events

Following the first round of the Zimba-
bwean elections on 29 March 2008, the
delay in the release of results which
would have shown a victory for the
Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)
provided cover for systematic violence
against opposition supporters and other
critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African
National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-
PF) party. In this context, the arrival of
the Chinese container ship, the An Yue
Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April
prompted fears that the Zimbabwean
authorities were arming themselves in
preparation for the further repression of
MDC supporters during the second
round of elections (fears based on his-
torical precedence and ones which
proved well founded, with widespread
violence subsequently forcing Morgan
Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the sec-
ond round of the Presidential elections
on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked
to the South African press and the South
African Transport and Allied Workers
Union (SATAWU), the union which rep-
resents dockworkers, revealed that the
An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of
armaments destined for onward trans-
portation to Zimbabwe: these were spe-
cifically rocket-propelled grenades,
mortars and small arms, three million
rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-
propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar
rounds.1

The reaction of the South African govern-
ment was predictable: January Masilela,
the South African Defence Secretary,
declared that the shipment had been
approved that week by the National
Conventional Arms Control Committee
(NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela
concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction
between two sovereign states and we don’t
have to interfere.’2

In contrast, Randall Howard, General
Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.³

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA).⁴ They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere.⁵ This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

*We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically demonstrate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … Satawu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.*⁶

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements.⁷ The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’⁸ It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.⁹
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign.\textsuperscript{10} IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’.\textsuperscript{11} The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, offloading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China.\textsuperscript{12} Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

**Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics**

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world.

Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.\textsuperscript{13}

Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyperspace, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe. His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

South-South Solidarity

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with ZANU-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their...
territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared. This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May. Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms.’

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded. The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals. Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes
1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.
10. Dube interview.
13. Dawson interview.
15. Dawson interview.
17. Dawson interview.
18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.
23. Dawson interview.
24. Rimmer interview.
Child Poverty in Africa
Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and wellbeing of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411214
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking: little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational...
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of *intersectionality*, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005).

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

Food Security & AIDS

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs – irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkelson), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOs, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes


2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).


4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).


7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
Neglect); Steering Committee members are Assefa Bequele (African Child Policy Forum), Tounkara Tambake (African Movement of Working Children), Moussa Sissoko (Coalition of African NGOs Working with Children), Fabrizio Terenzio (ENDA TM Jeunesse Action), Samantha Waterhouse (Resources aimed at Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect), George Nyakora (SOS Kinderdorf), Stella Ayo Odongo (Ugandan Child Rights NGO network). Individuals can join as well as organizations. Wambui Njuguna was elected President and Moussa Sissoko Vice President; ACPF will provide the Secretariat. In addition five regional custodians were elected (using the AU demarcation of African regions).

References


Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique

João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrião, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridião, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trênsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trânsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411222
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (ICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luís Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...) Eu o Povo Vou aprender a lutar do lado da Natureza Vou ser camarada de armas dos quatro elementos [a terra, o ar, a água e o fogo].

 (...) I the People will learn to fight with Nature at my side I will be comrade of arms with the four elements— [earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against apartheid.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular—if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner. Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period. In 1980 the first issue of the journal Estudos Moçambicanos on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEAs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call marketing, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present. And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism. The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslow, António Pacheco, David
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeyer, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchin, John Saul and also Pierre-Philippe Rey, Claude Meillassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Vershuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’.9 That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Said, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority.10 Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometime many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

Endnotes


6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.

7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.


As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008).

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;

- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);

- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;

- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;

- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;

- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;

- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production. In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauretania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

Table 2: Monthly percentage changes in the CPI and share of food expenditures in CPI for selected African countries/groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total CPI</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11

*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.²

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent...
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

Vincent Tickner of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Endnotes

1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.

2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

Bibliography

Bello, Walden (2008), Destroying African Agriculture in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org


Evans, Alex (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.


Krishan Bir Chaudary (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, Financial Express, 17 April.


Ray, Daryll E. (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.


At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7.0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution (http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-

USDA Top Officials vs. USDA Data

Daryll E. Ray

A couple of weeks ago (30 May 2008) we wrote a column in which we said:

China has increased its consumption of meats [beef, pork, broilers*] at a rate well above the rate of population increase.

We also noted,

China produces virtually all of the meat that is domestically consumed, and then some. In fact China was a net meat exporter for the last 7 years and 14 of the last 18 years.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411271
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

But we’re also seeing a new dynamic on the demand side of the ledger in the form of continued strong economic growth worldwide and growing prosperity in developing nations. That translates to a greater demand for food of all kinds and especially higher value foods such as meat and dairy products in nations like India and China where the growing middle class is emerging. That trend increases demand for feed grain for livestock as well.

As we have already seen, there is no demand for feed grains from China and India, and none from Indonesia and Brazil as well. The next smaller countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria – not a very large and growing middle class there. As far as dairy goes, the increases come from internal production not international markets. In fact, China and India have increased their consumption of these products. India has increased its net exports of these products while China’s net imports have not exceeded 100,000 tonnes in any one year.

**Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa**

**Carol B. Thompson**

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?
- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- **Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty**: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;
- **Loss of Biodiversity**: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;
- **GM Contamination**: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contami-
nate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a *moratorium* on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?’, Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

---

**Bibliography**


---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil,</td>
<td>240,000 ha;</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt's 'agri-cultural revival program'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sugar, manioc</td>
<td>jatropha by 2012;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>400,000 ha palm oil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate', 3m ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'available'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Sodcinal, both Belgium</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>To expand beyond</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>EU Commission study</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar</td>
<td>30,000 ha</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>soy, sorghum</td>
<td>'very suitable'</td>
<td>18% of global rainforests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Palm Oil</td>
<td>3m ha palm oil plantion</td>
<td>World Bank giving loans for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>planned; 12m ha</td>
<td>commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'available'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87% destroyed</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>forests of elephant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>325,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>140,000 to expand to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy</td>
<td>Jatropha, castor</td>
<td>3.5m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>beans, palm oil</td>
<td>'potential'</td>
<td>managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sugar, cassava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>copra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000 ha planned;</td>
<td>For rural electrification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>400,000 ha 'potential'</td>
<td>for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar,</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize;</td>
<td>'Govt seeking investment',</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>jatropha, sunflower</td>
<td>3m ha 'former home-</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lands' available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK; Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>18,000 ha</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>palm oil</td>
<td>will displace rice farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira</td>
<td>Stopped by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest saved but 6,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cleared on Kalangala,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bugala Islands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha,</td>
<td>45,000 ha now;</td>
<td>Forest reserves available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cassava</td>
<td>500,000 ha 'available'</td>
<td>for cultivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo

8 February 1947 - 6 March 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter disdain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

Susanne D. Mueller, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Briefings

Mining Investment & Community Struggles
Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 million in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through ‘boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) gives the power to the President to acquire land for mining through compulsory acquisition or to authorise its occupation and use (Section 2 of Act 703).

The Challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;
- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;
- Payment of Income tax;
- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);

![Figure 1: Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana](image)
Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts

One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

- Social disruption;
- Capital flight;
- Displacement of communities;
- Resettlement/Relocation problems;
- Low compensation;
- Land use conflicts;
- Loss of biodiversity;
- Environmental degradation;
- Increased diseases;
- Pollution of water bodies;
- Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
- Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
- Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies

- Creation of ghost towns;
- Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
- Acid mine drainage;
- Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
- Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy

- The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
- Lack of organisation for mining communities;
- The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
- Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
- Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
- Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
- Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
- The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
- Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
- Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
• Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe

Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up … It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be … a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years.¹ The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411156
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’2 Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

**Background & History**

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP’s political-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
Review of African Political Economy

selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results: Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rossner, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rossner, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term *lêve-lêve* (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having *caused* the coup, the coup *comes to matter* because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

Anticipation

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set-up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imagination of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo-mean national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and ethnologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Editor’s Note


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.

See also, Association of Concerned African Scholars at http://concernedafricascholars.org

Founded in 1979, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of Africa and US government policy, developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States, and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.

Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;

2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;

3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and

4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

**Spinning Controversy**

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbach with – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared *persona non grata* by the DRC government in July 2007.

The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest.

The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwean tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

China in the D.R. Congo

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate. 9

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

Henry Kippin, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

**Timeline of Events**

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.¹

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’²

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.3

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA).4 They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere.5 This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically demon-

strate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … SATAwu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.6

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements.7 The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’8 It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.9
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign.\textsuperscript{10} IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’\textsuperscript{11}. The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, offloading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China.\textsuperscript{12}

Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

**Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics**

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world.

Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.\textsuperscript{13}

Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyperspace, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe. His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

**South-South Solidarity**

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVFR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared. This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May. Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms.’

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded. The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals. Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes

1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.


10. Dube interview.


13. Dawson interview.


15. Dawson interview.


17. Dawson interview.

18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.


23. Dawson interview.

24. Dawson interview.
Child Poverty in Africa

Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and well-being of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational...
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005).

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

**Food Security & AIDS**

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs – irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkelsen), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOS, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes


2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).


4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).


7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
Neglect); Steering Committee members are Assefa Bequele (African Child Policy Forum), Tounkara Tambake (African Movement of Working Children), Moussa Sissoko (Coalition of African NGOs Working with Children), Fabrizio Terenzio (ENDA TM Jeunesse Action), Samantha Waterhouse (Resources aimed at Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect), George Nyakora (SOS Kinderdorf), Stella Ayo Odongo (Ugandan Child Rights NGO network). Individuals can join as well as organizations. Wambui Njuguna was elected President and Moussa Sissoko Vice President; ACPF will provide the Secretariat. In addition five regional custodians were elected (using the AU demarcation of African regions).

References


Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique

João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrão, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridião, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trênsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trênsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411222
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (IICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luís Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...) Eu o PovoVou aprender a lutar do lado da NaturezaVou ser camarada de armas dos quatro elementos [a terra, o ar, a água e o fogo].1 (…) I the People will learn to fight with Nature at my side I will be comrade of arms with the four elements- [earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].2

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against apartheid.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular – if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner. Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period. In 1980 the first issue of the journal *Estudos Moçambicanos* on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEA’s: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrière d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.). On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call *marketing*, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present. And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism. The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslow, António Pacheco, David

Briefings: Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique 505
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeier, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchín, John Saul and also Pierre-Philippe Rey, Claude Meilllassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Vershuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’. That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Said, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority. Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometime many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

**Endnotes**


6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.

7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.


As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008).

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;

- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);

- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;

- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;

- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;

- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;

- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production

In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

---

**Table 1: African Countries that import all their petroleum products, & their major grains imports as a per cent of domestic apparent consumption, ranked by prevalence of undernourishment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauretania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

---

**Table 2: Monthly percentage changes in the CPI and share of food expenditures in CPI for selected African countries/groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total CPI</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11

*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.2

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

Vincent Tickner of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Endnotes

1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.

2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

Bibliography

Bello, Walden (2008), Destroying African Agriculture in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org


Evans, Alex (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.


Krishan Bir Chaudary (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, Financial Express, 17 April.


Ray, Daryll E. (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.


At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal//tut/p/_s7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution (http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

But we’re also seeing a new dynamic on the demand side of the ledger in the form of continued strong economic growth worldwide and growing prosperity in developing nations. That translates to a greater demand for food of all kinds and especially higher value foods such as meat and dairy products in nations like India and China where the growing middle class is emerging. That trend increases demand for feed grain for livestock as well.

As we have already seen, there is no demand for feed grains from China and India, and none from Indonesia and Brazil as well. The next smaller countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria – not a very large and growing middle class there. As far as dairy goes, the increases come from internal production not international markets. In fact, China and India have increased their consumption of these products. India has increased its net exports of these products while China’s net imports have not exceeded 100,000 tonnes in any one year.

Daryll E. Ray holds the Blasingame Chair of Excellence in Agricultural Policy, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, and is the Director of UT’s Agricultural Policy Analysis Center (APAC). (865) 974-7407; Fax: (865) 974-7298; dray@utk.edu; http://www.agpolicy.org. Daryll Ray’s column is written with the research and assistance of Harwood D. Schaffer, Research Associate with APAC. (Reprinted here with thanks.)

* Editor’s Note: the term ‘broiler’ is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets.

Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa

Carol B. Thompson

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?
- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- **Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty**: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;

- **Loss of Biodiversity**: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;

- **GM Contamination**: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contami-
nate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insuffi-
cient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodi-
ties does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a **moratorium** on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?’, Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

**Bibliography**


---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.
### Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, manioc</td>
<td>240,000 ha; jatropha by 2012; 400,000 ha palm oil appropriate; 3m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt's 'agri-cultural revival program'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium EU Commission study</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>To expand beyond 30,000 ha</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar, soy, sorghum Palm Oil</td>
<td>3m ha palm oil plantation planned; 12m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries) has 18% of global rainforests World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/ Germany</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which 87% destroyed forests of elephant sanctuary 325,000 ha</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase to 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy LHB/Israel Hovey Ag./Israel Becco Biofuels Natl Biodiesel Corp/ both USA</td>
<td>Jatropha, castor beans palm oil Jatropha</td>
<td>140,000 to expand to 500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioennergy Intl/ Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/ UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha palm oil sugar, cassava copra</td>
<td>3.5m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil cassava</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned; 400,000 ha 'potential'</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/ Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha, sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize; 3m ha 'former home-lands' available</td>
<td>'Govt seeking investment', May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha allocated by govt 18,000 ha</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>400,000 proposed</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia, Indonesia PROKON/Germany</td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed palm oil Jatropha</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira Forest saved but 6,000 cleared on Kalangala, Bugala Islands</td>
<td>Stopped by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIDCO</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha, cassava</td>
<td>45,000 ha now; 500,000 ha 'available' for cultivation</td>
<td>Forest reserves available for cultivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo

8 February 1947 - 6 March 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter distain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411354
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

**Susanne D. Mueller**, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Mining Investment & Community Struggles

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through ‘boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) gives the power to the President to acquire land for mining through compulsory acquisition or to authorise its occupation and use (Section 2 of Act 703).

The Challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;

- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;

- Payment of Income tax;

- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);
Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier.

Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts

One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

- Social disruption;
- Capital flight;
- Displacement of communities;
- Resettlement/Relocation problems;
- Low compensation;
- Land use conflicts;
- Loss of biodiversity;
- Environmental degradation;
- Increased diseases;
- Pollution of water bodies;
- Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
- Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
- Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies

- Creation of ghost towns;
- Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
- Acid mine drainage;
- Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
- Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy

- The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
- Lack of organisation for mining communities;
- The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
- Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
- Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
- Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
- Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
- The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
- Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
- Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels.
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe

Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up … It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be … a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years.1 The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411156
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’ Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

Background & History

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.
selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results; Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spott ed signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term lêve-lêve (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

Anticipation

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set-up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imaginations of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo mean national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes
1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Editor’s Note


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.

See also, Association of Concerned African Scholars at http://concernedafricanscholars.org

Founded in 1979, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of Africa and US government policy, developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States, and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.

Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;
2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;
3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and
4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

Spinning Controversy

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbach with – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared persona non grata by the DRC government in July 2007.

The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest.

The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwean tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

China in the D.R. Congo

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate.9

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

Henry Kippin, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

Timeline of Events

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.¹

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’²

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.\(^3\)

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA).\(^4\) They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere.\(^5\) This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

\[
\text{We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically dem-}
\]

onstrate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … Satawu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.\(^6\)

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements.\(^7\) The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’\(^8\) It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.\(^9\)
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign. IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’. The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, off-loading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China. Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world. Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.

Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyperspace, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, and rumours circulated that the ship had ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe. His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

South-South Solidarity

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared.\(^{21}\) This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May. Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms.’\(^{22}\)

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded.\(^{23}\) The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals.\(^{24}\) Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes

1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.
10. Dube interview.
13. Dawson interview.
15. Dawson interview.
17. Dawson interview.
18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.
23. Dawson interview.
24. Rimmer interview.
Child Poverty in Africa

Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and well-being of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411214
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005).

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

Food Security & AIDS

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs – irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkellsen), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOs, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes


2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).


4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).


7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
References


Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique

João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrão, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridão, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trênsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trênsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (IICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luis Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...)

Eu o Povo
Vou aprender a lutar do lado
da Natureza
Vou ser camarada de armas
dos quatro elementos [a terra, o ar, a água e o fogo].

(...) I the People
will learn to fight with Nature at my side
will be comrade of arms with the four elements-
[earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against apartheid.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular – if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner. Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period. In 1980 the first issue of the journal *Estudos Moçambicanos* on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call *marketing*, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present. And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism. The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslow, António Pacheco, David
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeyer, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchin, John Saul and also Pierre-Philippe Rey, Claude Meillassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Vershuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’.9 That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Saïd, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority.10 Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometime many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

Endnotes


4. See Centro de Estudos Africanos, Problemas de transformação rural na Província de Gaza, Um estudo sobre a articulação entre aldeias comunais selecionadas cooperativas agrícolas e a Unidade de Produção do Baixo Limpopo, Maputo: CEA, 1979; A Transformação da Agricultura Familiar na Província de Nampula, Maputo : CEA., 1980; and Comercialização agrária : métodos de planificação, Maputo: CEA, 1982 or Comercialização agrária ao nível distrital : um estudo sobre o Alto Molocue, Maputo: CEA, 1982


6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.

7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.


Africa: International Food Price Rises & Volatility

Vincent Tickner

As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias1 has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008)

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;
- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);
- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;
- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;
- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;
- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;
- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production

In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauretania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total CPI</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11
*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

Endnotes

1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.

2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

Bibliography

Bello, Walden (2008), Destroying African Agriculture in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org


Evans, Alex (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.


Krishan Bir Chaudary (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, Financial Express, 17 April.


Ray, Daryll E. (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.


Vincent Tickner of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.


USDA Top Officials vs. USDA Data
Daryll E. Ray

A couple of weeks ago (30 May 2008) we wrote a column in which we said:

China has increased its consumption of meats [beef, pork, broilers*] at a rate well above the rate of population increase.

We also noted,

China produces virtually all of the meat that is domestically consumed, and then some. In fact China was a net meat exporter for the last 7 years and 14 of the last 18 years.

At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution (http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

But we’re also seeing a new dynamic on the demand side of the ledger in the form of continued strong economic growth world-wide and growing prosperity in developing nations. That translates to a greater demand for food of all kinds and especially higher value foods such as meat and dairy products in nations like India and China where the growing middle class is emerging. That trend increases demand for feed grain for livestock as well.

As we have already seen, there is no demand for feed grains from China and India, and none from Indonesia and Brazil as well. The next smaller countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria – not a very large and growing middle class there. As far as dairy goes, the increases come from internal production not international markets. In fact, China and India have increased their consumption of these products. India has increased its net exports of these products while China’s net imports have not exceeded 100,000 tonnes in any one year.

Daryll E. Ray holds the Blasingame Chair of Excellence in Agricultural Policy, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, and is the Director of UT’s Agricultural Policy Analysis Center (APAC). (865) 974-7407; Fax: (865) 974-7298; dray@utk.ed; http://www.agpolicy.org. Daryll Ray’s column is written with the research and assistance of Harwood D. Schaffer, Research Associate with APAC. (Reprinted here with thanks.)

*Editor’s Note: the term ‘broiler’ is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets.*

Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa

Carol B. Thompson

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?
- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- **Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty**: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;

- **Loss of Biodiversity**: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;

- **GM Contamination**: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contaminate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a *moratorium* on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references:

**Bibliography**


---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.
## Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, manioc</td>
<td>240,000 ha, jatropha by 2012; 400,000 ha palm oil appropriate, 3m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt's 'agri-cultural revival program'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium EU Commission study</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>To expand beyond 30,000 ha</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar soy, sorghum Palm Oil</td>
<td>3m ha palm oil plantation planned; 12m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries) has 18% of global rainforests World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/Germany</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which 87% destroyed forests of elephant sanctuary 352,000 ha</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase to 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy</td>
<td>Jatropha castor beans palm oil Jatropha</td>
<td>140,000 to expand to 500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LHB/Israel</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>125,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioenegy Intl/ Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha palm oil sugar, cassava copra Jatropha</td>
<td>3.5m ha 'potential'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil cassava</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned; 400,000 ha 'potential'</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha,sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize; 3m ha 'former homelands' available</td>
<td>'Govt seeking investment', May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha allocated by govt 18,000 ha</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK; Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>400,000 proposed</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia, Indonesia PROKON/Germany</td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed palm oil Jatropha</td>
<td>8,000 ha, 10,000 ha</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers Kigoma Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira Forest saved but 6,000 cleared on Kalangala, Bugala Islands</td>
<td>Stopped by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIDCO</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha, cassava</td>
<td>45,000 ha now; 500,000 ha 'available' for cultivation</td>
<td>Forest reserves available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo

8 FEBRUARY 1947 - 6 MARCH 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE's issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter distain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

_Susanne D. Mueller_, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Mining Investment & Community Struggles

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through 'boom and bust cycles'. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
Weak environmental standards;
Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) gives the power to the President to acquire land for mining through compulsory acquisition or to authorise its occupation and use (Section 2 of Act 703).

The Challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;

- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;

- Payment of Income tax;

- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);

---

Figure 1: Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana

---
• Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

• Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts

One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

• Social disruption;
• Capital flight;
• Displacement of communities;
• Resettlement/Relocation problems;
• Low compensation;
• Land use conflicts;
• Loss of biodiversity;
• Environmental degradation;
• Increased diseases;
• Pollution of water bodies;
• Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
• Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
• Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies

• Creation of ghost towns;
• Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
• Acid mine drainage;
• Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
• Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy

• The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
• Lack of organisation for mining communities;
• The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
• Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
• Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
• Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
• Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
• The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
• Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
• Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities' view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels;
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities' concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

**Daniel Owusu-Koranteng** and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

**Bibliography**


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


—

**Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe**

**Gisa Weszkalnys**

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up … It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be … a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years.¹ The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-

**DOI:** 10.1080/03056240802411156
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?2 Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse affecting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

**Background & History**

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP politico-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results: Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

**Diagnosing the Resource Curse**

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term lêve-lêve (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

**Anticipation**

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set-up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

**Conclusions**

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imaginations of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo-mean national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Editor’s Note


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.

See also, Association of Concerned African Scholars at http://concernedafricascholars.org

Founded in 1979, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of Africa and US government policy, developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States, and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.

Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;

2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;

3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and

4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

**Spinning Controversy**

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian3 is Billy Rautenbachwith – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared *persona non grata* by the DRC government in July 2007.4

The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21),5 which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwian President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest.6

The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing,7 but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwian tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.8

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

China in the D.R. Congo

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate.\(^9\)

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

Henry Kippin, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

### Timeline of Events

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.\(^1\)

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’\(^2\)

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.³

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA).⁴ They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere.⁵ This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically demonstrate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … Satawu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.⁶

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements.⁷ The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’⁸ It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.⁹
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign.\(^{10}\) IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’.\(^{11}\) The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, offloading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China.\(^{12}\) Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

### Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world.

Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.\(^{13}\)

Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyperspace, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the...
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville,\(^\text{14}\) and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.\(^\text{15}\)

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe.\(^\text{16}\) His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.\(^\text{17}\)

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

**South-South Solidarity**

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country — few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared. This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May. Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms.’

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded. The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals. Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes

1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.
10. Dube interview.
13. Dawson interview.
15. Dawson interview.
17. Dawson interview.
18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.
23. Dawson interview.
24. Rimmer interview.
Child Poverty in Africa

Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and well-being of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality. Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health. War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance. One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability. Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005). If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

Food Security & AIDS

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs – irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkelsen), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC).7 AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOs, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes


2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).


4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).


7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
Neglect); Steering Committee members are Assefa Bequele (African Child Policy Forum), Tounkara Tambake (African Movement of Working Children), Moussa Sissoko (Coalition of African NGOs Working with Children), Fabrizio Terenzio (ENDA TM Jeunesse Action), Samantha Waterhouse (Resources aimed at Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect), George Nyakora (SOS Kinderdorf), Stella Ayo Odongo (Ugandan Child Rights NGO network). Individuals can join as well as organizations. Wambui Njuguna was elected President and Moussa Sissoko Vice President; ACPF will provide the Secretariat. In addition five regional custodians were elected (using the AU demarcation of African regions).

References


Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique

João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrão, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridão, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trânsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trânsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411222
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (IICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luis Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...) Eu o Povo
Vou aprender a lutar do lado
da Natureza
Vou ser camarada de armas
dos quatro elementos
[a terra, o ar, a água e o fogo].¹

(…) I the People
I will learn to fight with Nature
at my side
will be
comrade of arms with the four elements-
[earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study *Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana* [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].²

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against *apartheid*.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular – if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner.3 Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period.4 In 1980 the first issue of the journal *Estudos Moçambicanos* on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEAs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call *marketing*, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present. And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism. The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslow, António Pacheco, David...
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeier, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchin, John Saul and also Pierre-Philipe Rey, Claude Meillassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Verschuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’. That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Said, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority. Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometime many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

Endnotes


4. See Centro de Estudos Africanos, Problemas de transformação rural na Província de Gaza, Um estudo sobre a articulação entre aldeias comunais selecionadas cooperativas agrícolas e a Unidade de Produção do Baixo Limpopo, Maputo: CEA, 1979; A Transformação da Agricultura Familiar na Província de Nampula, Maputo : CEA., 1980; and Comercialização agrária : métodos de planificação, Maputo: CEA, 1982 or Comercialização agrária ao nível distrital : um estudo sobre o Alto Molocue, Maputo: CEA, 1982


6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.

7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.


As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008).

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;

- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);

- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;

- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;

- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;

- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;

- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production. In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2): The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauretania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Monthly percentage changes in the CPI and share of food expenditures in CPI for selected African countries/groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total CPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11

*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.2

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

**Endnotes**

1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.

2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

**Bibliography**

**Bello, Walden** (2008), *Destroying African Agriculture* in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org


**Evans, Alex** (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.


**Krishan Bir Chaudary** (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, *Financial Express*, 17 April.

**MacMillan, Tom** (editorial) Vol. 3, issue 2, summer 2008 <www.foodethicscouncil.org>


**Ray, Daryll E.** (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, *Weekly Policy Articles*, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, *Weekly Policy Articles*, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.

**USDA Top Officials vs. USDA Data**

*Darryl E. Ray*

A couple of weeks ago (30 May 2008) we wrote a column in which we said:

*China has increased its consumption of meats [beef, pork, broilers*] at a rate well above the rate of population increase.*

We also noted,

*China produces virtually all of the meat that is domestically consumed, and then some. In fact China was a net meat exporter for the last 7 years and 14 of the last 18 years.*

At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

*If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue ([http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml)).*

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution [http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx]) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

*Editor’s Note: the term ‘broiler’ is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets.*
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?

- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- **Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty**: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;

- **Loss of Biodiversity**: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;

- **GM Contamination**: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contaminate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a *moratorium* on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?,’ Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

**Bibliography**


---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.
## Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, manioc</td>
<td>240,000 ha, jatropha by 2012; 400,000 ha palm oil appropriate; 3m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt's 'agri-cultural revival program'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium EU Commission study</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>To expand beyond 30,000 ha</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar soy, sorghum</td>
<td>3m ha palm oil plantation planned; 12m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries) has 18% of global rainforests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRCongo</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Palm Oil</td>
<td>125,000 ha</td>
<td>World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/Germany</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which 87% destroyed forests of elephant sanctuary</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase to 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy</td>
<td>Jatropha, castor beans, palm oil</td>
<td>325,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LHB/Israel</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>140,000 to expand to 500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hovey Ag./Israel</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>125,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natl Biodiesel Corp/both USA</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioenergy Int/ Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, cassava copra</td>
<td>3.5m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil, cassava</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned; 400,000 ha 'potential'</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha, sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize; 3m ha 'former home-lands' available</td>
<td>'Govt seeking investment', May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha allocated by govt</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>18,000 ha</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia, Indonesia PROKON/Germany</td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed</td>
<td>400,000 proposed</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>palm oil</td>
<td>8,000 ha</td>
<td>Kigoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>10,000 ha</td>
<td>Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira</td>
<td>Forest saved but 6,000 cleared on Kalangala, Bugala Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIDCO</td>
<td></td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha, cassava</td>
<td>45,000 ha now; 500,000 ha 'available' for cultivation</td>
<td>Forest reserves available for cultivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter distain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

Susanne D. Mueller, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Mining Investment & Community Struggles

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 million in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through ‘boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) gives the power to the President to acquire land for mining through compulsory acquisition or to authorise its occupation and use (Section 2 of Act 703).

The Challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;
- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;
- Payment of Income tax;
- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);
Review of African Political Economy

- Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

- Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts

One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

- Social disruption;
- Capital flight;
- Displacement of communities;
- Resettlement/Relocation problems;
- Low compensation;
- Land use conflicts;
- Loss of biodiversity;
- Environmental degradation;
- Increased diseases;
- Pollution of water bodies;
- Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
- Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
- Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies

- Creation of ghost towns;
- Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
- Acid mine drainage;
- Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
- Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy

- The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
- Lack of organisation for mining communities;
- The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
- Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
- Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
- Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
- Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
- The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
- Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
- Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels;
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe

Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up ... It creates a mirage in people's heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there's going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that's probably a good thing, for if there was, it's just going to be ... a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years.1 The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’ Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

**Background & History**

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP politico-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results: Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term lêve-lêve (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

**Anticipation**

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they laid the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people's wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people's preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imaginations of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo-means national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Editor’s Note


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.

See also, Association of Concerned African Scholars at http://concernedafricascholars.org

Founded in 1979, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of Africa and US government policy, developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States, and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.

Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin.1 It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’2 – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;
2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;
3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and
4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

Spinning Controversy

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbach with – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared persona non grata by the DRC government in July 2007.

The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest.

The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwean tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

China in the D.R. Congo

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate.9

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

Henry Kippin, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

### Timeline of Events

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.¹

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’²

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.5

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA).4 They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere.5 This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically demon-

strate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … Satawu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.6

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements.7 The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’8 It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.9
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign.10 IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’.11 The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, off-loading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China.12 Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world.

Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.13 Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyperspace, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe. His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

South-South Solidarity

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared.21 This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May. Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms.’22

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded. The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals.24 Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes

1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.
10. Dube interview.
13. Dawson interview.
15. Dawson interview.
17. Dawson interview.
18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.
23. Dawson interview.
24. Dawson interview.
Child Poverty in Africa

Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and well-being of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411214
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational

---

**Child poverty rates before and after social transfers EU, 2003**

![Graph showing child poverty rates before and after social transfers in EU countries in 2003](image-url)
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005).

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

**Food Security & AIDS**

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs – irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkelsen), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOs, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes
2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).
4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).
7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
Neglect); Steering Committee members are Assefa Bequele (African Child Policy Forum), Tounkara Tambake (African Movement of Working Children), Moussa Sissoko (Coalition of African NGOs Working with Children), Fabrizio Terenzio (ENDA TM Jeunesse Action), Samantha Waterhouse (Resources aimed at Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect), George Nyakora (SOS Kinderdorf), Stella Ayo Odongo (Ugandan Child Rights NGO network). Individuals can join as well as organizations. Wambui Njuguna was elected President and Moussa Sissoko Vice President; ACPF will provide the Secretariat. In addition five regional custodians were elected (using the AU demarcation of African regions).

References


Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique

João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrião, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridão, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trânsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trânsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411222
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (IICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luís Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...) Eu o Povo
Vou aprender a lutar do lado
da Natureza
Vou ser camarada de armas
dos quatro elementos[a terra, o ar, a água e o fogo].

(...) I the People
will learn to
fight with Nature at my side
will be
comrade of arms with the four elements-
[earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study *Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana* [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against apartheid.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular – if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner. Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period. In 1980 the first issue of the journal Estudos Moçambicanos on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call marketing, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present.\textsuperscript{5} And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.\textsuperscript{6}

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.\textsuperscript{7}

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism.\textsuperscript{8} The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslow, António Pacheco, David
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeier, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchin, John Saul and also Pierre-Philippe Rey, Claude Meillassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Verschuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’. That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Said, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority. Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometime many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

Endnotes

4. See Centro de Estudos Africanos, Problemas de transformação rural na Província de Gaza, Um estudo sobre a articulação entre aldeias comunais selecionadas cooperativas agrícolas e a Unidade de Produção do Baixo Limpopo, Maputo: CEA, 1979; A Transformação da Agricultura Familiar na Província de Nampula, Maputo : CEA., 1980; and Comercialização agrária : métodos de planificação, Maputo: CEA, 1982 or Comercialização agrária ao nível distrital : um estudo sobre o Alto Molocue, Maputo: CEA, 1982
6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.
7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.
Africa: International Food Price Rises & Volatility

Vincent Tickner

As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008)

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411248
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;
- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);
- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;
- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;
- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;
- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;
- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production

In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Monthly percentage changes in the CPI and share of food expenditures in CPI for selected African countries/groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11

*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;

- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;

- the developed economy philan-thropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;

- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;

- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.²

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

**Vincent Tickner** of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

**Endnotes**

1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.

2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

**Bibliography**

**Bello, Walden** (2008), *Destroying African Agriculture* in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org


**Evans, Alex** (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.


**Krishan Bir Chaudary** (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, *Financial Express*, 17 April.


**Ray, Daryll E.** (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, *Weekly Policy Articles*, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, *Weekly Policy Articles*, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.


At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7.0_10B?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution (http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

* Editor’s Note: the term ‘broiler’ is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets.

Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa

Carol B. Thompson

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?
- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- **Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty**: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;
- **Loss of Biodiversity**: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;
- **GM Contamination**: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contami-
nate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a moratorium on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?,’ Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

**Bibliography**


---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.
## Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, manioc</td>
<td>240,000 ha; jatropha by 2012; 400,000 ha palm oil appropriate; 3m ha ‘available’</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt’s ‘agricultural revival program’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium EU Commission study</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>To expand beyond 29,8m ha</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar soy, sorghum, Palm Oil</td>
<td>3m ha palm oil plantation planned; 12m ha ‘available’</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries) has 18% of global rainforests World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/Germany</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which 87% destroyed forests of elephant sanctuary</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase to 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy</td>
<td>Jatropha, castor beans palm oil</td>
<td>125,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LHB/Israel</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>140,000 to expand to 500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hovey Ag./Israel</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Becco Biofuels</td>
<td>125,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natl Biodiesel Corp/both USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2m ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioenegy Intl/ Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil sugar, cassava copra</td>
<td>3.5m ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil cassava</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned; 400,000 ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha, sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize; 3m ha ‘former homelands’ available</td>
<td>‘Govt seeking investment’, May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha allocated by govt 18,000 ha</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>18,000 ha</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia, Indonesia PROKON/Germany</td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed palm oil</td>
<td>400,000 proposed</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers Kigoma Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira Forest saved but 6,000 cleared on Kalangala, Bugala Islands</td>
<td>Stopped by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIDCO</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha, cassava</td>
<td>45,000 ha now; 500,000 ha ‘available’ for cultivation</td>
<td>Forest reserves available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo

8 FEBRUARY 1947 - 6 MARCH 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter distain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411354
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

*Susanne D. Mueller*, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Mining Investment & Community Struggles

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through ‘boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;
- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;
- Payment of Income tax;
- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);

---

**Figure 1: Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana**

![Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana](image-url)
• Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

• Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts

One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

• Social disruption;
• Capital flight;
• Displacement of communities;
• Resettlement/Relocation problems;
• Low compensation;
• Land use conflicts;
• Loss of biodiversity;
• Environmental degradation;
• Increased diseases;
• Pollution of water bodies;
• Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
• Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
• Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies

• Creation of ghost towns;
• Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
• Acid mine drainage;
• Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
• Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy

• The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
• Lack of organisation for mining communities;
• The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
• Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
• Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
• Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
• Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
• The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
• Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
• Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels;
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe
Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up ... It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be ... a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years. The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411156
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’ Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

**Background & History**

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP politico-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
Review of African Political Economy

selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja.

President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results: Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term lêve-lêve (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

Anticipation

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set-up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imagination of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo-means national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


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.

Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

**Global Witness & the TGI**

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the *Tribunal de Grand Instance* (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;
2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;
3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and
4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

Spinning Controversy

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbachwith – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared persona non grata by the DRC government in July 2007.

The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest.

The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwean tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

China in the D.R. Congo

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate.9

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

Henry Kippin, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

**Timeline of Events**

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.¹

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: *‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’*²

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile. 3

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA). 4 They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere. 5 This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically demon-

strate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … Satawu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008. 6

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements. 7 The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’ 8 It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa. 9
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign.10 IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’.11 The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, offloading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China.12 Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world.

Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.13 Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyperspace, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe. His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

South-South Solidarity

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
Review of African Political Economy

territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared. This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May. Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms.’

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded. The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals. Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes

1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.


10. Dube interview.


13. Dawson interview.


15. Dawson interview.


17. Dawson interview.

18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.


23. Dawson interview.

24. Rimmer interview.
Child Poverty in Africa

Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and wellbeing of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411214
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational

---

**Child poverty rates before and after social transfers EU, 2003**

![Graph showing child poverty rates before and after social transfers EU, 2003](image-url)
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005).

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

Food Security & AIDS

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs—irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkelsen), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOS, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes
2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).
4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).
7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and...
Neglect); Steering Committee members are Assefa Bequele (African Child Policy Forum), Tounkara Tambake (African Movement of Working Children), Moussa Sissoko (Coalition of African NGOs Working with Children), Fabrizio Terenzio (ENDA TM Jeunesse Action), Samantha Waterhouse (Resources aimed at Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect), George Nyakora (SOS Kinderdorf), Stella Ayo Odongo (Ugandan Child Rights NGO network). Individuals can join as well as organizations. Wambui Njuguna was elected President and Moussa Sissoko Vice President; ACPF will provide the Secretariat. In addition five regional custodians were elected (using the AU demarcation of African regions).

References


Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique

João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrião, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridião, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trênsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Graveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trênsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411222
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in...
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (IICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luís Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...) Eu o Povo
Vou aprender a lutar do lado
da Natureza
Vou ser camarada de armas
dos quatro elementos
[earth, air, water and fire].1

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].2

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against apartheid.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular – if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner. Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period. In 1980 the first issue of the journal Estudos Moçambicanos on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEAs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call marketing, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present.\textsuperscript{5} And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.\textsuperscript{6}

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.\textsuperscript{7}

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism.\textsuperscript{8} The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslow, António Pacheco, David
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeier, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchlin, John Saul and also Pierre-Philippe Rey, Claude Meillassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Vershuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’. That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Saïd, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority. Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometimes many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

Endnotes
4. See Centro de Estudos Africanos, Problemas de transformação rural na Província de Gaza, Um estudo sobre a articulação entre aldeias comunais selecionadas cooperativas agrícolas e a Unidade de Produção do Baixo Limpopo, Maputo: CEA, 1979; A Transformação da Agricultura Familiar na Província de Nampula, Maputo : CEA., 1980; and Comercialização agrária : métodos de planificação, Maputo: CEA, 1982 or Comercialização agrária ao nível distrital : um estudo sobre o Alto Molocue, Maputo: CEA, 1982
6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.
7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.
As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008)

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;

- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);

- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;

- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;

- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;

- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;

- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production
In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

Table 1: African Countries that import all their petroleum products, & their major grains imports as a per cent of domestic apparent consumption, ranked by prevalence of undernourishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauretania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total CPI</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Total CPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11

*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

Vincent Tickner of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Endnotes
1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.

2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

Bibliography
Bello, Walden (2008), Destroying African Agriculture in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org
Evans, Alex (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.
Krishan Bir Chaudary (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, Financial Express, 17 April.
Ray, Daryll E. (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.


USDA Top Officials vs. USDA Data
Daryll E. Ray

A couple of weeks ago (30 May 2008) we wrote a column in which we said:

China has increased its consumption of meats [beef, pork, broilers] at a rate well above the rate of population increase.

We also noted,

China produces virtually all of the meat that is domestically consumed, and then some. In fact China was a net meat exporter for the last 7 years and 14 of the last 18 years.

At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution (http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

But we’re also seeing a new dynamic on the demand side of the ledger in the form of continued strong economic growth worldwide and growing prosperity in developing nations. That translates to a greater demand for food of all kinds and especially higher value foods such as meat and dairy products in nations like India and China where the growing middle class is emerging. That trend increases demand for feed grain for livestock as well.

As we have already seen, there is no demand for feed grains from China and India, and none from Indonesia and Brazil as well. The next smaller countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria – not a very large and growing middle class there. As far as dairy goes, the increases come from internal production not international markets. In fact, China and India have increased their consumption of these products. India has increased its net exports of these products while China’s net imports have not exceeded 100,000 tonnes in any one year.

Daryll E. Ray holds the Blasingame Chair of Excellence in Agricultural Policy, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, and is the Director of UT’s Agricultural Policy Analysis Center (APAC). (865) 974-7407; Fax: (865) 974-7298; dray@utk.edu; http://www.agpolicy.org. Daryll Ray’s column is written with the research and assistance of Harwood D. Schaffer, Research Associate with APAC. (Reprinted here with thanks.)

*Editor’s Note: the term ‘broiler’ is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets.*

Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa

Carol B. Thompson

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?
- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- **Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty**: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;

- **Loss of Biodiversity**: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;

- **GM Contamination**: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contami-
nate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a *moratorium* on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?’, Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

**Bibliography**


**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.
### Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil,</td>
<td>240,000 ha;</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt's 'agricultural revival program'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sugar, manioc</td>
<td>jatropha by 2012;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>400,000 ha palm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>oil appropriate';</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3m ha 'available'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>To expand beyond</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>EU Commission study</td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR Congo</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar</td>
<td>29.8m ha</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>soy, sorghum</td>
<td>'very suitable'</td>
<td>has 18% of global rainforests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3m ha palm oil</td>
<td>World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>plantation planned;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12m ha 'available'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/ Germany</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase to 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>which 87% destroyed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>forests of elephant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sanctuary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>325,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LHB/Israel</td>
<td>castor beans</td>
<td>140,000 to expand to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hovey Ag./Israel</td>
<td>palm oil</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Becco Biofuels</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>125,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natl Biodiesel Corp/ Nabi Biodiesel Corp/ both USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioenergy Intl/ Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/ UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>3.5m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>palm oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sugar, cassava</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned;</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>copra</td>
<td>400,000 ha 'potential'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/ Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha, sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize;</td>
<td>'Govt seeking investment', May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3m ha 'former home-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lands' available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>18,000 ha</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sugar cane</td>
<td>400,000 proposed</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>proposed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>palm oil</td>
<td>8,000 ha</td>
<td>Kigoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>10,000 ha</td>
<td>Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira</td>
<td>Stopped by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest saved but 6,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cleared on Kalangala,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bugala Islands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha,</td>
<td>45,000 ha now;</td>
<td>Forest reserves available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cassava</td>
<td>500,000 ha 'available' for cultivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo

8 February 1947 - 6 March 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter disdain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

Susanne D. Mueller, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Mining Investment & Community Struggles

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 million in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through ‘boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) gives the power to the President to acquire land for mining through compulsory acquisition or to authorise its occupation and use (Section 2 of Act 703).

The Challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;
- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;
- Payment of Income tax;
- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);

![Figure 1: Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana](image)
Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts
One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

- Social disruption;
- Capital flight;
- Displacement of communities;
- Resettlement/Relocation problems;
- Low compensation;
- Land use conflicts;
- Loss of biodiversity;
- Environmental degradation;
- Increased diseases;
- Pollution of water bodies;
- Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
- Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
- Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies
- Creation of ghost towns;
- Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
- Acid mine drainage;
- Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
- Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy
- The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
- Lack of organisation for mining communities;
- The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
- Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
- Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
- Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
- Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
- The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
- Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
- Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels;
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe

Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up … It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be … a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years.1 The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’ Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

Background & History

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP’s politico-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
Review of African Political Economy

selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results: Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term *lêve-lêve* (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

Anticipation

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set-up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imaginations of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, São Toméan national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Editor’s Note


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.

See also, Association of Concerned African Scholars at http://concernedafricascholars.org

Founded in 1979, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of Africa and US government policy, developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States, and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.

Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;
2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;
3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and
4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

**Spinning Controversy**

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbach with – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared *persona non grata* by the DRC government in July 2007. The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest.

The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwean tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the...
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

**China in the D.R. Congo**

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate.

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

*Henry Kippin*, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

**Timeline of Events**

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.¹

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’²

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.3

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA).4 They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere.5 This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically demonstrate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … SATAWU’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.6

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements.7 The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’8 It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.9
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign.10 IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’.11 The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, offloading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China.12 Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world. Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.13 Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyper-space, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville,\textsuperscript{14} and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.\textsuperscript{15}

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{16} His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.\textsuperscript{17}

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

\section*{South-South Solidarity}

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared. This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May. Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms.’

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded. The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals. Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes

1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.


10. Dube interview.


13. Dawson interview.


15. Dawson interview.


17. Dawson interview.

18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.


23. Dawson interview.

24. Rimmer interview.
Child Poverty in Africa

Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and well-being of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year's conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children's rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation. Hughes early prevention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes. The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).  

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005).

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

Food Security & AIDS

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs – irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkelsen), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOs, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes


2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).


4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).


7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique
João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrião, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridião, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trênsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trânsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411222
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in...
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (ICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luís Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...) Eu o Povo Vou aprender a lutar do lado da Natureza Vou ser camarada de armas dos quatro elementos [a terra, o ar, a água e o fogo]. (...) I the People will learn to fight with Nature at my side will be comrade of arms with the four elements - [earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study *Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana* [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular – if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner.3 Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period.4 In 1980 the first issue of the journal *Estudos Moçambicanos* on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEAs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call marketing, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present. And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism. The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslow, António Pacheco, David
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeyer, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchin, John Saul and also Pierre-Philippe Rey, Claude Meillassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Vershuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’. That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Said, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority. Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometime many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

Endnotes


4. See Centro de Estudos Africanos, Problemas de transformação rural na Província de Gaza, Um estudo sobre a articulação entre aldeias comunais selecionadas cooperativas agrícolas e a Unidade de Produção do Baixo Limpopo, Maputo: CEA, 1979; A Transformação da Agricultura Familiar na Província de Nampula, Maputo : CEA., 1980; and Comercialização agrária : métodos de planificação, Maputo: CEA, 1982 or Comercialização agrária ao nível distrital : um estudo sobre o Alto Molocue, Maputo: CEA, 1982


6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.

7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.


Africa: International Food Price Rises & Volatility

Vincent Tickner

As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias1 has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008)

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;
- landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);
- smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;
- small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;
- reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;
- establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;
- sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production

In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauretania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Monthly percentage changes in the CPI and share of food expenditures in CPI for selected African countries/groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11

*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.2

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

Vincent Tickner of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Endnotes
1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.

2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

Bibliography
Bello, Walden (2008), Destroying African Agriculture in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org
Evans, Alex (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.
Krishan Bir Chaudary (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, Financial Express, 17 April.
Ray, Daryll E. (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.


USDA Top Officials vs. USDA Data

Daryll E. Ray

A couple of weeks ago (30 May 2008) we wrote a column in which we said:

*China has increased its consumption of meats [beef, pork, broilers] at a rate well above the rate of population increase.*

We also noted,

*China produces virtually all of the meat that is domestically consumed, and then some. In fact China was a net meat exporter for the last 7 years and 14 of the last 18 years.*

At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

*If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).*

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution (http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

"But we’re also seeing a new dynamic on the demand side of the ledger in the form of continued strong economic growth worldwide and growing prosperity in developing nations. That translates to a greater demand for food of all kinds and especially higher value foods such as meat and dairy products in nations like India and China where the growing middle class is emerging. That trend increases demand for feed grain for livestock as well."

As we have already seen, there is no demand for feed grains from China and India, and none from Indonesia and Brazil as well. The next smaller countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria – not a very large and growing middle class there. As far as dairy goes, the increases come from internal production not international markets. In fact, China and India have increased their consumption of these products. India has increased its net exports of these products while China’s net imports have not exceeded 100,000 tonnes in any one year.

*Editor’s Note: the term ‘broiler’ is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets.*

**Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa**

Carol B. Thompson

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

*DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313*
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?
- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?
- Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;
- Loss of Biodiversity: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;
- GM Contamination: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contaminate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a **moratorium** on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?,’ Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

**Bibliography**


---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.
## Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, manioc</td>
<td>240,000 ha, jatropha by 2012; 400,000 ha palm oil appropriate; 3m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt's 'agri-cultural revival program'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>To expand beyond 30,000 ha, 29.8m ha</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>EU Commission study</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar soy, sorghum</td>
<td>3m ha palm oil plantation planned; 12m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries) has 18% of global rainforests. World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR Congo</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Palm Oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/ Germany</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which 87% destroyed forests of elephant sanctuary 325,000 ha</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase to 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy</td>
<td>Jatropha, castor beans, palm oil</td>
<td>140,000 to expand to 500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LHB/Israel/Hovey Ag./Israel Becco Biofuels Naf! Biodiesel Corp/ both USA</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioenergy Intl/ Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil sugar, cassava copra</td>
<td>3.5m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil cassava</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned; 400,000 ha 'potential'</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/ Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha, sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize; 3m ha 'former home-lands' available</td>
<td>'Govt seeking investment', May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>18,000 ha</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia, Indonesia PROKON/Germany</td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed palm oil</td>
<td>400,000 proposed</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers Kigoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>8,000 ha</td>
<td>Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira forest saved but 6,000 cleared on Kalangala, Bugala Islands</td>
<td>Stopped by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIDCO</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha, cassava</td>
<td>45,000 ha now; 500,000 ha 'available' for cultivation</td>
<td>Forest reserves available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo

8 FEBRUARY 1947 - 6 MARCH 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter disdain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411354
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

Susanne D. Mueller, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Mining Investment & Community Struggles
Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through ‘boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The Mines and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) gives the power to the President to acquire land for mining through compulsory acquisition or to authorise its occupation and use (Section 2 of Act 703).

The Challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;
- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;
- Payment of Income tax;
- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);

![Figure 1: Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana](image)
• Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

• Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts

One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

• Social disruption;
• Capital flight;
• Displacement of communities;
• Resettlement/Relocation problems;
• Low compensation;
• Land use conflicts;
• Loss of biodiversity;
• Environmental degradation;
• Increased diseases;
• Pollution of water bodies;
• Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
• Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
• Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies

• Creation of ghost towns;
• Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
• Acid mine drainage;
• Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
• Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy

• The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
• Lack of organisation for mining communities;
• The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
• Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
• Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
• Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
• Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
• The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
• Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
• Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe
Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up ... It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be ... a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years.1 The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’ Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

Background & History

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP politico-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results; Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term lêve-lêve (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

**Anticipation**

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set-up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imagination of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo-mean national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;

2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;

3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and

4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

Spinning Controversy

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbach with – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared persona non grata by the DRC government in July 2007. The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest. The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwean tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

China in the D.R. Congo

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate.9

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

Henry Kippin, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmunds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwaean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

**Timeline of Events**

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.¹

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’²

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.²

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA).⁴ They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere.⁵ This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically dem-

onstrate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … SATAwu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.⁶

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements.⁷ The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’⁸ It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.⁹
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign.\textsuperscript{10} IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’.\textsuperscript{11} The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, offloading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China.\textsuperscript{12} Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

**Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics**

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world.

Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.\textsuperscript{13}

Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyperspace, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe. His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and co-ordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

**South-South Solidarity**

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared. This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May.

Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that ‘the Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms’.

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded. The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals. Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes
1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.
10. Dube interview.
13. Dawson interview.
15. Dawson interview.
17. Dawson interview.
18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.
23. Dawson interview.
24. Dawson interview.
Child Poverty in Africa

Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and well-being of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational
The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality...
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005).

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

**Food Security & AIDS**

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs – irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkelson), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOS, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

**Meredeth Turshen**, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes


2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).


4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).


7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique

João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrão, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridão, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trânsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trânsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411222
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (IICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luís Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...)

Eu o Povo
Vou aprender a lutar do lado
da Natureza
Vou ser camarada de armas
dos quatro elementos[a terra, o ar, a água e
o fogo].

(...)

I the People
will learn to
fight with Nature at my side
I will be
comrade of arms with the four elements-
[earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study *Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana* [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against apartheid.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular – if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner. Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period. In 1980 the first issue of the journal Estudos Moçambicanos on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEAs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call marketing, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present.\textsuperscript{5} And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.\textsuperscript{6}

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.\textsuperscript{7}

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism.\textsuperscript{8} The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslove, António Pacheco, David
When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’. 9 That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Said, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority.10 Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometime many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

Endnotes


4. See Centro de Estudos Africanos, Problemas de transformação rural na Província de Gaza, Um estudo sobre a articulação entre aldeias comunais selecionadas cooperativas agrícolas e a Unidade de Produção do Baixo Limpopo, Maputo: CEA, 1979; A Transformação da Agricultura Familiar na Província de Nampula, Maputo : CEA., 1980; and Comercialização agrária : métodos de planificação, Maputo: CEA, 1982 or Comercialização agrária ao nível distrital : um estudo sobre o Alto Molocue, Maputo: CEA, 1982


6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in the 1980s Mozambique.

7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.


Africa: International Food Price Rises & Volatility

Vincent Tickner

As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008)

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;
- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);
- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;
- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;
- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;
- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;
- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production

In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauretania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

### Table 2: Monthly percentage changes in the CPI and share of food expenditures in CPI for selected African countries/groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total CPI</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11

*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.2

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

Vincent Tickner of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Endnotes
1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.
2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

Bibliography
Bello, Walden (2008), Destroying African Agriculture in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org
Evans, Alex (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.
Krishan Bir Chaudary (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, Financial Express, 17 April.
Ray, Daryll E. (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.


At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

But we’re also seeing a new dynamic on the demand side of the ledger in the form of continued strong economic growth worldwide and growing prosperity in developing nations. That translates to a greater demand for food of all kinds and especially higher value foods such as meat and dairy products in nations like India and China where the growing middle class is emerging. That trend increases demand for feed grain for livestock as well.

As we have already seen, there is no demand for feed grains from China and India, and none from Indonesia and Brazil as well. The next smaller countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria – not a very large and growing middle class there. As far as dairy goes, the increases come from internal production not international markets. In fact, China and India have increased their consumption of these products. India has increased its net exports of these products while China’s net imports have not exceeded 100,000 tonnes in any one year.

Daryll E. Ray holds the Blasingame Chair of Excellence in Agricultural Policy, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, and is the Director of UT’s Agricultural Policy Analysis Center (APAC). (865) 974-7407; Fax: (865) 974-7298; dray@utk.ed; http://www.agpolicy.org. Daryll Ray’s column is written with the research and assistance of Harwood D. Schaffer, Research Associate with APAC. (Reprinted here with thanks.)

*Editor’s Note: the term ‘broiler’ is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets*.

---

Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa

Carol B. Thompson

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.  

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?

- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;

- Loss of Biodiversity: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;

- GM Contamination: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contami-
nate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a *moratorium* on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?’, Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

**Bibliography**


---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.
## Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, manioc</td>
<td>240,000 ha; jatropha by 2012; 400,000 ha palm oil appropriate; 3m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to gov't's 'agri-cultural revival program'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium EU Commission study</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>To expand beyond 30,000 ha</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar soy, sorghum Palm Oil</td>
<td>3m ha palm oil plantation planned; 12m ha 'available'</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries) has 18% of global rainforests; World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/Germany</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which 87% destroyed forests of elephant sanctuary 325,000 ha</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase to 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun BioFuel/UK; LHB/Israel</td>
<td>Jatropha, castor beans, palm oil Jatropha</td>
<td>140,000 to expand to 500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hovey Ag./Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Becco Biofuels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natl Biodiesel Corp/both USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2m ha 'potential'</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioenegy Intl/Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil sugar, cassava copra</td>
<td>3.5m ha 'potential' Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil cassava</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned; 400,000 ha 'potential'</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha, sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize; 3m ha 'former home-lands' available Govt seeking investment', May 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha allocated by gov't 18,000 ha Lindi</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>400,000 proposed In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers Kigoma Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia, Indonesia PROKON/Germany</td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed, palm oil Jatropha</td>
<td>8,000 ha 10,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira Forest saved but 6,000 cleared on Kalangala, Bugala Islands Stopped by civil society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha, cassava</td>
<td>45,000 ha now; 500,000 ha 'available' for cultivation</td>
<td>Forest reserves available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo

8 FEBRUARY 1947 - 6 MARCH 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty-five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter distain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411354
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

Susanne D. Mueller, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

The gold industry goes through ‘boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1st Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1st boom in 1901;

2nd Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3rd Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3rd Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

Mining Investment & Community Struggles
Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

ISSN 0305-6244 Print, 1740-1720 Online/08/030467-55
DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411115
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The Challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;
- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;
- Payment of Income tax;
- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);

Figure 1: Map of Gold Deposits in Ghana
Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts

One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

- Social disruption;
- Capital flight;
- Displacement of communities;
- Resettlement/Relocation problems;
- Low compensation;
- Land use conflicts;
- Loss of biodiversity;
- Environmental degradation;
- Increased diseases;
- Pollution of water bodies;
- Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
- Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
- Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies

- Creation of ghost towns;
- Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
- Acid mine drainage;
- Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
- Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy

- The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
- Lack of organisation for mining communities;
- The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
- Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
- Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
- Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
- Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
- The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
- Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
- Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé and Príncipe

Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up … It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be … a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years.¹ The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411156
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’ Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

Background & History

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP's coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP's own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP’s politico-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results: Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term lêve-lêve (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

**Anticipation**

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Bank’s changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel setup of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imaginations of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo-mean national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Editor’s Note


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.

See also, Association of Concerned African Scholars at http://concernedafricascholars.org

Founded in 1979, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of Africa and US government policy, developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States, and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.

Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;
2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;
3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and
4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

**Spinning Controversy**

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbach with – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared *persona non grata* by the DRC government in July 2007.

The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest.

The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwean tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

China in the D.R. Congo

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate. 9

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

Henry Kippin, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

**Timeline of Events**

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANU-PF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.¹

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’²

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.3

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA).4 They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere.5 This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically demon-

strate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … Satawu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.6

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements.7 The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’8 It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.9
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign.10 IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’.11 The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, off-loading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China.12 Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

**Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics**

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world.

Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.13

Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyper-space, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe. His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

South-South Solidarity

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
territory, arguing that the arrival of the
weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s
political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the
case with all the countries because we
don’t want a situation which will esca-
late the tension in Zimbabwe more than
what it is’, Mwanawasa declared.\(^2\) This
created severe diplomatic tension be-
tween Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both
governments trading insults in the me-
dia on an almost daily basis in May.
Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards
Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic
of his government’s pro-western lean-
ings, but is also a reflection of the
country’s renewed sense of purpose and
prosperity, symbolised by its achieve-
ment of debt relief and rising government
revenue achieved via recent increases in
mine taxes. Having previously clashed
with Zambian domestic civil society over
issues such as constitutional reform,
Zimbabwe provides an issue around
which the Zambian government and its
domestic critics can unite. Despite the
fact that the Chinese are major investors
in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a
mild and somewhat oblique criticism of
their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can
play a very useful role in Zimbabwe
without the use of arms.’\(^2\)

In sharp contrast, the Angolan govern-
ment remains largely impervious to both
internal political pressure and, insu-
lated by high oil prices, international
donor pressure. It is evident that, with-
out the campaign’s efforts and the real-
time scrutiny of the ship’s movements,
the An Yue Jiang would have docked in
Luanda and the armaments would have
been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its
contacts were presented in Luanda at the
time the ship docked; these individuals
were able to monitor the veracity of the
Angolan government’s pledge that the
arms would not be offloaded.\(^2\) The Port
Workers’ Union of Angola appears to
have been an important source of infor-
mation to the campaign; in a country
where independent civil society remains
weak, international trade union connec-
tions appeared all the more significant.
However, IANSA struggled to persuade
Angolan civil society representatives to
make on-the-record statements, for fear
of reprisals.\(^2\) Coverage of the Angolan
situation was also severely limited by the
lack of English-speaking media in the
country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s
rapid announcement that the Zimba-
bwean arms shipment would not be
offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a
reflection of its close and coordinated
relationship with China, which has ap-
parently distanced itself somewhat from
the ailing Mugabe regime in recent
months, having tired of denying Harare’s
unilateral declarations of Chinese in-
vestments in the country, as well as not
being paid for their supplies. Character-
istically, Chinese statements initially
sought to defend the arms shipment as a
normal commercial operation; however,
as has occurred in relation to its opera-
tions in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chi-
nese state is increasingly aware of the
limitations of its attempts to deny any
responsibility for the political conse-
quences of its commercial operations in
Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign
also provided a timely reminder that the
most effective grassroots opposition to
the Mugabe regime has, over the last
decade, been provided not by political
parties, but by civil society and social
movements. Whilst the MDC has created
problems for itself by its western orienta-
tion and partial adoption of neo-liberal
policies, it should not be forgotten that
the party had its origins in the wave of
popular discontent of 1997-99, when the
ZCTU, then headed by Morgan
Tsvangirai, played a central role in es-
ablishing the MDC, which initially pro-
claimed itself a social democratic party.
In its first few years as an independent
political party, the MDC alienated many
of its social movement supporters by
abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes

1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.

6. ‘Satawu cautions on Chinese arms ship still at sea’, SABC news.com, 8 May 2008; http://www.sabcnews.com/af...0,2172,169102,00.html


10. Dube interview.


13. Dawson interview.


15. Dawson interview.


17. Dawson interview.

18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.


23. Dawson interview.

24. Rimmer interview.
Child Poverty in Africa
Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and wellbeing of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411214
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early prevention, and participation (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational

---

**Child poverty rates before and after social transfers EU, 2003**

---
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies.

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

Food Security & AIDS

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs — irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkelsen), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOs, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes

2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).
4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).
7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique
João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrião, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridão, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trênsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trânsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).

References


What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (IICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leonor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luis Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leonor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...) Eu o Povo Vou aprender a lutar do lado da Natureza Vou ser camarada de armas dos quatro elementos[ terra, o ar, a água e o fogo].1 (...) I the People will learn to fight with Nature at my side will be comrade of arms with the four elements— [earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].2

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against apartheid.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular – if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner. Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period. In 1980 the first issue of the journal Estudos Moçambicanos on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEAs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call marketing, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present.⁵ And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.⁶

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.⁷

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism.⁸ The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munslow, António Pacheco, David
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeier, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchin, John Saul and also Pierre-Philippe Rey, Claude Meillassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Vershuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’. That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Said, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority. Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometime many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

**Endnotes**


6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.

7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.


Africa: International Food Price Rises & Volatility

Vincent Tickner

As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008)

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411248
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;

- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);

- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;

- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;

- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;

- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;

- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production

In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

---

**Table 1: African Countries that import all their petroleum products, & their major grains imports as a per cent of domestic apparent consumption, ranked by prevalence of undernourishment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% change</td>
<td>% change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total CPI</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Total CPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMO *</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11

*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.2

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

Endnotes
1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.
2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

Bibliography
Bello, Walden (2008), Destroying African Agriculture in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org
Evans, Alex (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.
Krishan Bir Chaudary (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, Financial Express, 17 April.
Ray, Daryll E. (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.

Vincent Tickner of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.


At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/__s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution (http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil’s exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil’s combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA’s focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China’s 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China’s consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China’s year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China’s production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China’s increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China’s increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil’s agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world’s food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China’s soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain’t seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil’s ability to produce soybeans and corn. China’s imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil’s agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India’s story is much the same as China’s, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

"But we’re also seeing a new dynamic on the demand side of the ledger in the form of continued strong economic growth worldwide and growing prosperity in developing nations. That translates to a greater demand for food of all kinds and especially higher value foods such as meat and dairy products in nations like India and China where the growing middle class is emerging. That trend increases demand for feed grain for livestock as well.

As we have already seen, there is no demand for feed grains from China and India, and none from Indonesia and Brazil as well. The next smaller countries are Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nigeria – not a very large and growing middle class there. As far as dairy goes, the increases come from internal production not international markets. In fact, China and India have increased their consumption of these products. India has increased its net exports of these products while China’s net imports have not exceeded 100,000 tonnes in any one year.

Daryll E. Ray holds the Blasingame Chair of Excellence in Agricultural Policy, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee, and is the Director of UT’s Agricultural Policy Analysis Center (APAC). (865) 974-7407; Fax: (865) 974-7298; dray@utk.ed; http://www.agpolicy.org. Daryll Ray’s column is written with the research and assistance of Harwood D. Schaffer, Research Associate with APAC. (Reprinted here with thanks.)

* Editor’s Note: the term ‘broiler’ is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets.

Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa

Carol B. Thompson

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?
- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;
- Loss of Biodiversity: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;
- GM Contamination: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contaminate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a **moratorium** on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?’, Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol.Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.

---

**Bibliography**


## Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, manioc</td>
<td>240,000 ha; jatropha by 2012; 400,000 ha palm oil appropriate’, 3m ha ‘available’</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt’s‘agri-cultural revival program’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium EU Commission study</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>30,000 ha</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar soy, sorghum Palm Oil</td>
<td>29.8m ha</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries) has 18% of global rainforests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR Congo</td>
<td>Aurantia/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>3m ha palm oil plantation planned; 12m ha ‘available’</td>
<td>World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/ Germany, Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which 87% destroyed forests of elephant sanctuary</td>
<td>325,000 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LHB/Israel, Hovey Ag./Israel Becco Biofuels</td>
<td>Jatropha, castor beans palm oil</td>
<td>140,000 to expand to 500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>125,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2m ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioenergy Intl/ Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/ UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil sugar, cassava copra</td>
<td>3.5m ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil cassava</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned; 400,000 ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/ Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha,sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize; 3m ha ‘former home- lands’ available</td>
<td>‘Govt seeking investment’, May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha allocated by govt</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>18,000 ha</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia, Indonesia PROKON/Germany</td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed palm oil Jatropha</td>
<td>400,000 proposed; 8,000 ha; 10,000 ha</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers Kigoma Jatropha to expand greatly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira Forest saved but 6,000 cleared on Kalangala, Bugala Islands</td>
<td>Stopped by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha, cassava</td>
<td>45,000 ha now; 500,000 ha ‘available’ for cultivation</td>
<td>Forest reserves available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo
8 FEBRUARY 1947 - 6 MARCH 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty-five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter disdain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411354
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

_Susanne D. Mueller_, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
Briefings

Mining Investment & Community Struggles

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Dependence on the mineral sector is central to economic reforms in Africa. These reforms have the objective of increasing economic growth and reducing poverty. Mineral endowed countries such as Ghana have been successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) to the mineral sector through liberalisation of mining codes, which provide generous concessions to foreign multinational mining companies. UNCTAD (2005) indicates that a large proportion of FDI to Africa has gone into the mining sector with the continent attracting mining investment to the tune of $15 billion in 2004. This represented 15% of the global total and a considerable increase of 5% from the mid-1980s.

According to Kwasi Barning (n.d.) foreign exchange earnings from mineral production in Ghana increased from $108 million in 1985 to $710 in 1999. This could be attributed to the gold price hikes, reforms of the mining regulatory framework of Ghana, which provided mining companies generous tax exemptions, facilities for profit repatriation and stability of investment. Mining districts such as the Wassa West District became the location of eight multinational surface mining companies from the late 1980s.

Gold Mining in Ghana – The Jungle Booms

The gold industry goes through ‘boom and bust cycles’. Ghana has experienced three gold rushes in periods described as Jungle Booms. These were:

1\textsuperscript{st} Jungle Boom: 1892 and peaking in 1897. It marked the period of industrial mining in Ghana in places like Tarkwa, Obuasi, Konongo and Prestea. The resistance against British domination during the Yaa Asantewaa War disrupted the 1\textsuperscript{st} boom in 1901;

2\textsuperscript{nd} Jungle Boom: from 1925 when efforts were being made to revive the economic distress associated with the World War One. Also disrupted by World War Two from 1939;

3\textsuperscript{rd} Jungle Boom started in the mid-1980s as part of the efforts to address economic decline of the early 1970s.

Conditions for the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Jungle Boom include but are not limited to:

- Economic decline and debt burden;
- High Gold prices;
- Privatisation of state gold mining concerns;
- Technology for mining low grade ore and adopting cost effective modes of mining; for instance, changing from underground mining to surface mining;
- Neo-Liberal economic policies;
- Strong desire of government to attract FDI through generous incentives, e.g. AngloGold Ashanti and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited have negotiated a retention of 80% of gross mineral sales in off-shore accounts;
• Weak environmental standards;
• Incentives for attracting multinational mining companies;
• Weak and liberal regulatory framework which allowed repatriation of profits; stability agreements; low royalty payments and tax exemptions; over protection for foreign companies in cases of disputes; poor compensation payment regimes and relatively lower remuneration for employees.

Regulatory Frameworks & the Challenges to Community Rights

The weak environmental standards help mining companies to externalise environmental cost, which helps companies to maximise profits. There are no legally binding environmental standards; EPA accepts that there are no laws on cyanide spillages.

Inadequate protection of community rights in the mining law. For example, whilst the 1992 Constitution of Ghana makes provision for citizens to go to the High Court on original Jurisdiction on Compensation issues, in the case of mining, compensation grievances are supposed first to be made to the Minister responsible for mines without direct recourse to the High Court.

Section 20 of the constitution states that ‘Records, documents and information furnished or attained should be treated as confidential and shall not be divulged without the written consent of the holder’. This section gives blanket confidentiality to all information including information on mining impacts on communities and the environment. It thus makes it difficult for the public to have access to reports such as Environmental Audit reports.

The Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703) gives the power to the President to acquire land for mining through compulsory acquisition or to authorise its occupation and use (Section 2 of Act 703).

The Challenge to Development & Governance

The expectation is that the success in attracting FDI in the mining sector would contribute to economic development of Ghana and improve the living conditions of mining communities.

The UNDP concept of development states that the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make human development more democratic and participatory. These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health and clean and safe physical environment. Each individual should also have the opportunity to participate fully in community decisions and to enjoy human, economic and political freedoms (UNDP, 1991).

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees property ownership by individual citizens whilst mineral ownership is vested in the President of the Republic of Ghana. It is the inalienable right of mining communities to use their lands and resources for economic and social wellbeing in the context of the UNDP concept of development.

The mining problem raises the constitutional issue of compulsory acquisition of community lands and properties to be appropriated by private mining companies. Another issue is the appointment of Parliamentarians in mining areas to serve as members of the Board of Directors of mining companies. Parliamentarians who have a constitutional mandate to serve the interest of their electorates work instead to serve corporate interest.

Surface mining is an enclave economic activity. It is predatory on other sectors of the economy. It leads to the loss of land-based economic activities because of the competition between farming and surface mining for land. Newmont’s Ahafo mine would displace about 20,000 farm-
ers at the end of the first and second phases of the mine’s operations. The operations of Goldfields Ghana Limited displaced 30,000 people in 5 years in the late 1980s. Low compensation payment and loss of incomes demonstrates the economic phenomenon often described as the ‘Dutch disease’. For example, Newmont paid 69,000 cedis (about $8) for a Cocoa tree to Cocoa farmers in Kenyase when a Cocoa tree can earn a farmer about half a bag of Cocoa beans for a year (about $25 per year) and the economic life of a Cocoa tree is between 40 and 50 years.

Notwithstanding the failures of compensation to adequately account for the loss of assets and earnings government of Ghana officials and mining company executives argue strongly that the benefits of mining outweigh the costs. The benefits include:

- Payment of royalties: Companies pay 3% of gross minerals mined as royalties but we need to note that the Mining Law sets the royalty payment at 3-6% of the value of gross minerals mined;
- Mining accounts for about 38% of the country’s foreign exchange earnings and yet its contribution to GDP is 5-6%. Contribution of gold production to GDP is far less at about 1.8%;
- Payment of Income tax;
- Mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country (TUC, 2007);
Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) noted that from total mineral revenue of about $870 million in 2003, only $46.7 million, or 5%, was retained in the Ghanaian economy. Newmont’s Ahafo mine, for instance, would contribute $300 million in 20 years to the economy of Ghana but the annual gold production for Ahafo mine is 500,000 ounces at a production cost of $250 per ounce. In 2008 the gold price broke the $1,000 barrier;

Corporate Social Responsibility of mining companies: Private Enterprises Foundation (PEF) estimates that corporate bodies spend 0.5-1% of profit after tax on CSR.

Land Use Conflicts
One of the most significant areas of conflict between mining companies and local communities relates to land. The compulsory acquisition of large tracts of indigenous lands for surface mining operations has unleashed many land use conflicts. Surface mining operations are undertaken in rural communities where the people are predominantly farmers. Some of the consequences of mining investment to Ghana include:

- Social disruption;
- Capital flight;
- Displacement of communities;
- Resettlement/Relocation problems;
- Low compensation;
- Land use conflicts;
- Loss of biodiversity;
- Environmental degradation;
- Increased diseases;
- Pollution of water bodies;
- Cyanide spillages: there had been about 13 officially reported cyanide spillages since the 3rd Jungle boom;
- Destruction of sacred/cultural sites;
- Human rights abuses;

Mine Legacies
- Creation of ghost towns;
- Problems of rock waste dumps and abandoned pits;
- Acid mine drainage;
- Socio-economic problems of resettled communities;
- Water stress, e.g. in Dumase the operations of Golden Star Resources had killed 6 streams and the community survives on water supplied by the company.

Challenges in Mining Advocacy
- The capacity gap between mining communities and multinational mining companies;
- Lack of organisation for mining communities;
- The tendency of government agencies to protect corporate interest as against the sovereign rights of citizens and mining communities;
- Weak legal framework for mining; weak environmental standards; weak regulatory institutions;
- Attraction of mining investment in Africa – the ‘race to the bottom’;
- Intimidation of communities which result in the loss of confidence in struggles to protect community rights;
- Difficulties in using the judicial system to redeem community rights. The case of forced eviction brought up by the people of Nkwantakrom against AngloGold Ashanti, Iduapriem mine has been in court for almost 10 years;
- The tendency of research/academic institutions and experts to serve corporate interests;
- Pushing neo-colonial policies as development agenda to exploit developing countries and deliberately branding mining advocacy groups as anti-development agents;
- Intimidation of activists and resource constraints.
Interventions of WACAM

WACAM is a community-based Human Rights and Environmental mining advocacy NGO working to build the capacity of mining communities to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies. Our organisation had organised communities affected by surface mining operations around their critical issues of concern and engaged in advocacy and campaigns for the protection of the rights of mining communities. Our interventions include:

- Understanding the struggle and developing the appropriate strategies to empower communities for effective participation in decisions affecting them. Information and education as tools for empowerment of affected people;
- Addresses weak capacities of communities through sensitisation using RBA;
- Formation of community groups to address lack of organisation and to better articulate communities’ view/concerns;
- Development of youth programmes;
- Use of courtroom advocacy to redeem rights and test the efficacy of laws/regulations;
- Policy advocacy based on communities’ concerns e.g. mining law reforms and mineral policy for Ghana;
- Using community concerns to build campaigns at the local, national and international levels

Figure 2: Demonstration by Student Activists, WACAM & Community People Against Newmont in Accra
Amplifying the voice for the mining communities through media sensitisation and developing links between the media and affected people.

Community struggles had raised national awareness on mining issues and also influenced public opinion. Some comments of important institutions and individuals on the mining situation in Ghana had been captured as follows:

Prof. Kassim Kasanga, an eminent valuation Consultant, Land Economist, former Chairman of Land Valuation Board and former Minister for Lands and Forestry stated in a presentation in 1997 and 2002 that there is injustice in the payment of compensation by mining companies to mining communities.

The former Minister for Mines, Mrs Cecilia Bannerman was reported to have said that Ghana had run short of gold to be used by the local jewellery industry, in spite of the gold boom (Daily Graphic, 11 November 2004).

According to the TUC (2007), mining employs about 15,000-18,000 people which is less than 1% of the total workforce in the country but causes employment losses through displacement of communities.

Mineral revenues: UNCTAD (2005) mentioned that out of a total mineral revenue of about $870 million generated in 2003, the government of Ghana earned only $46.7 million representing 5%.

H.E. Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Former Prime Minister of Ireland) in November 2006 at the UN Global Compact meeting in Ghana expressed worry about the minimal benefits of mining to Ghana and human rights abuses/violations in mining communities.

H.E. Vice President of Ghana on 15 January 2007 expressed concern about the minimal benefits from the mining sector to Ghana at the international meeting of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Accra.

H.E. the President of the Republic of Ghana in May 2007 was reported in the Daily Graphic that there was the need to change the mining policy of Ghana to make mining beneficial to the country.

President J. A Kufour stated recently at AGOA Conference that FDI inflows should not be in the extractive sector only but should shift to manufacturing.

The Western Regional Minister said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had led to loss of livelihoods and poverty in mining communities.

The Wassa West District Chief Executive said in September 2007 that activities of mining companies had worsened poverty of mining communities.

Conclusion

An assessment of the performance of Mining in Ghana by the World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) noted:

It is unclear what gold mining true benefits are to Ghana. Large scale mining by foreign companies has high import content and produces only modest amounts of net foreign exchange for Ghana after accounting for all its outflows. Similarly, its corporate tax payments are low due to various fiscal incentives necessary to attract and retain foreign investors. Employment creation is also modest given the highly capital intensive nature of modern surface mining techniques. Local communities affected by large scale mining have seen little benefits to date in the form of improved infrastructure or services provision because much of the rents from mining are used to finance recurrent, not capital expenditure. A broader cost-benefit analysis of large-scale mining that
factors in social and environmental costs and includes consultations with the affected communities needs to be undertaken before granting future production licences (World Bank, 2003).

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng and his wife are the founders of WACAM, the Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining in the Tarkwa Area, Ghana, West Africa; e-mail: Kowus75@yahoo.com

Bibliography


UNCTAD (2005), ‘Economic Development in Africa-Rethinking the Role of Foreign Direct Investment’.


Hope & Oil: Expectations in São Tomé e Príncipe
Gisa Weszkalnys

When there is the smell of oil, minds get stirred up … It creates a mirage in people’s heads. If we do not know how to manage it, it will be hell here (Manuel Pinto da Costa, former president of STP, cited in Shaxson, 2007:164).

Perhaps the best hope for STP is that there is sufficient external pressure from international institutions, creditors and the incipient civil society to ensure greater transparency in the distribution of oil revenues. Otherwise, STP is likely to suffer the same ills as other oil-rich states in Africa, except that any civil war or social unrest is highly unlikely in the gentle Santomean society. STP has always been very peaceful and, from this perspective, a highly positive role model for the continent (Frynas et al. 2006:19).

There is no certainty yet that there’s going to be economic production of oil. There is a good chance that there may not be. And part of me feels, well, that’s probably a good thing, for if there was, it’s just going to be … a disaster (oil industry employee, STP, March 2007).

‘Do you think there’s oil in São Tomé?’ was a question I repeatedly heard during my fieldwork. It is a question that has gripped São Tomé e Príncipe (STP), the tiny island state located in the Gulf of Guinea, for the last 10 years.1 The notion that there may be vast offshore oil resources in STP’s waters has spurred intense international interest (e.g., Bruzaca de Menezes, 2003; Frynas et al. 2003, 2006; Seibert, 2005; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007). Oil companies, journalists, economic experts, NGOs, and the large transnational institutions now speculate about the future of São Tomé e Príncipe, frequently portrayed as a coun-

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411156
try which has the hope, unlike elsewhere in Africa, of becoming prosperous whilst remaining democratic. STP is to set an example.

For the ethnographer, people’s anxious question about the country’s oil potential re-poses itself as: ‘How might one study an oil economy without oil?’ Just how much oil there is and whether it is ‘commercially viable’, as they say in the industry, is to date highly doubtful. So, is it possible to speak of an oil economy if no oil is being extracted, transported, sold, and refined? One way of beginning to examine STP’s emergent oil economy is to look at the materialisation of the assumed presence of oil in the country.

There is, for example, the impressive new building of the National Petroleum Agency, co-financed by the World Bank in which a cadre of local technicians is busy managing the islands’ future oil economy. There are public discussions and newspaper reports on the latest developments. In addition, there are the more and the less desirable by-products: the genuine and the shady business people; the illegal immigrants, traders and peddlers; the prostitutes; the banks (whose number has almost tripled in the last few years); the inflation; the rising property prices and the real estate speculation. There are also the latrines sponsored by Chevron under its ‘social programme’ obligations and the trucks recently given by Chrome Energy – in preparation, it is suspected, for their participation in an upcoming licensing round. Similarly, a relatively non-violent coup d’état in 2003 has been interpreted as symptomatic of a resource curse afflicting Santomean society (Frynas, 2006; Humphreys et al. 2006; but see Seibert, 2003). As Frynas et al. conclude, ‘[t]he prevalence of resource curse effects were already apparent even before STP started producing any oil’ (2006:14).

In short, the assumed presence of oil has had a number of effects and provoked particular activities in anticipation of an (un)certain future. Numerous consultants, NGO representatives, and foreign advisors have been attracted by what they identify as the country’s great need for expertise in the face of incipient oil wealth. They offer technical assistance and advice, and hold workshops, public deliberations and conferences. Of crucial importance, in this regard, has been the so-called management of expectations. It involves placing boundaries around people’s hopes and dreams, which are assumed to be irrational, destabilising and potentially dangerous. Key to this has been the notion of a ‘resource curse’, today a key term in the analysis of oil-rich African states and of Santomeans’ vocabulary in describing their country’s future, as well as a rich example allowing us to observe an enactment of socio-economic theory.

Background & History

On 30 June 2007, the US representation in STP invited ex-pat Americans, officials and the local ‘who’s who’ to an early Independence Day party. This was held in STP’s fortress São Sebastião, built in the 16th century by the Portuguese colonial settlers and turned into a historical museum after independence in 1975. With its limited resources, the museum is an effort to display a national history for a young independent African state. Within its thick walls now came to mingle the existing and possibly the new powers that be. US presence on the island is currently limited to the vast compound of the Voice of America that broadcasts from here all over South-West Africa and an occasional naval ship sitting just outside São Tomé’s shallow port, a faint echo of what has apparently become a near continuous US navy presence in the region. The US has provided training for Santomean military under the ‘African Partnership’ programme, and US ‘Seabees’ have carried out works in local schools and hospitals. Their main task, however, has
been to help build up STP’s coast guard facilities and to complete, in 2007, one of the radar elements of the maritime domain awareness system. The system facilitates the rapid exchange of data among participating countries and seeks to cover the entire Gulf of Guinea region, which has been declared of strategic US interest, not least because of its existing and potential oil resources (McFate, 2008; Shaxson, 2007; Soares de Oliveira, 2007).

A fortnight later, 12 July, it was STP’s own Independence Day. The festivities took place in Porto Alegre, São Tomé island’s southernmost community, connected to the capital by a single coastal road. I hitched a ride with the American ambassador who had flown in from Gabon, down the road that was to be repaired for the occasion with Equatorial-Guinean money. But it didn’t get done on time, possibly because the money ran out or, as some people suggested, because too much of it disappeared into the pockets of entrepreneurs. The ceremony was attended by a series of local officials and foreign diplomats, including the Portuguese, the Brazilian, the French, the Nigerian, and the Gabonese ambassadors. Finally, a helicopter arrived with the president and his guests of honour, the presidents of Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville and Equatorial-Guinea. A bus, recently gifted by Taiwan, carried them from the airfield that had been cut into the dense forest, to the location of the festivities. As a display of Santomean state and nation, the Independence Day festivities appear improvised, charming and a little parochial. Yet they are also a display of foreign and international powers that are seeking to circumscribe STP’s place on the geopolitical map of oil.

The expectation of vast offshore oil resources has given STP a significance it hasn’t had since its days as Portuguese entrepôt and as world-renowned cocoa producer. Despite the recent $314m debt relief under the HIPC scheme, STP is likely to remain one of the poorest African countries and almost totally dependent on foreign aid. Its approximately 160,000 inhabitants are the descendants of African slaves and contract workers, mainly from Cape Verde, and the Portuguese colonial settlers who lived on the islands from the 16th century onwards, and introduced sugar, coffee, and cocoa. STP remained a plantation economy until the end of the colonial period (Seibert, 2006:46). Political independence was achieved in 1975, followed by the establishment of a socialist one-party system. The economy was nationalised and the former plantations were brought into state ownership. Cocoa production based on plantations had been unprofitable since the 1920s (Frynas et al. 2006:2; Seibert, 2006:45) and by the late 1970s mismanagement and falling global cocoa prices led to its virtual collapse. From the late 1980s, STP underwent a democratisation process, accompanied by economic reforms and the dismantling of the large estates and privatisation of landed property with uneven, but overall disappointing, results. Cocoa still represents 90% of all exports, and the country’s economy remains extraordinarily fragile. In this context, oil seemed a blessing.

Oil extraction in STP appeared to become a real possibility with developments in ultra deep-sea exploration, coupled with the growing significance internationally of West African oil. The 1990s were characterised by new discoveries and rapid growth in production, for example, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea. Aside from some speculative onshore drillings in the 1970s and 80s, STP’s petro-era is generally seen to have started in 1997, with the ill-fated agreement signed with a small company called ERHC (Environmental Remediation Holding Company). Oil can now appear a firm part of STP politico-economic identity. As one of the director’s in the National Petroleum Agency noted in conversation, Santomeans have always associated them-
selves with oil. But this oil economy has had a difficult start (see also Frynas et al. 2003; Seibert, 2006; Shaxson, 2007 & Soares de Oliveira, 2007). First, together with ERHC the STP government set up a dubious joint venture petroleum company named STPetro. Both ERHC, and subsequently Mobil, were guaranteed rights to exploration and revenue shares, which vastly exceeded what is deemed standard in the industry. Especially the ERHC deal, later acquired by the American-Nigerian Chrome Energy, is now widely criticised as detrimental to the country’s interests. Border disputes with Nigeria led to a lengthy process of negotiations. These were settled in February 2001 with the agreement of a Joint Development Zone (JDZ) of which Nigeria holds 60% and STP 40%, governed by a so-called Joint Development Authority (JDA) with a head office in Abuja. President Fradique de Menezes, who came into office in 2001, is viewed favourably by most foreign observers impressed by his attempts to correct the mistakes made by his predecessor, by calling on foreign assistance and by emphasising the country’s intentions to remain transparent. In a first bidding round in 2003/4, only Block 1 was signed off for $123 million to a consortium of three companies, Chevron Texaco (51%), ExxonMobil (40%) and the Nigerian-Norwegian Dangote Energy Equity Resources Limited (9%). A further round in 2005 for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 involved too many small, unknown corporations partly with Nigerian connections. This result was seriously questioned (Procuradoria Geral, 2005) but not annulled.

Exploration has yet to show significant positive results: Chevron Texaco deemed the finds of its first drill in Block 1 of the JDZ, conducted in 2006, as not commercially viable. In early March 2007, the Chinese company Sinopec and the Canadian corporation Addax operating in Blocks 2 and 4, announced that they had hired an Indian vessel to conduct drillings in 2008, but these drillings are likely to be postponed until 2009. Chevron, too, announced plans to perform a second drill in 2008. In late 2007, Exxon Mobil’s interests in Block 1 were bought by Addax. In short, STP’s future as a petro-state appears elusive. STP has received a $49 million share of the signature bonus for Block 1. Much of this has been spent on advances received from Nigeria, including $13 million towards the operational costs of the JDA in Abuja (see also Seibert, 2006). Even if there is a commercial discovery any time soon, actual exploitation is not expected to begin before 2012 or later. Outstanding payments for the signature bonuses for blocks 5 and 6 seem increasingly unlikely. Risking and hoping, however, will continue.

Diagnosing the Resource Curse

Newspaper articles on STP have speculated how the discovery of offshore oil might change São Tomé e Príncipe rapidly and dramatically. In 2002, the New Yorker magazine published a long article asking, ‘Who needs Saudi Arabia when you’ve got São Tomé?’ Only two years later, Fortune magazine posed the worried question, ‘Will oil spoil this African Paradise?’ Most recently, The Guardian suggested, quoting a representative of International Alert – one of the large international NGOs seeking to prevent oil-related conflict in STP – that it would be best if there was no oil at all. Similarly, academic research on STP oscillates between diagnoses of an incipient resource curse, facilitated by a long-standing system of clientelism and corruption, and half-hearted assertions that the tiny country might follow a different path from its petro-neighbours. In 2007, São Toméans particularly from the urbanised, educated parts of society – including civil servants, administrative and private sector employees – seemed disappointed regarding the advent of oil. They increasingly considered it futile to expect oil to improve their situation. Many of them have participated in one of the numerous
seminars and workshops held on the topic of oil and are keenly aware of its potentially negative consequences. Their self-consciously reasonable outlook, I was told, is markedly different from the high hopes that were being traded in the streets, bars and homes of Santomeans only a couple of years ago, and which are claimed to be still prevalent among the uneducated poor, living in the former plantations.

Continuing high hopes and expectations are generally blamed on the government and politicians, trying to gain votes and attract investment to the country, or on the media, keen to build up a picture of STP as the ‘new Kuwait’. Sensationalist reports on the prospects of STP in the early 2000s dealt in hugely inflated figures of several billion of barrels of oil reserves. A third source of exaggerated expectations are expert documents. I heard angry comments, for example, about an ‘irresponsible’ IMF working paper, published only in the summer of 2006, which begins by stating that ‘São Tomé and Príncipe is on the verge of becoming an oil-rich country’ (Seguar, 2006:4). The paper assumes as its base line the existence of a 500 million barrel oil field in the JDZ, and suggests that provided there is adequate regulation a prosperous future for STP will be almost certain. While the IMF may insist that this is purely a working paper, with all its implications of provisionality, and moreover, does not reflect the view of the organisation at large, to more sceptical observers such pronouncements seem dangerously open to – deliberate or inadvertent – misinterpretation.

Hope in relation to oil, and an alleged ‘cargo cult’ attitude, are considered problematic. If unrealistic hopes get disappointed, it is feared, the result is likely to be increased social conflict. In my conversations with World Bank technicians, UNDP employees, staff of the Petroleum Agency, NGO workers, and ordinary locals two imaginaries of the future were dominant. In the academic literature they are known as the ‘resource curse’ and the related ‘Dutch disease’. The resource curse has become an influential heuristic since the late 1980s both in the scholarship concerned with resource economics and in the large global financial agencies (e.g. Humphreys et al. 2007). The term was invented to explain what appeared inexplicable: countries rich in oil, diamonds, or other natural resources did not always enjoy rapid development equally in all sectors (Auty, 1993; Humphreys et al. 2007; Karl, 1997; Rosser, 2006; Sachs and Warner, 2001; Watts, 2004). Today ‘the curse’ is variously taken to imply detrimental economic performance, violent conflict, corruption, or the entrenchment of authoritarian political regimes (Rosser, 2006:7-8). The ‘Dutch disease’ is sometimes seen as a version of the resource curse – or its herald. The notion describes the effect of the influx of huge oil revenues, the depreciation of the local currency, the neglect and decline of other economic sectors, first and foremost, of agriculture.

Students and observers of STP have spotted signs of the resource curse and the Dutch disease in the reliance on foreign aid, in the way Santomeans eat (an estimated 50% of their diet consists of imported produce), in the well-known but rarely punished corrupt behaviour of STP’s elite, and in just about everybody’s laid back lifestyle summed up by the Creole term lêve-lêve (e.g., Frynas et al. 2006). There are also the rural flight, the wage increase, and the inflation, which are all understood to be key symptoms (Soares de Oliveira, 2007). STP’s fragile position has not been helped by the notorious instability of its government. The 2003 coup d’état is sometimes interpreted as an early expression of discontent with the way the government (mis-)handled STP’s arrival in the oil era. However, it may be more precise to say that rather than oil having caused the coup, the coup comes to matter because of
now common negative expectations regarding oil in STP. What is interesting, here, is the plethora of activities that has been effected, directly and indirectly, by the anticipation of a resource curse and, conversely, the economy of expectation, consultancy and advice that this anticipation has provoked. This is the resource curse’s performative effect (cf. Osborne and Rose, 1999) in the tiny equatorial island state.

Anticipation

On paper, São Tomé e Príncipe appears to constitute an exemplary oil economy. Its legal framework regarding oil is considered to be even better than that regulating the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, which was for some time held up as exemplary in the African context (Pegg, 2005). The so-called Abuja declaration, signed with Nigeria, defines a will to transparency in the JDZ. STP possesses an Oil Revenue Management Law enacted in December 2004, which includes the establishment of a National Petroleum Council and, currently, an oversight commission and a public information office. In addition, a National Petroleum Agency (ANP) has been created. STP also has a National Oil Account as well as a ‘Permanent Fund’ for future generations. More recently still, the Santomean government has endorsed the UK-led Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (EITI) and is busy setting up a national committee.

The country’s status as a legal exemplar is partly due to what I term the anticipatory activities of international experts, transnational agencies and the national government itself. These activities include the technical assistance given by the World Bank, UNDP, or more recently the Millennium Challenge Corporation, but go beyond that. They include the projects implemented by international NGOs and the advice given by well-meaning experts who see the tiny country a convenient laboratory for their theories. Crucially, laws, documents, and paper alone are deemed insufficient in guaranteeing a prosperous and well-managed future for STP. Santomeans have little faith in the effectiveness of their state institutions and judiciary system which they know lets those doing wrong get away with impunity. And a look at other petro-states in the region shows that laws and committees do not readily translate into well-governed resource driven economies. Anticipatory activities have not stopped at the level of the state, the law or institutional reform. What is especially needed, it was suggested to me, is the creation of civil society and a ‘change in mentality’. Here, I will briefly discuss four rather different projects that all intend to contribute to STP achieving this institutional, social and behavioural transformation.

In 2003, a team of professors and graduate students from the Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York, under the leadership of the institute’s director Jeffrey Sachs travelled to STP to implement a legal advisory project. Invited by President Menezes, and partly sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the Columbia team advocated a holistic approach that took into account all the various aspects of Santomean society, including malaria, sanitation, and electrification. A central objective was to develop a framework for transparency in public expenditure. Their efforts were highly appreciated: they lay the basis for the petroleum law, and delivered a prestigious project that helped the country demonstrate its willingness to good governance.

The Columbia team was key in making ‘oil’ an explicitly public issue. They took advantage of the National Forum, organised as a response to the 2003 coup d’état and intended to bring unity to the country destabilised by military and social unrest and split into factions. In this context, the team organised meetings in
56 roças, villages, and towns, to explain the current and potential future developments regarding oil in STP. Deliberative groups, led by local facilitators, answered questionnaires to assess people’s wishes and expectations regarding a future with oil. The Columbia team now commends its intervention as a successful process of deliberation with measurable effects (Sandbu, 2004; but see also Humphreys et al. 2006). The Forum, the questionnaire, and the deliberations are claimed to have transformed people’s preferences in such a way that they would be more reasoned, less selfish and more public-spirited (Sandbu, 2004). They have been regarded as important instruments in re-constituting both officials and ordinary Santomeans as future inhabitants of an oil-rich country.

The World Bank’s current International Development Assistance for STP includes $5 million for a so-called Governance Capacity Building Project. It supports public finance management and helps build the institutional framework of the nascent petroleum sector. The focus on oil, governance and public finance management is to be continued in the coming years with further $4 million budgetary support funding. It reflects the World Banks changing policy of wedding poverty reduction programmes to support for the extractive industries sector (as in Chad-Cameroon pipeline case, Pegg 2005). Institutional thinking now partly reflects a scholarly critique of previous approaches made, for example, by Michael Watts (2001; 2004), which goes beyond a simplistic resource determinism. Bad governance, rather than oil per se, becomes seen as the central cause of the resource curse. Critical to the Governance Capacity Building Project in STP has been the design of a national petroleum law, the establishment of a Court of Accounts – as a general auditing body – and the set up of a National Petroleum Agency. The training provided by oil companies involved in STP’s Joint Development Zone – and rivaled by those financed by and conducted in Taiwan – has supposedly provided civil servants and government employees with indispensable skills and knowledge. ANP staff have been busy preparing a licensing round for the Exclusive Economic Zone, and the revision of STP’s oil law for the purpose. The ANP has also held seminars on issues to do with oil. For example, in April 2007, a day-long seminar on ‘Local Content’ served to present the findings of a study commissioned by the ANP, financed by the World Bank, and conducted by a Portuguese consultancy firm. It attracted a sizeable audience of perhaps 100 civil servants and state administrators, people from the banking and business sector, from international organisations, NGOs, and oil companies. It demonstrated to people the need for preparation, especially the creation of mechanisms to maximise the wealth that oil is likely to generate. The aim, to borrow James Ferguson’s term is to ‘thicken’ the presence of the oil industry in STP (Ferguson, 2005).

The London-based NGO International Alert (IA) has had a presence in the country for several years. Together with UNICEF and with partial funding from USAID, it has set up a media centre for local journalists and two community radio stations. Together with the Publish What You Pay Campaign, IA held two conferences in STP which allowed civil society actors from diverse countries in the region to exchange experiences and information about living with oil, including institutional and contractual frameworks, economic and political repercussions, the relevance of the EITI, the importance of fiscal discipline, and the management of expectations. It also organised a trip to Norway, on which a mixed group of parliamentarians, local business representatives, journalists and civil society representatives were introduced to how Norway has become a prime example of an oil economy which managed to escape the resource curse.
All these activities have been part of a concerted effort to strengthen ‘civil society’ in STP, which is considered rather weak and ill-prepared for the coming of oil.

A further element in this process of STP constituting itself as prudent and transparent oil state has been the signing up to EITI, the UK-led initiative which aims to devise principles to assure transparency in the extractive industries sector. A key mechanism has been the publication of company payments and revenues received by governments which are monitored by the national EITI committees that bring together the presumed opposing stakeholders: governments, the industry and civil society. In STP, the set up of the EITI committee was pursued with much pressure in the second half of 2007, due to a looming deadline. Ironically, the initial delay and subsequent haste with which the process was conducted has led to concerns about a lack of transparency and civil society involvement in this process. There were also tensions regarding the parallel set up of the Oversight Commission included as a monitoring body in STP’s oil revenue management law. Planning of the two entities initially went ahead separately but there is now talk about merging them to achieve greater effectiveness. Interestingly, some of those involved ascribed a clear advantage to ‘global’ initiatives, such as EITI, over local ones. Even though they are not binding they are felt to carry more weight than a commission anchored in STP law which is deemed, in large part, ineffective.

Conclusions

STP’s oil economy is an economy in which expectations have been a key object of concern. Their production, circulation and exchange are carefully guarded. One of these expectations is now the resource curse itself. Its flipside is the expectation of transparency and good governance. In other words, attempts to control and manage people’s expectations have generated other kinds of hope in STP. Both types of ‘imaginings of the future’ are made and promulgated partly through the initiatives and projects, seminars and workshops, the reports and legal documents that I have discussed, here. Depending on the results of the upcoming drillings, Santo-mean national planning may soon have to consider a ‘no-oil’ scenario.

While the hope for oil in STP has not completely faded away, one can see people quietly welcoming the delay in the take-off of the country’s oil economy. Especially for members of the urban educated class on whom this research has focused, and for whom the ‘curse’ of oil appears to be a real possibility, time is salvation. The postponement of the oil future, they say – which is produced by a set of political, economic, technical, and geological conditions and circumstances – might allow STP to prepare itself sufficiently or to continue seeking alternative routes for development. This briefing has highlighted the significant resources have been poured into preparing STP for its potential oil future. It also sought to open up a critical perspective on the huge claims involved. Between them, the activities of advisory agencies, government, NGOs, and oil corporations explicate potential futures and the familiar (and insufficiently researched) consequences of the extractive industries, specifically oil, in order to divert them. But will they make a real difference? Indeed, are there any simple solutions to the resource curse, which research increasingly shows to be a highly complex set of affairs? Or will these activities simply aid in a sophisticated make-believe?

Gisa Weszkalnys, University of Oxford, g.weszkalnys.97@cantab.net
Endnotes

1. This preliminary analysis draws on eight months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2007, conducted with support from the British Academy and the John Fell Research Fund. It included more than fifty interviews with representatives of the local administration, transnational agencies, oil corporations, NGOs, as well as ex-pats and ordinary Santomeans. The project has benefited tremendously from discussions with Andrew Barry as well as from the comments of the participants in the ‘Oil and Politics’ Conference, Goldsmiths, London, May 2007.

2. The research intends to contribute to a growing body of work on oil by human geographers and anthropologists (e.g., Apter, 2005; Barry, 2004, 2006; Ferguson, 2005; Roitman & Roso n.d.; Sawyer, 2004; Watts, 2001, 2004).

Bibliography


Editor’s Note


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.

See also, Association of Concerned African Scholars at http://concernedafricascholars.org

Founded in 1979, the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (ACAS) is a group of scholars and students of Africa dedicated to formulating alternative analyses of Africa and US government policy, developing communication and action networks between the peoples and scholars of Africa and the United States, and mobilizing support in the United States on critical, current issues related to Africa.

Copper & Controversy in the DR Congo

Henry Kippin

This briefing is concerned with the mining industry in the DRC, which spans copper-cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium and tin. It pays particular attention to some recent headlines and controversies in the copper industry, especially in the light of a report from British NGO Global Witness published in October 2007. A commonly-heard perspective on the DRC suggests that, following ostensibly democratic elections in early 2007, a resurgent formal extractive sector represents the country’s best chance of emerging from a seemingly continuous cycle of poverty and conflict. Yet as this briefing will show, any material benefits to the Congolese population will be contingent upon two key factors: a successful resolution to the government’s commission to review its mining contracts, and the potential impact of increasing Chinese investment in the country.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411180
The Copperbelt – which runs through Zambia and Katanga province in the DRC – is said to contain ‘34% of the world’s cobalt and 10% of the world’s copper’. Although Zambia is better known as a copper exporter, huge deposits lie in the DRC, and during the 1980s the country’s output amounted to as much as ‘7-8% of global production’ (Global Witness, 2006:13). During the 1990s however, the industry was run to ground as state-owned company Gecamines collapsed, along with the economic and social infrastructures constructed around it. And as the country descended into war following the toppling of President Mobutu in 1997, the destiny of several of its mines changed hands according to the complex and appalling machinations of a conflict involving multiple protagonists and interests.

In 2002, negotiations between President Joseph Kabila and rebel forces in the east of the country precipitated a fragile peace of sorts, and brought forth a period of transitional government in the country. Many of the problems the Congolese government now seeks to address stem from this period, wherein several controversial mining contracts were arranged amidst the embers of the conflict and a ‘restructuring’ of Gecamines.

This period of restructuring was overseen by the World Bank, and was centred on ‘rewriting the country’s mineral and forestry codes to facilitate private sector participation’ – the result, according to Global Witness, was that ‘numerous lucrative mining agreements were signed in opaque deals between unaccountable and unelected political leaders, mining companies and other economic operators’ (Global Witness, 2007:3). One such arrangement – which will be explored below – has captured the imagination of the international press, lending somewhat of a ‘soap opera’ element to the contract review begun in April 2007.

Newly elected officials in the Ministry of Mines well understand the importance of their review, both in terms of securing a ‘better deal’ for the treasury on royalties and ownership, and also in terms of impressing on the international community a perception of positive change in the country. This is especially important now that Chinese interest has begun to impact in tangible ways – with mining concessions acting as potential ‘bait’ for luring large-scale investment into industrial infrastructure.

Global Witness & the TGI

The October 2007 report from Global Witness identified four serious weaknesses in the contract review, the Tribunal de Grand Instance (TGI) being carried out in Lubumbashi. In brief, these were:

1) A lack of transparency and clarity;
2) An unrealistic timeframe for completion of the review;
3) Inadequate safeguards to protect its independence; and
4) Limited involvement of civil society.

If left unaddressed, argued the report, a feeling would remain that a potential ‘turning point’ for the industry would be missed, and that western investors would continue to tread warily in the sector. In addition, D.R. Congo is a signatory to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which requires (albeit voluntarily) that the details of mining contracts are made available for international scrutiny. Such weaknesses in the review process would certainly undermine these sentiments. In sum, it was argued that if the above concerns were not addressed, the outcome would represent ‘business as usual’ in the industry (Global Witness, 2007:2-3).
Potential shortcomings of the TGI are, however, only half of the story, as ‘business as usual’ owes a great deal to the manoeuvrings of private operators in the Congo. In Katanga, this is epitomised by the Central African Mining and Exploration Company (CAMEC) – a British company that has been involved in a high-profile dispute over the validity of three exploration licenses. The tale of CAMEC’s assets in the region is a good illustration of the types of issues the Ministry of Mines must deal with if their review is to make any meaningful difference, and is a testament to the complex nature of liberalised mining in Africa.

Spinning Controversy

CAMEC is seen as a relatively newcomer in Katanga, yet has established a rapid visibility (and easy headlines) thanks to association with some well-known personalities. Its chairman is Zambian Phil Edmonds, former England spin bowler and also chairman of White Nile Ltd. which enjoys significant assets in the Sudanese oil industry. Another Rhodesian is Billy Rautenbach – wanted for fraud in South Africa, and was declared persona non grata by the DRC government in July 2007.

The CAMEC controversy centres around three copper-cobalt mining licenses (Mukondo, C19 and C21), which were originally owned by Gecamines, but were transferred to a joint-venture between two different companies in November 1998. One of these – Central Mining Group – was controlled by then-Minister of State in the Presidency Pierre-Victor Moyo; the other was Ridgepointe Overseas Development Ltd., controlled by Rautenbach.

It is alleged that the deal was made as part of an agreement between former President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwian President Robert Mugabe (with whom Rautenbach has enjoyed a favourable relationship), in return for military intervention on behalf of the Congolese government. The licenses were transferred apparently without compensation, and, even more controversially, Rautenbach himself was Chief Executive of Gecamines at the time. In retrospect, this appears to be quite a staggering conflict of interest.

The fate of these licenses in the following ten years is confusing, but what is clear is that they were passed between companies owned by Rautenbach and John Bredenkamp – himself another Zimbabwian tycoon and sometime associate of Ian Smith during the 1970s. Fast forward to 2007, and the three aforementioned licenses were secured by CAMEC as part of an 80% take-over of Boss Mining – once again, a company linked with Rautenbach. To add another twist to the tale, Rautenbach is currently a significant shareholder in CAMEC, with a stake of approximately 17% at the time of writing.

Examining the C19, C21 and Mukondo licenses has been a central plank of the TGI’s review of mining contracts. Deputy Minister Kasongo has been outspoken in his criticism of CAMEC and Rautenbach, and the company even alleged that an intended take-over of Canadian company Katanga Mining launched in August 2007 was fatally undermined due to deliberate timing of the aforementioned licenses being revoked. In the event, a TGI hearing of 17 September approved and reinstated the contested licenses – perhaps confirming some of the fears of Global Witness, and certainly providing a boost to CAMEC’s share price.

The story, albeit in truncated form, highlights the real limits to government control over its mining industry, and serves as an abject example of the precipitous effects on extractive industries of civil conflict, shock adjustment and unaccountable government. And whilst Global Witness may be correct as to the need for transparency and strength from the
country’s new political leaders, this will continue to be undermined without similar sentiments of openness and accountability from the myriad companies and individuals involved in the industry.

**China in the D.R. Congo**

Of course, proper regulation of the copper industry in the DRC is of even more pressing concern to the west now that China has begun to make its presence felt in the country. In addition to a growing multinational presence, Chinese investment has also been framed in terms of ‘exchange’ – of massive bilateral, multi-sectoral investment ostensibly in return for future concessions in copper, diamond and gold-producing areas. Recent evidence of this is a proposed $5 billion loan earmarked for transport, health and education infrastructure projects, including a new railway connecting the mining regions in the south to the western port of Matadi. The loan has reportedly concerned the IMF, who had seen their own lending initiative halted in 2006 due to ‘poor implementation’ of its conditions. DRC country representative Xavier Maret has also warned of the potential macroeconomic impact of the loan which, he argued, could problematically distort imports, exports and the exchange rate.¹

The international community is clearly aware of the need for investment in the country, yet it appears that this move by China has taken some people by surprise. In actual fact, this is not the first instance where Chinese business interest in Africa has been enhanced by the willingness of its government to prop up governments with large-scale finance. In Angola a seemingly ‘done deal’ between Indian oil multinational ONGC, Shell and Angolan state agency Sonangol was overturned at the last minute in favour of Chinese company Sinopec. The clincher was a Chinese $2bn loan, which allowed the Angolan government to bypass the conditionalities upon which IMF support had been predicated (Alden, 2007:44). It is not hard to understand why the Congolese government sees this type of support as an attractive option. As Alden (2007:135) puts it: ‘seen from an African perspective, the most significant dimension on Chinese engagement is that it is a potential source of investment capital and development assistance which western sources are either uninterested or unwilling to provide’. Nevertheless, it seems that, in one important sense, Global Witness is absolutely right about the ‘turning point’ the DRC currently finds itself at. If the country’s population are to see any benefit from investment in its resources, the process of mining contract negotiations must continue to be robust and accountable – and so, too, must the behaviour of the investors it seeks to examine. This is true across the board, whether Chinese or otherwise.

This briefing has highlighted two recent controversies that have brought the Congolese mining industry back into the international press in recent months. As stability in the country has improved, the mining industry once again appears to be an attractive place to make money, and the two examples given here reflect a ‘scramble’ for position within the industry as metals and mineral markets boom under Chinese demand. Having come through democratic elections with relative success, the challenge for the DRC’s new government is now to build an economic infrastructure that can deliver increasing prosperity and security to its population. Separating controversy from copper is of fundamental importance to this task.

**Henry Kippin**, Research Director, African Development Information Services and Honorary Research Fellow, Political Economy Research Centre (PERC), University of Sheffield; e-mail: henry.k@afdevinfo.org
Endnotes


3. Edmonds is from northern Rhodesia – now Zambia; Rautenbach is from Zimbabwe.

4. See Mining Weekly (Creamer Media, South Africa), ‘DRC Confirms CAMEC’s Rautenbach was Deported’, 23 July 2007.

5. C19 and C21 (also known as 467 and 169 respectively) are licenses for profitable copper-producing areas of Katanga region. The C19 area is home to the Luita copper/cobalt processing facility, which is supplied by mines within the C19 and C21 areas. According to CAMEC, Gecamines had estimated C19 and C21 to contain ‘circa 1.5 million tonnes copper and 500,000 tonnes cobalt.’ See CAMEC official website at http://www.camec-plc.com/countries/droc.php. In addition to this, the Mukondo concession has been described as potentially one of the most lucrative in the world.


8. Financial Times: ‘Camec boosted as revoked Congo license is regained’, 20 September 2007. Confirmation was received in March 2008 that CAMEC’s licenses in the DRC are ‘safe’. As part of this resolution, CAMEC has agreed to increase state (Gecamines) share in their copper/cobalt ventures.


Bibliography


The Zimbabwe Arms Shipment Campaign

Miles Larmer

Little good news has yet emerged from Zimbabwe’s 2008 elections. However, the refusal by Durban dockworkers in April to unload Chinese arms imports destined for Zimbabwe was an impressive display of solidarity by unionised Africa, one that was supported by wider action by civil society throughout southern Africa and internationally. Veterans of the Anti-Apartheid Movement will have recalled the action of unionised dockworkers in the British port of Liverpool in July 1987, who similarly blocked the export of uranium to South Africa, as part of solidarity actions against the apartheid state.

The dockworkers’ initiative provided a stark contrast to the apathy of most (but not all) southern African Heads of State in confronting the reality that the Zimbabwean elections were being stolen through a systematic process which combined bureaucratic delay and systematic, and highly organised, militia and military violence. This violence was directed by the Joint Operations Command against opposition supporters and civil society organisations, to disrupt (and DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411198
even eliminate) the structures of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), by physically harming its members, supporters and lawyers, stealing ID cards necessary for voting and driving people from their localities, thus preventing them voting. Perhaps most importantly, the action against the shipment exposed the inaccurate though widely held view that Mugabe’s African critics support and are influenced by pro-western and imperialist positions, and who can therefore be characterised and dismissed as the agents of neo-colonialism.

Whilst the movement against the arms shipment was a dramatic and, at least to some, surprising initiative, this display of solidarity did not appear out of nowhere. Rather, it can be understood to reflect a number of underlying processes which are examined here. The first is a general (although highly uneven) strengthening of independent civil society movements across the southern African region over the last decade. Secondly, it was a demonstration of the growing alienation of the South African government (although not the African National Congress as a party) from its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), as well as much of wider civil society. Thirdly, it represented the fruits of strenuous (and, at times, apparently fruitless) efforts to build regional solidarity amongst trade unions and social movements in solidarity with Zimbabwean counterparts over the last five years. Whilst the MDC leadership has focused on gaining the support of the ‘international community’ (an effort which has enabled Mugabe to portray the MDC as the puppets of western powers), Zimbabwean civil society – particularly labour, women’s and church-based organisations – have steadily built cross-border links that bore fruit in this campaign.

Timeline of Events

Following the first round of the Zimbabwean elections on 29 March 2008, the delay in the release of results which would have shown a victory for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) provided cover for systematic violence against opposition supporters and other critics of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Popular Front (ZANUFPF) party. In this context, the arrival of the Chinese container ship, the An Yue Jiang, off Durban harbour on 14 April prompted fears that the Zimbabwean authorities were arming themselves in preparation for the further repression of MDC supporters during the second round of elections (fears based on historical precedence and ones which proved well founded, with widespread violence subsequently forcing Morgan Tsvangirai’s withdrawal from the second round of the Presidential elections on 27 June). The ship’s manifest, leaked to the South African press and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), the union which represents dockworkers, revealed that the An Yue Jiang was carrying 77 tonnes of armaments destined for onward transportation to Zimbabwe: these were specifically rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms, three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2,500 mortar rounds.1

The reaction of the South African government was predictable: January Masilela, the South African Defence Secretary, declared that the shipment had been approved that week by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which he chairs. Masilela concluded: ‘This is a normal transaction between two sovereign states and we don’t have to interfere.’2

In contrast, Randall Howard, General Secretary of SATAWU, publicly declared:
We do not believe it will be in the interest of the Zimbabwean people in general if South Africa is seen to be a conduit of arms and ammunition into Zimbabwe at a time when the situation could be described as quite volatile.

Howard, who also serves as the President of the International Transport workers Federation (ITF), contacted the ITF Secretariat in London, initiating the international arm of the campaign.

Meanwhile, human rights groups in South Africa quickly petitioned the Durban High Court for a freeze on the movement of the arms. The petitioners included the Bishop of Durban Rubin Philip, supported by the South African Litigation Centre (SALC) and the Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA). They obtained an interim legal judgement on 18 April that the arms could not be transported overland in South Africa, by utilising the Conventional Arms Control Act of 2002. The International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Johannesburg office supported these efforts and also mobilised the resources of its London-based secretariat. IANSA’s aim was the impounding of the ship, to stop not only the offloading of the arms in Durban, but also their movement elsewhere. This was not successful; although the interdict was granted, the Ann Yue Jiang left Durban harbour on the day of the court judgement.

SATAWU and the other campaigners now sought to ensure that the arms were not offloaded elsewhere in southern Africa; Howard declared:

We again strongly call on all African governments and dock workers to refuse the vessel docking access and to refuse handling the weapons with a view to ensuring that the vessel leaves African shores immediately. We call on the United Nations to bring pressure to bear on the Chinese government to practically demonstrate their commitment to recall and stop using the politics of deception … Satawu’s interest only lies with the six containers of lethal weapons on board being boycotted and returned to Beijing until the political crisis in Zimbabwe is resolved, in the context of the possibility of genuine democracy reinstated based on the will of the people there. To that extent, we urge local, African and global media to ensure that this important humane story remains in the public discourse until the vessel returns with the weapons on board as the struggle did not end in Durban on 18 April 2008.

The ITF now used its expertise and network of contacts in the industry to track the vessel’s movements. The ship initially sailed north to Mozambique; labour unions were alerted to the ship’s imminent arrival and prepared to lobby their government. However, the An Yue Jiang lacked a permit to dock in Maputo and the authorities declared that it would not be accepted into Maputo port because, in the words of Transport and Communications Minister Paulo Zucula, ‘we wouldn’t allow it into Mozambican waters without prior arrangements.’ It then turned south, as Mozambique revealed that its next scheduled destination was Luanda, in Angola. The possibility that the ship might land in either Namibia or Angola, both of which have governments previously sympathetic to the Mugabe government, raised new concerns. After liaison with their South African counterparts, civil society organisations mobilised in Namibia against the An Yue Jiang, which initially sought to refuel at Walvis Bay. On 24 April, 200 Namibians, mobilised by church-based organisations and the Legal Assistance Centre, marched to the Chinese embassy in Windhoek in protest against the shipment. Bishop Zephania Kameeta told the demonstration that the arms shipment threatened to destroy good relations between China and Africa.
This emphasis on in-country activity reflected a major priority for IANSA and other organisations, that the campaign should be locally owned. As Joseph Dube, IANSA’s Africa Coordinator based in Johannesburg argues, the SADC Heads of States’ reluctance to respond to ‘outside voices’ on Zimbabwe meant it was crucial that the campaign activities were reflective of the priorities and approaches of civil society in the countries involved, so that it could not be portrayed as a western-controlled campaign. IANSA’s London-based Secretariat sought to ensure continued media interest in the ship’s movements, linking it to its wider campaign for an international Arms Trade Treaty. Sustaining press coverage became more difficult once the vessel was out of South African waters.

On 24 April, the ship was rumoured to be heading for Lobito. The following day, the Angolan government declared that it would allow the An Yue Jiang to dock in Luanda, but that the vessel would only be allowed to offload ‘merchandise destined for Angola’. The Angolan Council for Human Rights was mobilised, and local trade unionists were contacted, but it proved more difficult to establish an open campaign against the shipment in Angola (for reasons examined below). At the same time, the ship was recalled to China by its owners, the state-owned Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (Cosco). The An Yue Jiang remained in Luanda harbour for some days, off-loading cement and other supplies. It was reported to have left Luanda on 6 May.

In mid-May, there were widespread reports that the arms had in fact found their way to Zimbabwe – having been offloaded in (variously) Luanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or Congo-Brazzaville. Some civil society organisations and the ITF ridiculed these claims, whilst the Chinese embassy in South Africa explicitly stated that the weapons were being returned to China. Nevertheless, doubts have been raised regarding the success of the campaign, something which is addressed below.

**Local & Global solidarity, Old & New Tactics**

The brief and successful campaign against the arms shipment incorporated both traditional and more modern social movement tactics. On a regional and international level, email, web links and cell phones enabled the rapid sharing of information. Organisers were able to identify and contact civil society activists in particular countries where it was feared the arms shipments would be taken to next, or possibly be transported through, to reach Zimbabwe. The latest intelligence was shared in seconds with activists across the region and the world.

Important activist and campaigning networks served to coordinate the global campaign: Avaaz and the International Network on Small Arms (IANSA) both played an important role, establishing and circulating a petition, which was then posted on many websites. Meanwhile, a host of bloggers monitored the reported movements of the vessel using Lloyds of London’s Maritime Intelligence Unit; this proved impossible for a couple of days, when the An Yue Jiang’s transponder was temporarily turned off.

Of course, such short-term international campaigns, organised largely in hyperspace, have a tendency to escape the control of their initiators. Stories, petitions and emails were forwarded continuously with little reference to their origin; blogs blend unverifiable fact with occasionally unpalatable opinion. Internet-based techniques are undeniably useful for such urgent campaigns with specific aims, but also carry the danger of a loss of ownership and legitimacy when applied to longer-term campaigns with more complex objectives. In this case, stories and rumours regarding the ship abounded on the
internet – it was reported to have been landed in Pointe Noire in Congo-Brazzaville, and rumours circulated that the ship had been ‘offloaded’ onto smaller vessels at sea, despite the technical impossibilities involved; the ITF sought to scotch such rumours, but this was not entirely successful.

One important story which continues to circulate on the internet is that originated by Zimbabwe’s Deputy Minister of Information Bright Matonga, who announced some weeks ago at a press conference that the arms shipment had in fact been delivered to Zimbabwe. His claim was not supported by other government officials and was specifically denied by the Minister of Defence, but it has continued to circulate. The ITF, having tracked the movements of the An Yue Jiang closely, ultimately to its return to Shanghai in mid-June, are certain that the arms remain onboard, with no opportunity for them to be unloaded unobserved.

If much of the campaign’s international publicity and profile was generated on the internet, it was on the ground in South Africa where the campaign began. Here, it was initiated by rank-and-file dockworkers, utilising one of the oldest forms of solidarity action – a refusal by workers to handle goods. Durban is of course a centre of working-class action with a long and proud history; the 1973 dock strikes were central to the resurgence of the internal struggle against apartheid. SATAWU was established in 2000 to represent not only dock workers but also railworkers, who have initiated militant and sometimes violent wage campaigns in recent years. SATAWU was central to the campaign, representing the local membership which could ensure the boycott of the goods was effective, but also utilising its international linkages to the ITF in particular. The ITF, as well as monitoring the movements of the vessel, also sought to mobilise labour organisations in the region, but was hampered by both communications problems, and by the uneven development of international labour linkages in southern Africa. They worked with International Trade Union Confederation officials to identify union contacts in Angola and Mozambique who could alert local dockworkers to the issue. The ITF also worked alongside established networks of international NGOs; here, the need for consultation and coordination of activities did not always reflect the need for urgent concrete actions.

South-South Solidarity

The campaign of solidarity in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, would not have been possible without nearly a decade of patient solidarity work by a range of civil society organisations and social movements, linking Zimbabwean activists and their counterparts in the region. In a context in which the South African government has been habitually sympathetic to its Zimbabwean counterpart, the range and extent of this solidarity has generally been overlooked by observers.

Those involved in such initiatives have faced considerable challenges. In Johannesburg, the wider Gauteng province and other parts of northern South Africa, the influx of millions of Zimbabwean refugees over the last decade has fuelled the xenophobic feelings of many poor South Africans. The widespread stereotyping of Zimbabweans resident in South Africa as both criminals and as workers desperate enough prepared to undercut South African wages created significant anti-Zimbabwean feeling, expressed in the horrifying wave of xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. Against this, organisations such as the Solidarity Peace Trust have sought to raise awareness of the oppression of Zimbabweans at home, and their suffering inside South Africa, for example their poor treatment by inadequate immigration services. The Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) in Johannesburg hosted many of these activities. OSISA and the Media Institute of Southern Africa played an important role in coordinating meetings in Johannesburg from around 2002, whilst Elinor Sisulu played a leading role in raising media attention of the plight of Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa. These groups struggled to mobilise the vast Zimbabwean exile population in the country – few were willing to draw attention to themselves, thereby risking their precarious residential status. Nevertheless, it was precisely these organisations and the networks they created which were key to the rapid organisational and legal mobilisation which took place over the arms shipment; indeed, it can be argued that such a response would not have been possible without the painstaking effort in laying the groundwork over recent years.

Sectoral solidarity has also become increasingly important. Women’s organisations, particularly Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), made links with their counterparts in South Africa. Similarly, ties between particular churches with a base in both countries enabled practical solidarity efforts such as the provision of food and medicines; such activities took place below the radar of larger civil society organisations. The labour movement, in particular, has built on existing but relatively weak official linkages via the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC) to good effect, contributing to a significant estrangement between COSATU and the ANC government over the issue. For example, in the run-up to the Presidential run-off in June, COSATU sought to raise solidarity with the leaders of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, who have been charged with ‘spreading falsehoods prejudicial to the state’.

Regional State-Civil Society Relations vis-à-vis Zimbabwe

Nevertheless, the capacity of civil society to influence regional policy and action on Zimbabwe should not be overstated. Indeed, the influence of civil society and social movements on the policies of southern African governments remains both limited and highly uneven.

In South Africa, COSATU’s backing of the new ANC President, Jacob Zuma, has borne fruit with his highlighting of the problems in Zimbabwe, declaring in late June that the situation in the country was out of control and that ‘We cannot agree with Zanu-PF. We cannot agree with them on values.’ Zuma’s remarks were in marked contrast to the increasingly embattled complacency of government President Thabo Mbeki, who had notoriously stated during his post-election visit that there was ‘no crisis’ in Zimbabwe. Zuma’s credentials in the liberation struggle, and his Africanist and populist appeal, might at first glance make him an unlikely champion of liberal democracy. Whatever his personal feelings, the Zimbabwe issue has enabled Zuma to further embarrass and isolate Mbeki, reflect the concerns of his supporters in COSATU, and reach out to international opinion concerned about the prospect of a Zuma presidency. Nevertheless, during his meeting in London with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown in April, Zuma was not prepared to publicly support a full arms embargo against Zimbabwe.

One of the demands of the Zimbabwean opposition has been the removal of Mbeki as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) mediator on Zimbabwe, and his replacement with Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa, the current head of the regional body. Following Mozambique’s action in rejecting the vessel, Mwanawasa issued a specific request to SADC member states on 22 April to bar the arms shipment from their
territory, arguing that the arrival of the weapons could exacerbate Zimbabwe’s political crisis: ‘I hope this will be the case with all the countries because we don’t want a situation which will escalate the tension in Zimbabwe more than what it is’, Mwanawasa declared. This created severe diplomatic tension between Zambia and Zimbabwe, with both governments trading insults in the media on an almost daily basis in May. Mwanawasa’s critical stance towards Zimbabwe is undoubtedly symptomatic of his government’s pro-western leanings, but is also a reflection of the country’s renewed sense of purpose and prosperity, symbolised by its achievement of debt relief and rising government revenue achieved via recent increases in mine taxes. Having previously clashed with Zambian domestic civil society over issues such as constitutional reform, Zimbabwe provides an issue around which the Zambian government and its domestic critics can unite. Despite the fact that the Chinese are major investors in Zambia, Mwanawasa also offered a mild and somewhat oblique criticism of their role, arguing that the ‘Chinese can play a very useful role in Zimbabwe without the use of arms.’

In sharp contrast, the Angolan government remains largely impervious to both internal political pressure and, insulated by high oil prices, international donor pressure. It is evident that, without the campaign’s efforts and the real-time scrutiny of the ship’s movements, the An Yue Jiang would have docked in Luanda and the armaments would have been offloaded. The ITF ensured that its contacts were presented in Luanda at the time the ship docked; these individuals were able to monitor the veracity of the Angolan government’s pledge that the arms would not be offloaded. The Port Workers’ Union of Angola appears to have been an important source of information to the campaign; in a country where independent civil society remains weak, international trade union connections appeared all the more significant. However, IANSA struggled to persuade Angolan civil society representatives to make on-the-record statements, for fear of reprisals. Coverage of the Angolan situation was also severely limited by the lack of English-speaking media in the country.

Nevertheless, the Angolan government’s rapid announcement that the Zimbabwean arms shipment would not be offloaded in Luanda was perhaps also a reflection of its close and coordinated relationship with China, which has apparently distanced itself somewhat from the ailing Mugabe regime in recent months, having tired of denying Harare’s unilateral declarations of Chinese investments in the country, as well as not being paid for their supplies. Characteristically, Chinese statements initially sought to defend the arms shipment as a normal commercial operation; however, as has occurred in relation to its operations in Sudan and elsewhere, the Chinese state is increasingly aware of the limitations of its attempts to deny any responsibility for the political consequences of its commercial operations in Africa.

Finally, the arms shipment campaign also provided a timely reminder that the most effective grassroots opposition to the Mugabe regime has, over the last decade, been provided not by political parties, but by civil society and social movements. Whilst the MDC has created problems for itself by its western orientation and partial adoption of neo-liberal policies, it should not be forgotten that the party had its origins in the wave of popular discontent of 1997-99, when the ZCTU, then headed by Morgan Tsvangirai, played a central role in establishing the MDC, which initially proclaimed itself a social democratic party. In its first few years as an independent political party, the MDC alienated many of its social movement supporters by abandoning approaches based on mass
mobilisation and by adopting a pro-western stance that aided Mugabe’s efforts to portray it as a neo-colonial puppet. It was slow to realise that attempts to gain support solely on the basis of Harare’s human rights record had little purchase in Africa, appearing to reflect Western concerns rather than the need to overcome the (still relevant) colonial legacy, particularly inequalities over land ownership (something which Mugabe has of course failed to overcome in his 28 years in power).

Despite this, and notwithstanding the suppression of their activities by the Zimbabwean state, the country’s social movement activists have continued to play an important role in raising awareness about their plight and seeking to mobilise solidarity action in southern Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. The fruits of this ongoing activity, little noticed by the mainstream media, were realised in the successful boycott campaign against the An Yue Jiang. Following the failure of the 2008 election to realise the Zimbabwean people’s hopes for political transition, it may be that a coordinated combination of local, regional and international civil society initiatives on provides an important beacon of hope in a generally bleak vista.

Endnotes
1. ‘Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe’, Times (UK) Online, 18 April 2008; http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3772113.ece
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Interview, Louise Rimmer, IANSA Communications Officer, and Joseph Dube, Africa Coordinator, 25 June 2008.
10. Dube interview.
13. Dawson interview.
15. Dawson interview.
17. Dawson interview.
18. The author attended a number of these meetings in 2005-06.
23. Dawson interview.
24. Dawson interview.
Child Poverty in Africa

Meredeth Turshen

The African Child Policy Forum, a non-profit pan-African policy and advocacy centre working on the rights and well-being of children, convened the Third International Policy Conference on the African Child from 12 to 13 May 2008 at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. A biennial event, this year’s conference focused on child poverty and approached it from the angle of children’s rights, a position not frequently taken. More commonly, poverty is described in terms of humanitarian disasters, food shortages, health crises such as the AIDS pandemic, education deficits, and a decline in the capacity of future generations of Africans to improve their lives. Human rights and poverty seem to be separate fields with bodies of literature that rarely overlap.

The keynote speaker was Professor Yanghee Lee (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), who is the current chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Defending child rights and supporting the importance of analysing poverty as a rights issue, she described children living in poverty as those deprived of their right to protection, denied access to food, water, and sanitation facilities, and cut off from basic education, shelter, and healthcare services. Poverty is most threatening and harmful to children, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to reach their full potential, and to participate as full members of society.

Over 40% of sub-Saharan Africans live on less than US$1 per day, according to the World Bank; the extremely poor are those living on less than 50 cents a day. The proportion of children living below national poverty lines is higher than adults in many African countries. Household size makes a difference: the incidence of child poverty is higher among large families. For example, 55% of South African households with four or more children are in the lowest income quintile as compared to 14% of households with one child. Among the most vulnerable are children in women headed households, orphans, and children with disabilities. Armed conflict and the AIDS pandemic are thought to be responsible for pushing children into these situations of greater vulnerability to poverty.

Poverty is the likely reason children fail to attend school or fail to reach the last grade of primary education. The cost of child poverty is high in terms of both human and financial capital: death rates before the age of five in the poorest 20% of the population are at least twice as high as rates in the richest 20%. Over 26% of all 5 to 14 year olds are working in sub-Saharan Africa.

Child poverty is not exclusive to Africa and four speakers addressed problems of child poverty in India and Europe. A. K. Shiva Kumar, Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, compared India with the African continent and found India behind on such measures of child wellbeing as the percentage of malnourished children (43% moderately to severely underweight in India, 28% in sub-Saharan Africa), which he attributed to stark inequalities and acute discrimination against girls in Indian society. Despite the past decade of economic growth, child poverty declined only 1%, showing that economic growth does not necessarily translate into reduced poverty or less inequality. For growth to lead to improvements in Indian children’s lives there would have to be more public investment, better public management, greater public participation with a louder public voice (for example in social audits, independent media, and vigilance in monitoring and reporting on government programmes), and a change in public values, especially respect for the law.
Marta Santos Pais, Director of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, reviewed the plight of children in the Central European shift to market economies. Despite high percentages of children in their populations, few Central European governments place children high on the agenda in their national action plans on poverty. One in four children lives in extreme poverty, and disparities between and within countries are widening. The multidimensional aspects of poverty remain unstudied and disaggregated data are lacking; little information is available on social exclusion and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities like the Roma, while the correlation of poverty with high rates of child abandonment and institutionalization is assumed rather than demonstrated.

Hugh Frazer, advisor to the European Anti-Poverty Network, discussed the 2001 strategy of the European Union to promote social inclusion and eradicate poverty especially among children, a plan made urgent by ageing populations and slow population growth that call into question the future of social security systems. Four core areas of needs emerged from analyses of the data: adequate early intervention, and prevention (early intervention and prevention as well as a balance between universal and targeted policies were cross-cutting themes). The data on child poverty reduction across the European Union are stunning, and most of the gains are due to social transfer programmes (the only exception is Turkey, an anomaly that was not explained).

Peter Townsend, Professor of International Social Policy, London School of Economics, picked up on the theme of child benefits, declaring that they could save 300 million African children from extreme deprivation. To pay for the benefits, he proposed a new type of currency transfer tax (like the Tobin tax): 1% of payroll taxes from transnational corporations operating in regions with large numbers of children in poverty (yielding about $500 billion); the tax would fund a UN network of centres that would give cash or in-kind benefits to families with children. Townsend argued that the language of human rights changes the analysis of world conditions, shifting from personal failures of the poor to the responsibilities of international financial institutions, the G8, and transnational
social protection, comparing it to the $210 billion the UK has spent.

The Gender Dimension of Child Poverty

My own brief was to consider the gender dimension of child poverty. Although offices of national statistics are making progress on publishing disaggregated data in vital statistics, health, and education, they do not publish data on child poverty disaggregated by sex since child poverty is a reflection of family circumstances. In effect the poverty of boys is not separate from the poverty of their sisters. Yet African women represent 70% of the poor, so the issue is to find ways to measure the impact of the discriminatory systems operating in childhood that lead girls to greater poverty in adulthood. If we are to correlate poverty with gender, then we need both data disaggregated by sex and gendered information about the different roles, social status, economic, and political power of women and men in society. A gendered definition of poverty measures more than wealth and income, but policy makers tend to treat gender in isolation from structural analyses of inequality. An exclusive emphasis on gender roles leads to a focus on behavioural change at the individual level, rather than on policy change at the societal level.

Because gender means more than male/female differences, we need to know the dynamics of discrimination and subordination between the sexes. Without the social and economic contexts that establish power differentials, gender is misused as a synonym for the female sex. These social and economic contexts are found within families and communities, within nations, and in global relations between North and South. In societies that prefer and privilege sons, we know that daughters may not survive pregnancy and childbirth, may suffer or die in infancy and childhood from malnutrition and lack of medical attention to childhood diseases, and will attend school irregularly and receive fewer years of education than their brothers.

To assess the multilayered aspects of subordination, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has developed the concept of intersectionality, the experience of discrimination on more than one ground. Racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantage, and other discriminatory systems create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of females and males, racial and other groups. Intersectionality describes the way that specific acts and policies create burdens that flow along these intersecting axes, creating a dynamic of disempowerment (Coomaraswamy, 2001).

The Commission on Human Rights distinguishes three types of intersectional subordination: targeted discrimination (ethnically motivated gender-specific forms of violence; rape in civil conflicts is an example); compound discrimination (discrimination against girls and women who are also members of a subordinate racial or ethnic group); and structural discrimination (where policies intersect with underlying structures of inequality to create a compound burden for particularly vulnerable girls and women).

Although gross poverty data exist for North/South differences and for male/female income differences, the data on racial, ethnic, and religious numerical minorities within countries of the South are largely nonexistent. In an issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization devoted to the theme of inequality and health, a comparative study of child mortality in nine developing countries shows that the largest difference between poor and non-poor occurs in Brazil (Wagstaff, 2000), which is a highly unequal society. Such comparative studies are rare and unfortunately this one does not differentiate between boys and girls. Another article on child mortality
in the same issue of the WHO Bulletin observes ‘there has been no systematic examination of ethnic inequality in child survival chances across countries in the [sub-Saharan African] region’ (Brockerhoff & Hewitt, 2000:30). Geographical location of ethnic groups (residence in the largest city), household economic conditions, educational attainment and nutritional status of the mothers, use of biomedical maternal and child health services including immunization, and patterns of fertility and migration were the criteria for determining inequality. The authors report no breakdown by sex. Racism, sexism, class prejudice, and discrimination – as either the legacy of colonial rule or the result of internecine power struggles – were apparently not issues considered relevant to inequality.

Although statistical offices have documented the association of high levels of income inequality and poor health, researchers have not explained the uneven experiences of minority communities that do not have the same rates of sickness and death. Societies privilege some minorities like whites in Namibia, and social cohesion mitigates risk in other minority communities. It is not enough, however, to trace disparities in health status to disparate treatment, or to show the different outcomes that result from the minimal and delayed care of disadvantaged minorities when we control for socioeconomic status and access to health care. Intersectionality promises a much richer and deeper understanding of girls’ and boys’ poverty and health.

War dramatically and fundamentally alters life prospects for girls and boys. It may provide new opportunities – a few boys may use the military to advance and a few girls may take on roles previously denied them – but most girls face more constraints in wartime. Government protections falter or fail, their families may be displaced or even broken up, and their communities often become more conservative and xenophobic during armed conflict. Poverty in wartime takes on a different character; war reveals the stark nature of poverty shorn of the mitigating context of neighbourly solidarity and familial networks of mutual assistance.

One assumes that the purpose of improving qualitative and quantitative data about child poverty is to better target aid programmes. Targeting is the approach that, unfortunately, is currently the norm, and an older style of universal programmes that had neither means tests to qualify for aid nor other limitations like age and group affiliation is out of favour. The objections to targeted programmes are that they are expensive to administer, not transformative, not redistributive (despite claims to the contrary), and do not lead to structural change. At best targeted programmes bring about incremental improvements in the lot of targeted groups, which are often defined as ‘vulnerable’ with little elaboration of the structures that create vulnerability.

Feminists have criticized a false universalism that masks male-biased arrangements, yet they have found universalistic social policies effective in eliminating forms of inequality in social frameworks that assume that males are the breadwinners and heads of household. Policies friendly to women and girls are found in societies that base their social policies on notions of social citizenship and on universalism as an integral part of social policies (Mkandawire, 2005).

If we are to address the gender dimension of child poverty, it seems that a different sort of research design – leading perhaps to other kinds of projects – is needed. Research could be designed to gather data on girls’ and boys’ pathways from poverty in childhood and adolescence to an impoverished or better-off life in adulthood. Examination of these trajectories in cohort studies might reveal the points of divergence in girls’ and
boys’ lives that lead to more poverty in adulthood for women. Such research should be both qualitative and quantitative, tracing children’s life chances and setbacks in gendered settings.

The young lives research project on childhood poverty in Ethiopia reveals the many contradictions involved in current poverty reduction programmes: for example, the conflict between labour-intensive development approaches and child welfare (labour-intensity undermines child welfare by increasing children’s work burden). If boys are typically pulled out of school to work in family enterprises or earn wages, and girls drop out to work at home substituting for mothers occupied by income-generating projects, why is the outcome of their lack of education different? Do boys require less education to get out of poverty or do they learn skills on the job that help them in adulthood? Do girls require more education to overcome gender stereotypes and discriminatory systems or do domestic chores deprive them of the practical knowledge and experience they will need to take advantage of occupational opportunities? Only a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research will yield answers to these questions, and only operations research will provide the designs for projects that help overcome the obstacles to eliminating child poverty.

Food Security & AIDS

Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, addressed the current food crisis. Africa is a net food importer, and grain prices have risen two to three times as energy prices soar. Africa is chronically hungry because its food productivity is the lowest in the world. Yields are typically 3-5 tons per hectare elsewhere and 1 ton per hectare in Africa because of poor seeds and little fertilizer. Poverty precludes the purchase of inputs, and soil depletion amplifies low productivity. African agriculture is 96% rainfed (in a period of dwindling rainfall), while population is rising and subdivisions create ever-smaller farms.

The current food crisis is a conjunction of rising world demand, which is outpacing production under an increase in climate shocks, and the diversion of food crops into biofuels to counter scarce oil supplies. Sachs believes we are in a new era of rising commodity prices (and not just food). Emergency food supplies are not a solution to long-term problems. Africa needs a Green Revolution, a revolving fund to finance critical inputs – irrigation, fertilizer, and genetically modified high-yield seeds. Increased investment in agriculture must accompany more schooling (with no fees), clinics for malaria (with no user fees), and better infrastructure (roads, electricity, cell phone coverage, water and sanitation).

Sachs blamed the rich countries for failing to honour pledges of 0.7% of GDP in aid and on spending too much on the military. He had an echo chamber in panelists from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Shahidur Rashid & Alemayehu Seyoum), the UN World Food Programme (Jakob Mikkel森), and the World Bank (Harold Alderman).

Stephen Lewis, former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, also took the rich countries to task for failing to write off Third World debt (while saving banks in the mortgage crisis), continuing to subsidise agriculture, protecting patented drugs, and giving a fraction of promised aid (the USA gives 0.18% of GDP while spending $3 billion on the war in Iraq). AIDS complicates everything and exacerbates poverty. It wrecks children’s lives when their families and communities fall apart; 85% of orphans receive no form of aid and most (40-60%) are looked after by grandmothers. Gender inequality and poverty drive the pandemic. Lewis recommended the creation of a
new UN agency for women and suggested $1.6 billion initial funding. While he mentioned the food crisis in passing, he made no direct link between AIDS and food security.

In response, Dharam Ghai, former Executive Director of UNRISD, wondered about the global context of the food crisis, which was occurring worldwide, not just in Africa. Why is the crisis happening now? Is it a short-term crisis? Or, remembering the 1970s food crisis when world population was only 4 billion and pressures on the environment were fewer, is it a cyclical phenomenon? Or is it a long-term structural crisis? Ghai said he was disillusioned and no longer believes in aid; the South must become self-reliant if it is to gain strategic strength and make the world listen (viz. China). African leadership is dysfunctional, he said, a declaration contested by Urban Jonsson, former senior advisor to UNICEF on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. Jonsson pointed out that Africa has changed since 1960; there is more peace, more efforts for democracy, an end to apartheid. AIDS has crushed many dreams.

Creation of the Africa Movement for Children

A satellite conference – the Second All Africa Consultative Conference of Child, Youth and Human Rights Organisations – met on 11 May 2008 and created the Africa Movement for Children (AMC). AMC, which is composed of over 200 NGOs around Africa, has several purposes: to build solidarity among African NGOs, to be a lobby to speak on behalf of children, and to build support for NGOs under pressure at home.

Four principles govern the AMC: panAfricanism, universalism, children’s rights, and children’s participation. The panAfrican approach is seen as essential to standardizing legislation for the protection of children and in resolving issues like paedophilia and trafficking, which require an Africa-wide approach. Children’s participation is a first priority, and questions were raised about how to associate children. The UN General Assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2009. For this occasion the Africa Movement for Children will create a plan of action and decide on the organisation’s final structure.

Meredeth Turshen, Rutgers University; e-mail: turshen@rci.rutgers.edu

Endnotes


2. The ACPF prepared several background papers for the conference, notably country studies of child poverty in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania (see the website for all ACPF documents http://www.africanchildforum.org).


4. A targeting rationale drives World Bank structural adjustment programmes and PSRPs (Mkandawire 2005).


7. The AMC Steering Committee convenor is Wambui Njuguna (African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and
Neglect); Steering Committee members are Assefa Bequele (African Child Policy Forum), Tounkara Tambake (African Movement of Working Children), Moussa Sissoko (Coalition of African NGOs Working with Children), Fabrizio Terenzio (ENDA TM Jeunesse Action), Samantha Waterhouse (Resources aimed at Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect), George Nyakora (SOS Kinderdorf), Stella Ayo Odongo (Ugandan Child Rights NGO network). Individuals can join as well as organizations. Wambui Njuguna was elected President and Moussa Sissoko Vice President; ACPF will provide the Secretariat. In addition five regional custodians were elected (using the AU demarcation of African regions).

References


Memories of Ruth First in Mozambique

João Paulo Borges Coelho

João Paulo Borges Coelho is a Mozambican historian working at the University Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo. Born in 1955, he grew up Beira, in the centre of Mozambique. He studied at University in Maputo and completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bradford on ‘State Resettlement Policies, Development and War’ (1993). His academic work has focused on nationalism, war, demobilisation, reintegration, and peace resolution.

Since 1995, João Paulo Borges Coelho has written seven novels (As Duas Sombras do Rio, 2003; As Visitas do Dr. Valdez, 2004; Índicos Indícios I. Setentrão, 2005; Índicos Indícios II. Meridão, 2005; Crónica da Rua 513.2, 2006; Campo de Trânsito, 2006; and Hinyambaan, 2007) and won the Craveirinha prize of the Mozambican writers’ association in 2006. His novel Campo de Trânsito deals with a controversial episode in post-colonial history, namely the deportation of thousands of so-called unproductive people in the countryside in an operation named ‘Operation Production’.

This text was presented at a workshop held in Maputo in August 2007 in the memory of Ruth First, one of the founding editors of the Review of African Political Economy. The workshop was entitled: ‘Moçambique no Contexto da África Austral e os Desafios do Presente: Repensando as Ciências Sociais’ [Mozambique in the context of Southern Africa and the challenges of the present: rethinking the social sciences].

Introduction and translation by Eric Morier-Genoud (University of Oxford) and Rosa Williams (University of Chicago).
What brings us together today is the memory of Ruth First. The memory above all of her role as an intellectual and an academic and of the time she spent in Mozambique as a part of our University and our Centre of African Studies. Her stay of five years began in 1977 and came to an abrupt end on 17th August 1982 with her sudden death, 25 years ago today (August 2007).

The five years Ruth First spent here were an important period in the history of the region and of this country. In line with the logic of the world in those days, Southern Africa was divided into two irreconcilable zones which were in intense conflict – the region that we called the Southern White States (Rhodesia and South Africa) and the countries ruled by their majority. In 1977, this conflict had two years before been aggravated by the independence of Mozambique and Angola. For us the most concrete expression of the conflict was the frontier war conducted by Smith, the man we called the ‘tobacco farmer Smith’, who was fighting ferociously to maintain his access to the Beira Corridor for the export of his tobacco and fighting, above all, for the survival of his anachronistic regime. Seen from this angle, the recent fate of Zimbabwe appears both ironic and tragic: a country ruled by anachronistic regimes desperately fighting for their survival. A little further south the looming conflict with apartheid South Africa, muted up to that point, was about to start to claim its first victims in Mozambique. It would eventually claim Ruth First’s own life.

Those five years were also a time when many profound transformations were taking place within the nation under the influence of the most important event in our recent history: the Third Frelimo Congress. This congress in some sense put an end to a relatively ‘liberal’ period of transition characterized by confusion but also by enthusiasm, and aimed to outline and implement a socialist order.

We could not of course see things in 1977 with the clarity with which we see them today. Only the past can be arranged in
the drawers of our analytical categories. The present must be lived through its own forms of clarity and obscurity. And thirty years ago this past which I am talking about was our present. A difficult present, one in which we were slowly coming to feel the tempering of the euphoria of independence. Gradually we were seeing the re-establishment of wartime life, along with its rationing of food, gas and so on.

How did we at the University live this past which was then our present? We lived it in a rather messy way, with some confusion, but above all with great enthusiasm. Though still an elitist arena, our university simmered with ideas. We did not have much of a guilt complex in relation to the past; we looked for ways to participate in the great transformation which had begun. Everything was urgent; the need to build a defence against the aggressions waged against us was mixed with the need to think about development. Not forgetting the need to put food on the table.

The building which we now call CEA (Centre of African Studies) used to belong to the Mozambican Institute of Scientific Investigation (ICM) which comprised the cream of academia in the last phase of colonialism. It is a building which summed up neatly the spirit of the period, serving a space in which the old, dying, structures confronted the emerging ones, a struggle which was just about managed by the director, Pedro Alcântara.

While the inertia suffered within the old structures was discernible in the dress and habits of faculty and staff, it is only fair to recognize that the representatives of the former era did their best to respond to changing times. We see this in the number and quality of the issues of the Institute’s publication Memórias piled in the cellars of the Documentation Centre. In 1974, for example, Rita-Ferreira published his Etno-história e cultura tradicional do grupo angune (Nguni) [Ethno-history and traditional culture of the Angune (Nguni)]. The following year Leónor Correia de Matos translated and annotated Henri-Alexandre Junod’s Cantos e Contos dos Rongas [Ronga songs and stories].

At the time we were not the least prepared to accommodate these contributions, which we would consider laudable today, in what could have been one of the most productive dialogues of the transition period. We loftily declined from engaging in such a dialogue, which gave us some satisfaction, but left us without the benefit of the experience of well respected social scientists – those I have mentioned and others. Consequently, Luís Polanah passed by us in his straw hat, Rita-Ferreira still gave a few classes, Leónor Correia de Matos arrived in her little car, beige if I remember correctly (maybe a Simca or a Morris, cars no one drives today and which were becoming rare even then) and no one seemed to notice them anymore. Sitting on the padded chairs of a relatively luxurious bar (the colonial academics’ bar where even alcoholic drinks were unremarkable), we would see them pass by and, to us, they looked like ghosts from the past.

Meanwhile new structures appeared. In early 1976, where the CEA library stands now, the Centro de Técnicas Básicas para o Aproveitamento dos Recursos Naturais (TBARN) [Centre for basic techniques for the use of natural resources] was established, the true precursor to the debates over the best models of development for the country. Run, intellectually and administratively, by the painter and writer António Quadros, we went there to read René Dumont and Leroi-Gourhan while studying ways to store cereals, to build effectively and cheaply with the materials at our disposal, to use animal traction and to use water-power in small dams and hydraulic ram pumps. In other words we were trying to outline, in a perhaps somewhat naïve but very enthusiastic way, a material solution for a new
society, just and horizontally organized, where men lived ‘with nature at their side’. What my brief account cannot convey of the spirit of TBARN is more clearly captured in the verse of Mutimati Barnabé João, the occasional heteronym of António Quadros:

(...) Eu o PovoVou aprender a lutar do lado da NaturezaVou ser camarada de armas dos quatro elementos[a terra, o ar, a água e o fogo].¹ (…) I the People will learn to fight with Nature at my side will be comrade of arms with the four elements-[earth, air, water and fire].

At the same time, next door, the Centre of African Studies was also taking its first steps under the direction of Aquino de Bragança. You could not have anything more different from TBARN than this Centre of African Studies, attentive to the recent history of Mozambique’s liberation, attentive to geopolitics, attentive to the regional political economy, and to the larger questions of the Cold War. This was the period when the first generation of CEA researchers produced the study Zimbabwe: alguns dados e reflexões sobre a questão rodesiana [Zimbabwe: some facts and reflections about the Rhodesian question].²

The differences in the nature of the two centres, as well as the differences in the character of their mentors, were the basis of the tension between the two places. Indeed, there could not be two more different individuals than António Quadros and Aquino de Bragança. While the former spent the day dealing with bees and designing commendable things with soil under his fingernails, smoking a pipe which helped him think, Aquino de Bragança was a man of society with a fine sense of humour, always whispering a new secret in our ears about those in power, or, in more public moments, finding a witty saying appropriate to each situation, preferably in French. While António Quadros would leave the drawing-board where he spent the day to go and check on a detail, taking brisk small steps and hidden behind his dark glasses, Aquino de Bragança remained seated in a sofa with his hand extended to underscore an idea and with his leg balanced across him, thus making his belly balance, in a gesture so characteristic that all those who knew him remember it well. It is not surprising then that Aquino de Bragança referred to TBARN as ‘the crazy man’s project’ while António Quadros talked about CEA as ‘that setting of the international plotters’.

We, as disciples of one and students of the other, were in the privileged position of being able to benefit from both ways of thinking about the world: one which some saw as too political and another that others saw as too poetic. We learned from those who, in spite of living within University, would not for a moment hesitate to contemplate the world beyond it. In those days (and I say this without modesty), we believed in learning from masters.

It is around this time, in the first half of 1977 if I am not mistaken, that Ruth First arrived. When I think of her, the first image that comes to my mind is auditory: her high-heels furiously hammering the corridor floor. Only after that do I recall her arched legs capable of that vigorous walk, her aquiline nose and strong chin, her dark glasses, her always impeccable matching skirt and jacket. And then finally her powerful and authoritarian voice. In my memory, she always appears surrounded by researchers. Or rather, she always has researchers at her disposal, in offices where she bursts in and comes out hurriedly with some papers in her hand.

It seems to me that this was the CEA’s most prosperous period, so to speak. In part, in good part in fact, this prosperity was due to the work of Ruth First. Her biographies have shown what her brilliance and intellectual sharpness were capable of when combined with an
organising spirit forged in the struggle against apartheid.

I daresay that Ruth First accepted the invitation to come to Mozambique because she would be closer to her own country and she could more effectively direct from here the work begun at what I think was known as the Nucleus for the Study of Southern Africa, a sort of observatory of the geopolitical and economic evolution of the region, and of South Africa in particular — if need be providing academic support to the ANC. But once here, she not only continued to develop this work but also ably organized and directed research projects and social and economic analyses of life in Mozambique, the best known, without a doubt, being the 1977 study of the Mozambican miner. Other important projects followed, producing reports which still support my teaching on this period today. These included research on rural transformations in Gaza (1979), on the transformation of family agriculture in Nampula (1980) and several others on agrarian commercialization (1980/81), to cite only those from that period. In 1980 the first issue of the journal Estudos Moçambicanos on the subject of underdevelopment and migrant work appeared, reflecting the two sides of life in Mozambique and its connections with the larger region. Finally, I must mention her role in the organization of the Course on Development which still marks a generation of Mozambicans, and which in turn reflected back on her own research, empowering and enriching it.

I think however that to attribute the success of CEA during this period only to Ruth First, however deserved and just, would be somewhat incorrect. It would be the same as attributing it only to Aquino de Bragança and to his own, particular, manner of directing CEA, pulling unseen strings. In my view, in the same way as the strength and creativity of IICM emerged from the tensions between different departments during the transition, the success of CEA had much to do with the creative tensions which developed as a result of the meeting of diverse forces, with different ways of putting reality in perspective. We might say that there were several CEs: the Centre on Southern Africa, the Course on Development and the projects supervised by Ruth First, the History Workshop directed by Jacques Depelchin and closely connected with Aquino de Bragança (aimed at rethinking the recent history of the liberation of the country), and yet other small ideas of projects such as those which Aquino de Bragança was always recruiting us for (a study of Mozambican nationalism in the manner of Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, a programme of interviews of former combatants, etc., etc.).

On balance, it is fair to reserve a share of the credit for Aquino de Bragança, in view of the skill that he deployed in negotiating the activities of CEA within the sphere of politics and government, at a time when there was usually little room to manoeuvre. He not only accomplished what we would today call marketing, promoting the considerable services which the centre had to offer to those at the highest levels of the circles of power. He also managed, at the same time, to absorb some of the shockwaves emanating from any research which expressed too heterodox an opinion.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and ask the purpose of this incursion into the past, one which crosses terrain which others in this room know far better than I, merely a neighbour to the CEA and its occasional collaborator. The past, of course, does not exist; it evaporates with each day that passes. What do exist are discourses about the past, discourses with intentions, all fed by that past so as to operate in the present.

The French historian Le Goff once observed that memory only tries to capture
the past so as to serve the present.\textsuperscript{5} And, in spite of our seeing the past in the light of the present, in spite of the fact that we use the past as a weapon in the struggles of the present, it is often forgotten when it does not serve our purpose or when it becomes bothersome.

I and others, in this room, are agreed that this moment in the past, thirty years old, could be useful for our present and that it should therefore not be forgotten. At least, this is how I understood the objective of our meeting today: to consider to what extent the social sciences of thirty years ago, which emerged in the climate that I have briefly described, can illuminate the social sciences of today, born of a totally different context?

I will try to answer this question, in the space I have left, by choosing, from amongst many others, three characteristics which in my view correspond to many of the virtues of the context which I have sketched out. Or, if you prefer, three lessons that I draw personally from this exercise of remembering Ruth First’s days in Mozambique.

I will call the first lesson that of Diversity. It is not by chance that I have focused so much on the tensions which existed between the different actors: tensions between TBARN and CEA; tensions between TBARN and the Centre for the Study of Communication, which I have not yet mentioned; tensions between these centres and the dynamic Faculty of Art; tensions, as I will call them, within CEA; finally, the tension that for a while was much talked about between CEA and the Department of Anthropology, over the question of whether anthropology could free itself from its colonial past.\textsuperscript{6}

My argument here relies on the often used botanic metaphor according to which a monoculture is always poorer and more vulnerable than a natural forest. The latter, beautiful, lush, is made up of diverse species, all of which adapt themselves to the environment and establish complementary relations. Differently put, I contend that these inter or intra-departmental tensions, when they result from the healthy confrontation of diverse academic perspectives, constitute the kernel of university life; they guarantee the progress of the social sciences.\textsuperscript{7}

The social sciences, like other sciences, are made up of investigations and contradictions. That is to say they are alien to certainty, to absolute truth. Absolute truth is sterile; it brings to mind order and hierarchy, but also stagnation, everything that immobilises the world. Adorno says that the absolute, totality, is a lie. Steiner writes that incompleteness and the fragment are the passwords of modernism.\textsuperscript{8} The fundamentalism of absolutes, in its defence of a definitive and supposedly ‘true’ text, in its hatred of the uncontrolled and secular word, is the principle enemy of science, which can only live if it breathes the air of liberty. Only critical interrogation, born out of contradictions, provokes change and the search for the new. Transformation, then, can only take place in a context of diversity.

The second lesson that this moment in the past teaches us, closely linked to the previous one, I call Hospitality. Hospitality in the sense that the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas uses it: a gesture of welcome, or a predisposition to receive the Other, to receive he who is different from us in our midst. One thing which remains with me from this time thirty years ago is the memory of the people who arrived daily at this University, and in particular at the CEA building. From every direction came dozens and dozens of national and above all international scholars (there were few Mozambicans involved in research at the time). Let me give you here a few names I remember: Kurt and Masha Madörin, Barry Munsnow, António Pacheco, David
Wield, Marc Wuytts, Bridget O’Laughlin, Kurt Habermeier, Helena Dolny, Colin Darch, Judith Head, Dan O’Meara, Rob Davies, Alpheus Manghezi, Sipo Dlamini, Valdemiro Zamparoni, Jacques Depelchin, John Saul and also Pierre-Philippe Rey, Claude Meillassoux, Christine Messiant, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Christian Geffray, Yves Lacoste, Marc Ferro, Philippe Constantin, Nadine Wanono, Lúcio Flávio Regueira, Constante Pereira, João Azevedo, Teresa Muge, Marcelo Ramos, Miguel Arrais Jr, Christine Vershuur. And, of course, Ruth First herself. This list could carry on, I have only mentioned the visitors of that era and have still left many out. Many became specialists in subjects related to Mozambique after their stay here, others were already well-known academics when they came here or passed through. All of them, in one form or another, contributed to enriching our intellectual life. And we received all of them with hospitality.

When I speak of hospitality, I speak of important, even fundamental, ethical dimension of respect for the Other, but not only this. I also mean, like Lévinas, a dimension of growth, of learning, in so far as (and I cite him) the Other ‘comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain’. That is, the presence of these Others, with their diverse research, perspectives and problematics, constitutes an invaluable source of wealth which enlarged not only our vision but also the number and quality of perspectives about our reality. It brought us more than we contained. It enriched us and enriched the discourses about our reality.

In contrast, an inhospitable attitude of self-sufficiency is, in the academic world, the attitude of a self-satisfied person, someone who has lost curiosity and the ambition to know more, to learn more. It is the attitude of a person who has given up on academia, even if lethargy, their career or some other obscure reason have kept them within it. It is the attitude of someone who can see only a threat in the Other.

So my question is: what are we doing today to cultivate this hospitality which populated the corridors of the social sciences faculties with associate researchers and extended our knowledge? My question is: why are our corridors devoid of researchers? My question is: how do we populate our corridors again?

Finally, the third and last lesson I want to draw from this period in time is one which concerns what I will call Trust and it has to do with the complex relationship between the spheres of politics and academia. I have already noted the incredibly important role which Aquino de Bragança and Ruth First exercised in defence of CEA before the political sphere. Alongside Fernando Ganhão, the rector of University at the time, they gave a voice to academia, ensuring that it was not a subordinate partner, but a critical interlocutor in a productive dialogue with the powers that be. In this respect, I cannot resist referring to the theorist Edward Said, who wrote that our function as academics is to enlarge the spheres of debate, not to establish limits which suit the dominant authority. Science develops from a base of contradictions; it is founded on uncertainty. Since science, by definition, is what academia does, it will always be bad at carrying out orders. By definition, there is entropy in the scientific process and much loss of energy. Sometimes many failures are necessary to obtain a single success. The destiny of academia is radical: create or be useless.

I believe that the individuals I am talking about were creating something. They endeavoured to define themselves through debates rather than wait for others to define them. They debated which path to follow rather than wait to be told which path needed to be followed. In consequence they gained re-
spect from all sides of the political field and diverse sectors of the state, people who were soon knocking on the door asking for studies and critical opinions about this and that.

I remember with great clarity the last day I heard Ruth First’s heels hammering the floor of the corridor. Ruth looked through our door and announced that she would be opening a bottle of wine in her office, to bid farewell to our colleague John Saul. She turned on her heel and left. We tidied our desks and were on our way when the explosion happened. A few hours later, when the echoes of the terrible attack faded away, I remember thinking that nothing would be the same from then on.

It is our duty to recall these scholars who were interested in far more than their careers and who took pleasure in the work they did. Uneasy about the world, they felt the need to do something, something which would contribute to it. These were academics whose purpose was not to describe or carry out rituals (including that of earning money), nor to prove their obedience. Their purpose was to help diminish the suffering of existence (in the literal, scientific and cultural sense); to fight ignorance; to help transform a particular place without losing sight of the fact that they belonged to something universal.

To me this past, with the values it held, constitutes a reference point. One which we should try to return to whenever we feel we have moved too far away from it. We shall have to see whether we are capable of transmitting to future generations this legacy of principles and values which was generously left to us.

Endnotes


4. See Centro de Estudos Africanos, Problemas de transformação rural na Província de Gaza, Um estudo sobre a articulação entre aldeias comunais selecionadas cooperativas agrícolas e a Unidade de Produção do Baixo Limpopo, Maputo: CEA, 1979; A Transformação da Agricultura Familiar na Província de Nampula, Maputo: CEA., 1980; and Comercialização agrária : métodos de planificação, Maputo: CEA, 1982 or Comercialização agrária ao nível distrital : um estudo sobre o Alto Molocue, Maputo: CEA, 1982


6. Ironically, in spite of the accusations advanced by CEA intellectuals who held a rather orthodox view typical of the time, anthropology eventually proved more sensitive to the first signs of internal civil conflict in 1980s Mozambique.

7. In the same way as tensions between different political forces constitute the kernel of the democratic functioning of a society and of its progress.


Africa: International Food Price Rises & Volatility
Vincent Tickner

As often happens to Africa, external factors have crucial implications for the lives of many Africans. This is particularly the case with the steep rises in international food prices in the last two years, and the particularly abrupt spike in international prices of a number of basic foodstuffs that has taken place since February/March 2008. The volatility in these prices has also left many people uncertain as to how best to react. The circumstances are changing from day to day, and vary substantially between different economies. Some observers considered that these prices had peaked in late May, but they continued to grow in early June, and the likelihood remains that they will stay high, but also stay volatile, leaving many operators in the food supply chains uncertain.

The factors contributing to these price rises are complex. They range from supply/demand imbalances with slow demand response in certain circumstances, run-down stocks, under-investment in agriculture and pertinent infrastructure, decreasing land availability, agricultural productivity growth slowing down, export oriented agriculture over local demand needs, decreasing water resources, structural adjustment policy-orientation resulting in food import increases in many poorer countries, index traders and hedge and risk fund traders diversifying swiftly into commodities, over-hasty support and incentives to bio-fuel feedstock production, climatic instabilities (some of which are influenced by climate change), increased inter-linkages between commodity prices (particularly of agricultural inputs and agricultural products with oil-product prices), knee-jerk reactions with trading restrictions by different governments and operators.

The weighting of the comparative importance of each contributing factor has only taken place in a fairly haphazard way to date, and often bias1 has occurred in the importance attributed to different factors (see Von Braun, 11 & 22 April 2008 for some simple attempted weighting).

The crux of the matter is, however, that despite the denials, a major contributor to the food prices spike has been international capital holders, responding to the weakened US dollar, shake-out of the US sub-prime loans chaos and credit squeeze, and high-energy prices, by speculative investment through the ‘swaps loophole’ in agricultural commodities, with the inherent instabilities of this liberalised capitalist exchange system. Such traders (particularly index traders) have been buying up commodities and holding their positions, creating artificial premiums. The current profit domination of much food production contributes to this distortion.

In the first three months of 2008, the volume of globally traded grain futures and options increased by 32% on the comparable volume in the same period in 2007. There would also appear to have been considerable direct investment in commodities by what are referred to as ‘deep pool’ investors (private investors using banks, but by-passing commodity exchanges), but the difficulty is that such investments are not transparent, and not easily measurable in present circumstances. A second key factor, which US representatives have tried to play down, is the rapid increase in bio-fuel feedstock production from food crops that has been artificially supported and subsidised. Even IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington, DC) has advocated changing bio-fuels policies (Von Braun, May, 2008)

At the receiving end of this crisis are many Africans and African countries. A
specific World Bank study on likely impacts (Ivanec & Martin, 2008) concluded that ‘the recent large increases in food prices appear likely to raise overall poverty in low income countries substantially’, although it also says that ‘little hard information appears to be available on actual impacts on poor people’. They also indicate that the impacts are likely to ‘differ considerably by commodity and by country’ (e.g. greater impact in Madagascar in relation to rice prices than in Zambia or Malawi that are more oriented to maize). There is considerable diversity in circumstances and responses of African countries to date, and many aspects are still changing, and likely to change. Nevertheless, many African households (the majority) are likely to suffer as a consequence, and resort to diets with an even poorer nutritional content, particularly:

- Poorer urban households with limited income-generating possibilities, and limited incomes already;

- Landless rural populations, or smallholders that are deficit in their household food balances (both groups often having limited food security at present);

- Smallholders in more isolated zones, who have increased input supply costs (prices of fertiliser have increased even more than those of food prices), as well as increased marketing costs (because of weak transport infrastructure and increased fuel prices), who cannot easily increase supply in a viable, economic way;

- Small-scale food supply intermediaries, primarily in the system with limited capital to get some sort of a living, because alternative employment is also limited.

Many African governments are also squeezed by all this, regardless as to whether their orientation to their people is altruistic or self-seeking. They cannot sit idle, waiting for the negative impacts to happen or to be analysed in detailed socio-economic studies. They need to react, both with short-term initiatives and putting in place longer-term policies and investments. Many are trying to take short-term action in a number of ways, particularly in the following:

- Securing adequate national supplies of food for the immediate future, at sometimes considerable cost now, with limited budgetary resources to do so, while this is simultaneously limiting their efforts to develop their economies;

- Reducing import tariffs on basic food products (e.g. Nigeria, Morocco – both of which had poorer harvests in 2007, as well as Egypt, Ghana and Senegal) to encourage swift food imports, despite resultant decreases in government revenue;

- Establishing appropriate safety-net mechanisms for food supply, when sometimes the appropriate institutions are not in place, not functioning well, or have limited coverage, even if this is only done crudely by consumer subsidies (e.g. South African government has been considering introducing food vouchers and extending tax relief on basic foodstuffs; the Egyptian government has expanded food aid recipients). The cost of such programmes has to be met, however;

- Sometimes trying to control prices (Benin, Senegal) by price-fixing or anti-hoarding measures, which rarely succeed for long, and often cause tensions, corruptions, and by-passing of the ‘controlled’ distribution system;
• Efforts (often too late!) to establish suitable food stocks or food stock release measures that would cushion such price volatility and fluctuating food supplies (a practice discouraged in many countries by external forces in recent years);

• For countries that periodically export basic food crops, limiting their exports (e.g. Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia) to ensure local availability, with resultant losses in foreign exchange for the economy, leaving aside trade ‘distortion’ issues;

• Endeavouring to manage the resultant growth in crime, dissention and rioting that inevitably occurs amongst desperate populations determined to survive, particularly urban ones (food-related protests in late 2007/early 2008 have taken place in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mauretania, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa);

• Managing the balance between food crop production, feed production and bio-fuel feedstock production

In 2007, 16,000 tonnes of maize were exported from Mozambique to Mexico by the Argentine trader who has a near monopoly of bulk trade in the north of the country, in order to supply deficits of maize for local food consumption in Mexico due to excessive exports of maize from there to the USA for bio-fuel production. Now the Mozambican government is struggling between trying to prevent such exports aggravating local food needs, while simultaneously trying to promote production for these ends on more marginal land.

Africa accounts for about 22% of the global share of cereal imports, while its

---

**Table 1: African Countries that import all their petroleum products, & their major grains imports as a per cent of domestic apparent consumption, ranked by prevalence of undernourishment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Major grains % imported</th>
<th>% under-nourishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia *</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe *</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger *</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

share in exports is roughly 3%. Africa’s total cereal import bill in 2007/08 is forecast at US$2.7 billion, 23% higher than in 2006/07. In some poorer countries, increased food import bills could easily lead to substantial widening of the current account deficits, further impacting on other macroeconomic variables: exchange rates, monetary reserve positions or increased indebtedness. Global prices do not always transmit immediately to domestic prices in African countries for a number of reasons, but local markets cannot remain disconnected from world markets over the longer term. In the short term, national trade policies, public procurement and distribution of cereals, roots & tubers, and poor infrastructure, seem to play an important role in determining African domestic prices. Countries in southern Africa with large cereals imports relative to their domestic requirements, such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, have experienced much stronger price transmission from South African prices, the region’s main exporter.

Which are the most vulnerable African countries? The FAO, in preparation for the June 2008 High-Level Food Security Conference in Rome with other international organisations, indicated the following African countries (although using slightly dated figures) (see Table 1); that because of the already low levels of nutrition in the country, their food supply weaknesses, their energy fuel vulnerability, and their limited purchasing power, are particularly at risk.

Commodity Price Indices (CPIs), although often having an urban bias, can give some indications in the rates of price increase in basic foods. Recent data for a number of African countries have been supplied by FAO (see Table 2):

The World Food Programme (WFP) has recently been monitoring developments in 30 ‘at risk’ countries, including Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Sao Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. To date the results of this monitoring have not been widely publicized.

How have African governments been responding to the problems presented to them? The response has so far been very varied. Interestingly, the FAO found (2008:42), having surveyed 77 countries, that up to now the responses of a number of African countries have been much less than in other parts of the world. A number of actions have been taken by North African countries, but amongst sub-Saharan countries, the actions taken

| Table 2: Monthly percentage changes in the CPI and share of food expenditures in CPI for selected African countries/groups |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total CPI | Food | Total CPI | Food |
| Kenya | 4.6 | 12.6 | 15.4 | 24.6 |
| Botswana | 10.6 | 18.2 | 7.7 | 18.3 |
| South Africa | 5.8 | 10.9 | 8.6 | 13.6 |
| Egypt | 15.4 | 24.6 | 9.5 | 13.5 |
| Senegal | 3.6 | 7.3 | 5.8 | 10.9 |
| Malawi | 6.8 | 11.4 | n.a. | n.a. |
| UEMO | 6.9 | 14.6 | 3.6 | 7.3 |

Source: FAO 2008 Table 11
*Includes: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
have been much less. This may be because such governments are waiting to see how their main food crop harvests for 2008, due to commence in May/June, are likely to turn out. The more common responses in sub-Saharan African countries have been the reduction of taxes on food grains and different forms of price controls and/or consumer subsidies. About 20% of these countries had been releasing supplies from food stocks and another 20% had been involved in introducing export restrictions on food grains, but about 21% of sub-Saharan African governments had not undertaken any responsive measures, according to their survey.

A range of institutions from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), ECOSOC, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), OECD, to a range of donors and NGOs, are seeking, or presenting, their ‘solutions’ for short-term responses, and for more medium-term and longer-term responses. Few of these envisage radical reform of the international agricultural commodity trading system, nor any types of trade restriction.

The free-traders are a bit dubious about the hypocrisy of bio-fuel supports (including subsidies) in developed countries, when those same countries simultaneously advocate liberalized trade options, but surreptitiously keep their own trade restrictions. Greater investments are needed in agriculture and infrastructure to facilitate crop marketing in African countries, but investments for whom in those countries?

- Already we see the pro-GM crops lobby positioning their case;
- Outsiders (including the Chinese and agribusiness firms) wanting to get hold of land in Africa and develop more-efficient agriculture on it;
- the developed economy philanthropic tycoons with their ‘private equity approaches’;
- The population-restriction lobby wanting to restrict population growth of ‘certain’ populations;
- The international food aid lobby shouting for immediate increased food aid, administered and supplied by them in their way, even with more local supply provision, and with token responses to social welfare system development and monetary transfers instead of in-kind transfers.²

Short-term responses are needed, as well as longer-term ones. Unfortunately, at the moment these seem to be dominated primarily by increasing food and humanitarian aid in the short-term, followed by research into improving crop productivity and high-tech fast-impact food production approaches (including subsidization of such development) in the more medium term. A wider range of responses is needed. IFPRI advocates ‘calming the markets’ by monitoring, and setting of maximum limits on futures trading positions and increasing margin deposits to discourage speculative trading, but eschews more radical solutions. Interestingly, they are also advocating ‘modest grain reserves’ with IMF-supported import-financing facilities, but make no mention of the increased profits of international grain trading companies, fertilizer companies and seed companies during the recent period. Besides these, some of the more communal responses that have been developed in countries such as Cuba, Venezuela and Brazil, need to be considered in a number of African contexts, with efforts to achieve productivity increases amongst smallholder producers, as well as a range of more permanent
social welfare support systems. One fear is that electoral and other political pressures in ‘developed’ countries, combined with the usual vested interests, will limit consideration by governments in those countries primarily to their own inhabitants, leaving only a food aid option (delivered on their terms) to help out the worst cases (probably mainly where it looks like causing political instability where ‘developed’ country interests are involved). African local policy-makers are facing a difficult balancing act between an urgency to respond, on the one hand, and taking enough time to understand the consequences of what they are doing in a complex situation, on the other. Countries and governments are being exhorted to determine their own policies, but then are being discouraged to do so if they challenge liberalized trade approaches, or do not adopt comprehensive approaches, despite the diversity of circumstances.

In the meantime traditional capitalist labour markets continue driving down real incomes, and only certain types of African producers will be in a position to respond to the price increases.

The UN/FAO Regional Conference for Africa held from 16-20 June 2008 in Nairobi hardly touched on these pressing issues in its background papers, even though the Director-General, Jacques Diouf made passing reference to them. We will see where things are by the time of the G8 Summit in July and the UN Secretary-General’s summit meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2008.

Vincent Tickner of Government and Agricultural Marketing Consultants (GAMCO) has been a freelance consultant in aspects of the marketing of basic foods and food security issues for over 25 years, having worked in over 50 countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

Endnotes
1. It would appear that the factor of rapidly-increasing meat demand in certain countries, mainly put out by USDA in relation to India and China, has not only been over-exaggerated, but it is actually wrong (see Ray, 30 May 2008 and following briefing); hence it is not even included as a factor here.

2. See also MacMillan 2008 on the food crisis being a new vehicle for old ideas.

Bibliography
Bello, Walden (2008), Destroying African Agriculture in ‘Foreign Policy in Focus’, 3 June; www.fpif.org
Evans, Alex (2008), ‘Rising Food Prices: Drivers and Implications for Development’, Chatham House Food Supply Project, London, April.
Krishan Bir Chaudary (2008), ‘Should the ban on commodity futures be widened? Futures caused the market manipulation’, Financial Express, 17 April.
Ray, Daryll E. (2008), ‘One could say the cupboard is bare, but actually there is no cupboard’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 4 April; (2008), ‘USDA top officials versus USDA data’, Weekly Policy Articles, APAC, University of Tennessee, 30 May 2008.


At the 19 May 2006 USDA briefing with reporters, Chief Economist Joseph Glauber said:

If you were to look at countries like India and China where the GDP there has been increasing on the order of 5 to 10% annually, that has expanded demand, particularly demand for meat products, which has contributed to both a growth in livestock exports in the case of this country and also demand for protein meals, soybean meal, other sorts of things. And, that has continued and is projected to continue (http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/05/0130.xml).

That made us wonder if we had made a mistake so we went back to the data to see if there was an error in our calculations. We are well aware that Chinese imports have sustained the world soybean complex market for some time, but were we wrong about China and the growth in livestock exports? And, what about India? Let’s look at the data.

To start with, what does Glauber mean by countries like China and India? To be fair, are there other countries we should include in our analysis? Together the population of China and India is 2.5 billion people – nearly 37% of the world’s population. The next largest country is the US with 304 million followed by Indonesia (232 million) and Brazil (187 million).

Looking at Indonesia, the USDA PS&D (Production, Supply, And Distribution (http://www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/psdQuery.aspx) numbers shows that Indonesia is a minor player in the meat market, importing a mere 9,000 tonnes of broiler meat a year. When it comes to the oilseed complex and grains, Indonesia has been a net exporter for the last five years with net exports of nearly 7 million tonnes in 2007. The very modest increase in Indonesia’s demand for meats (broil-

USDA Top Officials vs. USDA Data

Daryll E. Ray

A couple of weeks ago (30 May 2008) we wrote a column in which we said:

China has increased its consumption of meats [beef, pork, broilers*] at a rate well above the rate of population increase.

We also noted,

China produces virtually all of the meat that is domestically consumed, and then some. In fact China was a net meat exporter for the last 7 years and 14 of the last 18 years.

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411271
ers) has not affected either grain and oilseed complex imports and meat imports, so they are not a factor in the increasing demand that is said to be a component of the increase in the price of corn and other grains.

In Brazil meat consumption has doubled since 1990, growing from 8 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes in 2007. At the same time, Brazil's exports of meats has increased from 0.3 million tonnes to 6.0 million tonnes. Likewise Brazil's combined exports of oilseed complex and grains has grown nine-fold from 5 million tonnes in 1990 to 45 million tonnes in 2007.

The numbers we have just looked at suggest that USDA's focus was specifically on China and India. A re-examination of our data confirm that China's 2007 consumption of broilers was nearly five times what it was in 1990, with a small amount of imports. Pork production in 2007 is twice what it was in 1990 and China exports a small amount. Beef consumption is now 7 times what it was in 1990 and again China exports a small amount. When all meats are combined, China has been a net exporter of meats since 2001. Currently pork accounts for 70% of China's consumption of major meats, followed by poultry at 18% and beef at 12%.

Despite the repeated expectations that China would become a major importer of grains to feed the increased meat animal production, it has remained a net exporter of all grains since the 1996/1997 crop year. Since the 1999 crop year, China's year-ending grain stocks have declined from 88% of annual usage to 28% of usage in 2007. That reduction in stock levels has provided the grain that China needed in order to increase its level of meat production. Even though stock levels are down from their highs and one might anticipate that they soon will need to import when their stocks run out, it is instructive to note that China's production of grains has exceeded its consumption for each of the last three years, while maintaining significant net export levels.

When it comes to soybeans and oilseed complex in general, the story is quite different. With the 1994 crop year China shifted from being a net exporter of oilseed complex (seed, meal, oil) to being a major net importer. In 2007, China imported 44 million tonnes of oilseed complex, the bulk of it coming from soybean and its products. Certainly, China would not have been able to increase its meat production in the absence of these imports.

In the current environment, China's increase in demand for oilseed complex needs to be put in context. Rather than placing a significant upward pressure on world crop prices over the last decade, it could be argued that China's increase in soybean imports for use as animal feed has lit a bonfire under the feet of Brazil's agricultural sector, vastly increasing the world's food growing capacity both now and in the future. For most of those years China's soybean complex imports prevented soybean prices from tanking quite as badly as corn and the other grains. With at least 300 million acres of land available for tillage, we ain't seen nothing yet when it comes to Brazil's ability to produce soybeans and corn. China's imports have helped spark a major round of investment in Brazil's agricultural production capacity that may lead once again to production levels that exceed consumption levels, resulting in declining prices in the coming years.

India's story is much the same as China's, only simpler. India has been an exporter of oil meals that could be used for meat animal production and an importer of palm oil and soybean oil that were used for food consumption. When it comes to grains, India has been a net exporter for 15 out of the last 18 years.
India has also been a net meat exporter for the last 18 years. Most of the exports were beef. India’s consumption of beef is about the same as it was in 1990 while broiler consumption has risen from 0.2 million tonnes to 2.3 million tonnes in 2007. Given that the eating of meat, as proscribed by Hindu beliefs, one would expect that the growth in meat consumption, particularly beef and pork would be very slow.

In that same press briefing, US Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer said:

*Editor’s Note: the term 'broiler' is mostly used in North America to describe chickens or turkeys raised primarily for their meat; 'they are given unrestricted access to a special diet of high protein feed delivered via an automated feeding system. This is combined with artificial lighting conditions to stimulate growth and thus the desired body weight is achieved in 4-8 weeks, depending on the approximate body weight required by the processing plant. After processing, the poultry is delivered as fresh or frozen chicken to the stores and supermarkets'.

Agrofuels from Africa, not for Africa

Carol B. Thompson

‘2008 – The Year of Food Riots’ flashes across news headlines, as hungry people are taking to the streets in more than 70 countries, protesting the high price of food.

Higher food costs result from many factors, such as drought, reduced grain reserves, and higher demand from population growth. A major factor, however, is increased production of food crops to feed cars not people. At the start of the decade, a small amount of grain – 18 million tonnes – was used for industrial purposes. This year 100 million tonnes will go towards agrofuels and other industrial purposes.

American cars now burn enough maize to meet all the import needs of the 82 countries classified as ‘low-income food-deficit’ by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. As one commentator remarked, ‘there could scarcely be a better way to starve the poor.’

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411313
Because the demand for agrofuels seems to be insatiable, more global corporations are looking at Africa in a different way, not seeing the hungry, but rather, noticing the extensive land mass and calling Africa the ‘green OPEC’.

- But is this land ‘available’ for fuel production?
- What are the impacts of fuel crop production on food crops?

A basic problem is that industrialised countries have set ‘green’ targets for agrofuel consumption which they cannot fulfill with their own local production. For Europe to grow crops for its ethanol targets, it would take 70% of its farmland, for the USA, 43%. Fulfilling ‘green’ goals, therefore, very much depends on industrialised countries taking command of land in South countries in order to grow agrofuel crops.

The amount of land under discussion for agrofuel crop production in Africa is massive: over 2 million hectares in Mozambique, 1-2 million hectares in Ethiopia, and even 3 million hectares discussed as ‘available’ in tiny Benin.

No matter how much land is allocated, however, its use will be overwhelmingly for foreign consumption. Such major tracts of land designated to meet foreigners’ transport needs signals, once again, the expatriation of African lands. Export crops for overseas consumption while Africans go hungry is a historical pattern all too familiar on the continent; it is certainly not the hope of 21st century African agriculture.

For efficiency, the current producers of agrofuels use monoculture plantations for maize, soya, and sugar, maximising fertiliser and water inputs for high yields. For crops, such as jatropha, most often planted on the fringes of marginal land, the planting patterns would have to drastically change to large-scale monoculture in order to grow sufficient feedstock.

High yields are necessary because of the massive amount of plant material needed for fuel. WorldWatch Institute offers the comparison that the amount of grain required to fill the 90-litre petrol tank of a 4x4 vehicle once with ethanol could feed one person for a year. The grain it takes to fill the tank every two weeks over a year would feed 26 people.

Requiring high yields also gives impetus to the industries wanting to profit from genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which could not take off in the global marketplace as food (maize, soya, canola), but seek to find new life in the agrofuel market. The plans are to genetically modify cassava to a higher sugar content and to genetically modify other plants so their cellulose composition can be more easily broken down to extract the liquids. These GMOs, grown on vast tracts of land, will genetically pollute indigenous strains, altering their characteristics as well as contributing to the loss of biodiversity.

What are the implications of global agrofuel production on African lands?

- **Loss of Food Security and Food Sovereignty**: Making hungry children compete with cars for food draws a clear image of loss of food security. As the continent of Africa strives to reduce hunger, the global corporations see plentiful land – millions of hectares – free for the taking? Agrofuels therefore directly threaten the human right to food;

- **Loss of Biodiversity**: Although biodiversity is the future of food, especially with global warming, agrofuels value only monoculture;

- **GM Contamination**: Introducing plantation production of geneti-
cally modified trees or cassava, sorghum, or maize will contami-
nate local varieties and destroy biodiversity;

- **Threat to Small-Scale Farmers:** Industrial production of agrofuels enhances the agricultural model which pushes small-scale farmers aside as ‘inefficient’ and ‘insufficient’ producers. If plantation farming is the model, rural communities will once again become workers for foreign corporations which export the product and the profits;

- **Anti-Development:** Africa has much experience with production of tobacco, cotton or cut flowers for global markets. A few become rich, but there is no development, for the export of unprocessed commodities does not create new industries or many jobs. Plantation agrofuels would perpetuate this pattern.

Many African civil society organisations are calling for a *moratorium* on agrofuel investment and production. The real costs must first be transparently debated by all.

Excerpted from a report, that has full references: Carol B. Thompson (2008), ‘Agrofuels for Africa?’, Community Technology Development Trust (Harare), May.

---

**Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa**

This preliminary chart of estimations gives only a hint of the many discussions across Africa about foreign use of African lands to supply foreign markets.

**Could you please help us to update the list opposite?**

Carol Thompson, our US-based ROAPE editor, will be collating the data and we will be publishing these updates in the March 2009 issue.

Please send your findings to Carol. Thompson@nau.edu and mark the subject line ‘ROAPE/Agrofuels’.

---

**Bibliography**


## Agrofuels & Foreign Land Use in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Corporations</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Interest by Malaysia, China, S. Africa, Brazil</td>
<td>Jatropha, palm oil, sugar, manioc</td>
<td>240,000 ha; jatropha by 2012; 400,000 ha palm oil appropriate; 3m ha ‘available’</td>
<td>Agrofuels central to govt’s ‘agri-cultural revival program’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Socapalm, Socfinal, both Belgium EU Commission study</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>‘To expand beyond 30,000 ha’</td>
<td>Forest peoples resisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Auranta/Spain, ZTE Intl/China</td>
<td>Cassava, sugar soy, sorghum Palm Oil</td>
<td>‘very suitable’ 3m ha palm oil plantation planned; 12m ha ‘available’</td>
<td>Congo River Basin (6 countries) has 18% of global rainforests, World Bank giving loans for commercial logging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Flora Ecopower/Germany, Sun BioFuel/UK; drafted Ethiopian agrofuels strategy LHB/Israel Hovey Ag./Israel Becco Biofuels Natl Biodiesel Corp/both USA</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>14,000 ha of which 87% destroyed forests of elephant sanctuary 325,000 ha</td>
<td>No restitution yet – will increase to 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.2m ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>Negotiating with foreign corps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Bioenegy Intl/ Swiss</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>93,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Equatorial Biofuels/UK</td>
<td>Palm oil</td>
<td>700,000 ha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>State land concessions to foreign corps.</td>
<td>Jatropha castor beans palm oil Jatropha</td>
<td>3.5m ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>Mozambique Biofuel Industries managing concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Telefonaktiebolaget, LM Ericsson, MTN/China</td>
<td>Sugar, palm oil copra cassava</td>
<td>50,000 ha planned; 400,000 ha ‘potential’</td>
<td>For rural electrification for telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>Magindustries/Canada</td>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>68,000 ha</td>
<td>Wood chips shipped to Europe for biomass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.Africa</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Maize, sugar, jatropha, sunflower</td>
<td>650,000 ha maize; 3m ha ‘former homelands’ available</td>
<td>‘Govt seeking investment’, May 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>several 1000s ha allocated by govt</td>
<td>Chronic food deficit country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Sun Biofuels/UK Sweden (goal of no fossil fuels by 2020)</td>
<td>Jatropha</td>
<td>18,000 ha</td>
<td>Lindi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia, Indonesia PROKON/Germany</td>
<td>Sugar cane proposed palm oil</td>
<td>400,000 proposed</td>
<td>In the Wami Basin wetlands; will displace rice farmers Kigoma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>SCOUL/E. Africa</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>7,100 ha Mabira Forest saved but 6,000 cleared on Kalangala, Bugala Islands</td>
<td>Stopped by civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>D1 Oils Africa/UK</td>
<td>Sugar, jatropha, cassava</td>
<td>45,000 ha now; 500,000 ha ‘available’ for cultivation</td>
<td>Forest reserves available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apollo L. Njonjo

8 February 1947 - 6 March 2008

Apollo Njonjo, a former contributor to ROAPE’s issue, ‘Kenya: The Agrarian Question’ (No. 20, March 1981) died in Nairobi on 6 March 2008 after twenty five years of dealing with a heart condition complicated by diabetes. He was born in Limuru, attending distinguished local primary and secondary schools even during Mau Mau and the Emergency. He graduated with honors in history and government from the University of Nairobi in 1970. He then went to Princeton University, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Politics in 1977. His Ph.D. thesis on ‘The Africanization of the “White Highlands” and the Agrarian Class Struggle in Kenya’ remains a classic and still is widely cited.

Upon returning to Kenya, Apollo taught in the Department of Government at the University of Nairobi from 1977-79, then working for Technoserve, a US development organization. In 1981, he set up one of the first Kenyan owned and operated consulting firms, the Business and Economic Research (BER) Bureau. His main focus was on water development projects and his clients ranged from Kenyan ministries to a number of bilateral and multilateral organizations in Eastern and Central Africa. He also assisted students from his home area with grants and with advice and worked in other sectors as well as bringing a number of development projects to Limuru.

Apollo spent his life fighting against repression and for democracy in Kenya. He was a part of Kenya’s ‘second liberation’ and the long and difficult struggle against the tyranny of former President Moi. He was Secretary General of the progressive Social Democratic Party (SDP) from 1991-2007 after which he headed The Center for Multi-Party Democracy in Nairobi. He understood that Kenya’s future depended on its ability to establish multi-ethnic political parties and was disappointed when the SDP failed to live up to its initial promise. He ran for M.P. from his home district of Limuru three times, including in the last election.

Apollo is best remembered by his friends as someone with a good sense of humor, a keen intellect, an argumentative style, and an utter distain for tribal politics. He was intellectually honest and incisive and did not pander to popular views or to what others wanted to hear.

His own home and office were multi-ethnic and he was appalled by the violence which engulfed Kenya after the 2007 election. He also was singularly unimpressed by many of Kenya’s new wave of politicians after 2002, viewing them as predictable primitive accumulators. He saw the devastating results of land grabbing and the building of vast shoddy complexes of flats in parts of Nairobi, where water and sewage resources were inadequate, something he knew from his own work.

The kinds of questions posed by Apollo and others in ROAPE’s issue on the Agrarian Question in Kenya and in Apollo’s article, ‘The Kenyan Peasantry: A Reassessment’ remain relevant today: what sort of differentiation is Kenya’s rural population experiencing, with what consequences, how does it compare with previous types of capitalist development, and what does it tell us about Kenya’s future? In his 1981 ROAPE article Apollo noted that Kenya’s peasantry was increasingly being quasi-proletarianized, and that its continued attachment to its small unviable bits of land made it prone to fascism, something disputed by other contributors to the volume. That said, Apollo felt Kenya’s recent implosion into violence was not
about land grievances, but ultimately about a political class which was prepared to do anything to obtain and retain political power, including perpetrating the worst sorts of violence along ethnic lines. He was shocked by what happened and feared for Kenya’s future.

He leaves behind his family: his wife Irene Wanjiku, his daughter Waringa, his son Kimani and his wife Carol, and a grandson, Tyler Ngigi as well as friends and colleagues, all of whom miss him greatly.

Susanne D. Mueller, Associate, Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; smueller@fas.harvard.edu. Susanne Mueller attended graduate school at Princeton with Apollo, and knew him and his family for 38 years. She last saw Apollo in 2006 when she stayed with the family and last spoke to him in January 2008 during the violence.
On one side of this analysis, we have an institution slowly pushing along global efforts towards agreement on the principles of implementing justice across frontiers; on the other, perhaps the most notorious of Africa’s violent cults, a local world seemingly of unreason, cruelty, and no justice at all except excessive vengeance. The International Criminal Court was finally established after decades of hesitant steps towards ‘universal jurisdiction’ following the second world war. Its status was achieved through collaborative agreements between states who signed up to the 1998 Rome Statute, though a number of signatories have not yet ratified the law.

The United States, and the Sudan, are among these. Theoretically the ICC has wider, and more flexible, powers than the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague set up by the Security Council in 1993, which dealt with former Yugoslavia and then established the ICT for Rwanda in Arusha (whose terms of reference are limited to events of 1994, and therefore can appear, in retrospect, one-sided). The first case to be referred to the ICC, in 2004, was that of the leadership of Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. This was prompted by recent massacres attributed to them of displaced people, including women and children – despite efforts towards a ceasefire. The first warrants were issued the following year for the arrest of Joseph Kony and a number of his colleagues.

Allen draws on his earlier years of teaching and research in northern Uganda and the southern Sudan, supplemented by recent consultancies, to illustrate how many-layered these complications are. While himself basically in favour of ICC intervention, he shows that a range of well considered views can be found among Ugandans of all backgrounds. Some argue they have a right to see justice and punishment for the LRA leaders, while others point out that punitive measures smack of ‘revenge’ and might provoke retaliation. These interviewees explained to Allen that real peace can only be found when there is reconciliation. For example, the Ugandan government passed an Amnesty Act in 1999 which encourages, and even rewards, former rebels who turn themselves in. At a local, cultural and religious level, there are traditional ceremonies among the Acholi and Madi through which hostile parties can be brought together, and offences forgiven. Some are pointing out that the entry of the ICC into the complex situation of northern Uganda, with its sharp identifi-
cation of key criminals, is making all modes of amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation more difficult.

Allen touches on the longer history of the LRA and its roots in Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. He also sketches the links between the persisting strength of the LRA and the ups and downs of regional civil wars - specifically the role played by the Sudanese government of Omer el Beshir in supporting it (while the Ugandan regime was lending help to the SPLA). It is very interesting that the Sudan itself has recently gained a high profile vis-à-vis the ICC. In 2005 the Security Council first referred the Sudanese situation to the ICC. Accusations, and later warrants, were directed at the leadership of the Janjawid militias in Darfur and indeed some government leaders. Meanwhile, since the publication of Allen’s book, the Sudan government has been denying the right of the ICC to try their citizens – while Sudanese leaders have been playing a key role in attempting to negotiate peace (on Sudanese territory) with Kony and the LRA. The July, 2008, decision by the ICC chief prosecutor to place the name of President Beshir before the court has dramatically raised the stakes, and it is interesting that Museveni is one of the few African leaders to show reluctance in rallying to Beshir’s ‘support’.

This book, in the new African Arguments series, is quite compact and inevitably dense. It will be a demanding read for those not yet familiar with the history of Uganda/Sudan border relations. But it is not only this region of Africa, or indeed the world, which has become a space in which ordinary citizenship scarcely exists. As a case study, this is a highly revealing snapshot of an important moment in the efforts of the international community to try and confront appalling crimes in the frontierlands of nation-states which do not have the judicial or political capacity to protect the lives of their own people.


Reminiscent of the euphoria that accompanied Ghana’s independence in 1957, we are again witnessing an era of optimism about Ghana’s future. A landmark transition to liberal democratic political stability and a modest economic growth have made Ghana the poster child of liberal democracy in Africa. It is in this context that the anthology of Kwame Boafo Arthur is situated. The central thrust of the book, as Boafo Arthur states, ‘is to put the liberal democratic cum neoliberal processes over the past decade in clear perspective’ (p. 1). To this end, Boafo Arthur assembled a team of seasoned Ghanaian scholars to examine the liberal state on a variety of important topical areas: human rights, security, economic development, conflict management, political leadership, gender and politics, labour activism, and foreign policy. This is a lot of ground to cover thoroughly in a single volume, making this an ambitious project.

As is common with edited volumes, the essays vary in quality. There are chapters that are just thick empirical descriptions, without any theoretical framework. Other chapters, namely, Kwame Ninsin’s on the tension between free market and the democratic ideal of equality; Joseph Ayee’s on the comparison of the leadership qualities between Rawlings and Kufuor, Alexander Frempong’s on the liberal democratic peace, and Kwaku Tsikata’s on the gap between constitutional guarantees of human rights and the real life enjoyment of these rights, stand out for their clarity, analytical rigour, and theoretical grounding.

However, the book has some limitations. It is poorly organised: for coherence, flow
and easy reading, the essays should have been organised into thematic parts. Similarly, the book is in need of a conclusion on what it has accomplished and what needs further investigations. As the ‘liberal state’ is both the theoretical and empirical referent of the book, one was hoping to see the essays explicitly situated in relation to the fundamental theoretical and political canons of the ‘liberal state’. Except in some few instances, they were not. This might be due to the failure of the editor to lay out the theoretical and political coordinates of the ‘liberal state’ in the introductory chapter. For the individual contributions to form a coherent whole, Boafo-Arthur needed to rigorously unpack the ‘liberal state’, both theoretically and historically. Instead, he allotted a paltry one and half pages to such a vital discussion (pp. 5-6).

The foundational theoretical and political doctrine of the liberal state, namely, the separation between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ is not problematised. Neither is the socio-historical specificity of the ‘liberal state’ addressed. The liberal state emerged in a specific socio-historical context in England, begging the question whether we can talk blithely of the emergence of a ‘liberal state’ in a different socio-historical context in Africa. Therefore, this book not only needed a clear theoretical framework but methodological guidance.

Given this serious oversight, Boafo-Arthur and some of his contributors make some assertions which suggest a superficial knowledge of the ‘liberal state’. Boafo-Arthur finds the ‘wholesale marginalisation of the state in the management of the market’ (p. 17) baffling and wrong. In reality, there has never been ‘wholesale marginalisation’ of the liberal state, but rather a selective intervention in the interest of the market. Second, the ‘liberal state’ seems to be conflated with a constitutional government. With respect to Ghana, the liberal state is merely distinguished from the praetorian dictatorships which ruled the country at one point; so the First Republic under Kwame Nkrumah is a liberal state while Rawlings’ PNDC is not.

However, the issues are more complex than this. Boafo Arthur correctly points out that the Rawlings PNDC government used ‘draconian’ methods to implement liberal economic policies, and in the process, suppressed ‘the fundamental liberties of the people’ (p. 7). Yet the ‘international community and donor agencies ignored them because the PNDC was implementing to the letter the Bretton Woods-inspired economic management package’ (p.236). To explain away this monumental contradiction and twofacedness of the international community is to skirt the responsibility of asking a central question of this book: why did the Ghanaian liberal state wait until 1993 to emerge?

Answering this question would have thrown into relief a gamut of dynamics – class, new imperialism and the power of liberal discourse – which would have given Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors a pause before jumping on the liberal bandwagon. Similarly, the unrealistic expectations of the liberal state and criticisms of what is misunderstood as transgressions of its doctrines could have been avoided. For example, Boafo Arthur expects the liberal state to ensure ‘the creation of material wealth that will be for the good of the whole society’ (p. 5), and sees inequities as a dilution of the ‘sacrosanct values inherent in liberalism’ (p.12).

Ninsin argues that socioeconomic inequality ‘leaves liberal democracy a distant pedigree of its classical form’ (p.103), and advocates the intervention of the liberal state in the market to redistribute wealth. Surely, they are mistaken. While I am sympathetic to Ninsin’s concerns, he cannot remain in the liberal state straitjacket and simultaneously make these demands. Despite these limita-
tions, the book is a handy and valuable source of information on the Ghanaian state in this era of global neo-liberalism.


Sidney Bunting was the privileged child of successful, conscientious Methodist parents. Throughout his childhood they rubbed shoulders with the literally great and good the most distinguished of whom was W.E. Gladstone. It was a home dominated by good works and high culture. Sidney, a clever and musical boy, was expensively educated at St. Pauls School and Magdalen College Oxford. By late 19th century standards his background was liberal even radical.

Like many of his class, the young Sidney was an enthusiast for liberal empire if that is not entirely oxymoronic. Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War he sailed for the Cape and volunteered to fight. After the Peace of Vereeniging he stayed on in South Africa where some of his ancestors had established mission stations in the early 19th century and where there remained a family-owned estate. As he had begun to practise as a solicitor in London before the war, he recommenced his legal career in Johannesburg. He conformed to the expectations of a white professional man in that rich, rough mining town. He joined racially segregated clubs and mixed with the right, white people. While there is no real attempt here to explain this, from the end of the first decade of the 20th century he began to sympathise with the plight of labour, albeit white labour; one suspects that this owed something to the social conscience which surrounded him in childhood. He threw in his lot with the Labour Party, a *soi disant* socialist organisation which perversely preached job and pay discrimination.

The imminent outbreak of war appears to have prodded him leftwards. He took an increasingly unpopular anti-war stand and this brought him into contact with activists like Philip Roux. The author tells us virtually nothing about the emotional and intellectual navigation which took Bunting from a South African own-brand racialist *faux* socialism towards the real thing. But by 1915 he was using the language of the far left, linking up with local activists and beginning to argue that the emancipation of the South African working class required an immediate ending to discriminatory measures such as pass laws, residential discrimination and oppressive labour contracts; he was arguing that the South African workers of all colours were oppressed and must fight that oppression together. He began to work with, and not just condescendingly for, African workers. And by 1915 he is clearly reading Marx and regarding that canon as more than merely instructive.

Revolutionary ideas and an identification with the struggles of black people began to isolate him from many of his old friends, from many of the organised white working class and importantly from the state. He began to be harassed – dogged by detectives and not infrequently taken to court and even imprisoned. The inspiration of the Russian revolution and the Comintern’s direction led to a merger of South Africa’s few and small far left organisations and Bunting became a founder member of the Communist Party of South Africa in October 1920. In the following 16 years of his life he and his wife were to be deeply

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411404
involved with the CPSA, an involvement that involved visiting Weimar Germany and then Moscow for Comintern meetings. But prominent as he was, the last part of his life was spent unrewardingly running uphill. What had been in legal terms for whites at least a relatively liberal state which had tended to tolerate radicals as cranks rather than subversives became increasingly coercive with the reforms introduced by Oswald Pirow; it became more and more dangerous to participate in radical multi-racial politics. But even more damaging was the self-indulgent fraternal infighting which hamstrung radical opposition in the inter-war period; that infighting could descend to the worst depths of personal defamation, racist slander and cruel exclusions. Bunting was a victim of this and although the Party staged a show funeral, a ‘Red Funeral’, for him, those who professed grief at his graveside included many who had stabbed him in the back.

Sidney Bunting was a fascinating man but much of what made him into a figure straight out of an Ibsen play remains unexplained and even un-interrogated in this biography. There is far too much stodgy and frankly uninteresting detail in the first 60 pages of this book and far too little of the kinds of exploration of a life that one expects from a biographer. Each of the step-changes in his life, and they were huge, remains a mystery; for example was Philip Roux, Eddie Roux’s remarkable father, his mentor? When did Bunting first encounter Marx’s writing? How important to his intellectual development was his wife, Becky Notlewitz a refugee from Tsarist anti-Semitism who had spent time in London’s Whitechapel, a radical hot-spot, before embarking for South Africa in 1914 where she joined the International Socialist League? And what should we make of a man, a passionate advocate of labour struggle, who maintained an active paid involvement as a director of the family estate in Natal, which was clearly NOT a workers’ paradise, until as late as 1923 and continued to bank dividends from that concern until his death? And above all why does the book end so abruptly with his death? There is no attempt to evaluate Bunting’s longer-term contribution to the evolution of not only the CPSA but also the ANC and given the author’s earlier scholarship, this is a real loss.

_______________________________


The starting point and the raison d’etre for ‘Women in African Parliaments’ is the dramatic increase in the percentage of women elected to national parliaments in the past decade. Its opening paragraph details the Rwandan election of 2003 which resulted in a national legislature which was 48.8% female, and meant that Rwanda replaced Sweden as the country with the highest level of female political representation globally. Anyone who is familiar with the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) listing of the percentage of women in parliaments could not but be aware of the shift that has taken place in its rankings. While internationally the percentage of women in parliaments has increased, some of the most dramatic changes have been in the global South, with many states in Latin America, Asia and Africa moving ahead of ‘old’ democracies. This appears more remarkable in the case of Africa, given the ‘development failure’ of the region and its overall declining level of human development. It is in the context of these changes that this book is
particularly timely. The editors have drawn together some significant original research on the topic and the core of the book is six case study chapters each dealing with an African state: Mozambique; South Africa; Namibia; Uganda; Rwanda; and Senegal. With the exception of Senegal that had a relatively peaceful political transition, the states covered have all come through political transitions after prolonged periods of violent conflict. As a result of this choice, the chapters reflect a key strand of experience that was part of the wave of democratisation in Africa in the 1990s and also the gendered aspects of that experience.

The opening chapter sets up a framework to analyse women’s political engagement in the case study states that has a universalist quality, and could be equally applicable to the democracies in the global North. In dealing specifically with Africa it synthesises the institutional and social movement factors that have impacted on the election of women candidates, and assesses the impact the election of women has had on institutional culture, on legislation, and on civil society, the later primarily in the form of the women’s movement. The case study chapters that follow, with minor deviations, adhere to the structural framework provided in the opening chapter covering a brief history of women in the respective state, the path to political office, the impact of women in parliament and the future direction of women’s political engagement. As a result of this discipline the book facilitates both a detailed examination of the individual states and a comparison between them.

In the detail of the case studies a diverse and complex picture of women’s political engagement emerges. With regard to Uganda, Aili Mari Tripp comments that formerly the focus has been on ‘how women have sought to increase their political representation’ and that less ‘has been said of the motivations and objectives of states in adopting such policies’. It is this complex relationship between the goals of women’s activism and the goals of existing political elites, set within the framework of the states’ relationship with the international system and its policy norms, and the pressure that can be put on reconstructing and aid dependent states that is explicitly or implicitly dealt with in the individual chapters. The picture that is built up, while it may have points of similarity with other contexts, is very far removed from the idealised ‘western’ model of women’s political advancement and engagement with parliaments. The concluding chapter returns to a discussion of the feminist concerns alluded to in the opening chapter, asking the question how can women’s representation advance the agenda of gender equality. It presents ‘weak’ versus ‘strong’ conceptualisations of participation, representation and gender equality outcomes – arguing predictably in favour of focusing on strong definitions. Its main strength lies in its application of these definitions to Africa and to the particular circumstances of the case study countries.

‘Women in African Parliaments’ fills a gap in the literature. Without directly addressing the issue it also raises the question of the tensions that exist in this form of analysis between using a common, internationally applicable model, with the inevitable problems of ‘Western’ bias, and examining the particular patterns of women’s political engagement that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. How far can models drawn from western experience aid an understanding of African women’s problematic engagement with the state. In the substantive chapters, the complexity of this relationship is fully dealt with providing a basis for future research and debate. Overall a very welcome, interesting and readable book.
In *The Sun By Night*, the Ghanaian writer Benjamin Kwakye, one of the most accomplished of a new generation of African novelists, has produced possibly the most important Ghanaian novel since those of Ayi Kwei Armah, establishing Kwakye as a premier African literary voice. Kwakye, born in Accra, is a recipient of the 2000 Afrique Newsmagazine W.E.B. DuBois Award for Literature and his first novel, *The Clothes of Nakedness*, received the 1999 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book (Africa Region) and was adapted for radio as a BBC play of the Week.

Kwakye’s latest offering, which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2006, is an artistic, deep and thorough treatise of the issues facing post-colonial Ghana. The novel takes the form of a court trial, reported by an enterprising and courageous journalist, in which a wealthy businessman and former politician, Koo Manu, stands accused of the murder of an Accra prostitute named Akwele. The trial merely serves as a window that opens out onto a variety of issues in post-independence Ghana and Africa as a whole that African novelists have long been concerned with: the inequalities between rich and poor; the post independence malaise; the struggle between tradition and modernity; the causes and consequences of prostitution; the relationship between father and son; the role and position of women; the differences between generations; the insensitivity and corruption of political and economic elites; marriage, love and polygamy. Like Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Kwakye’s novel provides a very thorough exposure of corruption in various sectors of the Ghanaian state. Whereas Armah dealt with the national liberation period and the rise and fall of Kwame Nkrumah, Kwakye’s novel evolves against the background of political events from the late 1960s (e.g. the period of civilian rule led by Dr. Kobi Abrefa Busia) through to the overthrow of Hilla Liman in the early 1980s in a coup led by Jerry Rawlings.

The novel’s title as well as the headings of the three books within it alert the reader to the possibility that Kwakye intends to explore a complex yet ultimately very bizarre set of circumstances. Apart from the heading of the first book, *The Abused Road*, these are all suggestive of the paradoxical or even apocalyptic: *The Sun by Night*, *The Eclipse of the Mother* and *The Rain of Snow*. The novel itself, suggests tremendous confusion, upheaval, disaster and despair, but ultimately there is the possibility and hope of better things to come. The journalist’s reporting of the trial provides an enveloping narrative that links together the other threads of the story woven around the main participants or witnesses in the drama. The journalist in this story is rather like Ikem Isodi (in Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah*), in that he is honest and courageous and is not afraid to speak the truth and criticise an immoral and brutal regime regardless of the consequences. Like many writers in Africa before him, he is arrested, beaten and imprisoned.

*The Sun By Night* is an insightful story in many ways, providing important social commentary. Kwakye explores the social and psychological causes for the bizarre behaviour of most of the characters in the novel and he is not afraid to tackle the important issue of polygamy from both female and male points of view. Kwakye also includes a very thorough exploration of the causes, nature and consequences of prostitution. In this regard, the conversation between Kubi, disguised as Kwamena, and the intelligent prostitute Ama Badu is quite revealing. Al-
though Kwamena depends on prostitutes for the satisfaction of some of his deepest needs he decides to adopt a high moral tone and to castigate the prostitute for doing something for a living that is demonstrably wrong. Kwakye’s novel shows however that the vast majority are forced into prostitution by poverty, lack of opportunity, or by unscrupulous relations or acquaintances. The novel also consistently reflects on the importance of tradition in Ghana, portraying traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices, portraying ceremonies in which the ancestors and the traditional gods are invoked and depicting traditional protocol and traditional beliefs in attitudes towards questions of polygamy and marriage. Adherence to traditional practices is also seen in the celebration of Koo Manu’s betrothal and wedding and in the christening of his first child.

This ambitious and highly imaginative novel offers a compelling revelation of post-colonial concerns. Apart from the manipulation of language and narrative technique, Kwakye evokes some incredibly realistic scenes such as in his presentation of police and military brutality, in the church scenes, and in the sexual encounters between various people. Around the framework of the trial Kwakye brilliantly weaves together events, settings and characterisations in this highly readable and engaging book.


Almost all readers of ROAPE will be regular visitors to the Pambazuka News website. This book – one of a series – takes articles from that web resource (and a few from other places) and organises them around trade-related issues. Consequently, the book reads as a series of short essays in the intellectual tradition of Pambazuka: anti-imperialist and supportive of social movement politics in Africa.

First, a comment on the contributions. These are highly variable in their originality, quality, and focus. Some are general critiques of neo-liberalism which do not add a great deal. Thus, arguments about imposed liberalisation, the limits of primary commodity exporting, neglect of small-scale trade, and the predations of transnationals are all expressed in this book. But, a good deal of these arguments are made in brief and generalised terms, rendering some chapters as rehearsals of familiar points. This is especially the case on the section on Women and Trade.

The stronger chapters are based on some fresh empirical material, all of which highlights the deleterious nature of Africa’s trading relations in the present-day – what Henning Melber rightly calls ‘predatory capitalism’ in his engaging chapter. Patrick Bond presents us with an account of the ‘ghost on the coast’, the Coega industrial zone in South Africa (a neo-liberal white elephant in the making?) which should depress even readers most cynical of the New South Africa. There are large and important issues behind Bond’s account (and reflected in other chapters) which desperately need

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411594
more expansive treatment, most obviously the near-complete subordination of (parts of) African states to private business, and the bullish way in which the transnational corporate class asserts the conditions under which it is prepared to invest. In a world where violence against organised labour is increasing and labour action is seen as in some sense ‘old fashioned’, it is important to remember how threats of ‘capital strike’ (disinvestment, withdrawal of investment, the running down of capital) are part of the mainstream politics of ‘economic openness’.

But, of course, investment is not trade – although both are increasingly controlled by a small number of transnationals that are ever more adept at investing and trading within their own structures. My point here is that the contributions tend to bleed into other areas in ways that lead the reader to lose the focus on trade, and why trade matters especially in the context of new forms of regulation, liberalisation, and commercial norm setting. If there is a certain amount of conceptual fuzziness, one might balance this against the book’s desire to bring the issues to a broad readership in accessible ways. This the book does, but then the website does it far better and at less cost for the reader.

Which brings me to an important question: who is the book for? There is some scope for it to be adopted in development and African politics courses. Some chapters offer short focussed critiques of, say, Firestone’s disgraceful treatment of workers in Liberia, but it is not an ‘academic’ book.

The title of the book is striking, suggesting an association between the Atlantic slave trade and contemporary trading relations in Africa. Clearly, the intellectual traditions of the Left have relied on analogies of slavery for various anti-imperialism campaigns: the various Jubilee organisations have spoken about debt bondage and made explicit comparisons with the anti-debt and anti-slavery campaigns (in Britain based on a curious mix of internationalism and national esteem). But, beyond the rhetorical power of slavery analogies, what are the associations that one can make?

One is that, since the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, Africa has been locked into and subordinated by a capitalist global political economy dominated by the states and capitals of the West. Quite right, and worth repeating despite its self-evident truth until this state of affairs is no longer with us. But, contemporary capitalism bears little relationship to the Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century. So, what resonance does slavery have in the contemporary world?

Although outside the remit of this book, it is vital to note that slavery has hardly gone away; far from it. More complex forms of slavery – very often based in trafficking, domestic labour, and violence against women – are at the heart of the highly ideologised phenomenon that is called ‘globalisation’. Like primitive accumulation, the ‘freedom’ that Marx used ironically to explain proletarianisation is a tendency within capitalist social relations rather than a stage or enabling event and therefore bonded and enslaved labour are likely to persist for as long as capitalism itself. But, it is important to maintain a distinction between the social relations of slavery and wage labour. The chapter by Robtel Pailey, titled ‘Slavery Ain’t Dead’, describes the conditions of work in the now-infamous Liberia Firestone rubber plantation. What he goes on to describe, though, is the violence and exploitation of the waged workers who buckle under extreme collection quotas and live in squalor. Dubbing this slavery is normatively attractive, but politically misleading. These predations are intrinsic to wage-labour capitalism; calling them slavery serves to distract us from a
real facet or tendency within capitalism – the ever-present possibility of working people more or less rapidly to death where socio-economic conditions allow. This happened during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, it is present in the sweatshops that are contracted to produce cheap goods in minimal time to meet the 24-hour quotas and demands of international trading transnationals, and it can be found in Liberia and doubtless many other places in Africa.

The point of this short aside is simply that it is not clear in the book what the history of the Atlantic slave trade teaches us apart from the apparent historical continuities of deleterious Western interventions in Africa. What we have is a vague sense of Western responsibility for poverty and exploitation in Africa and some very general references to justice and reparations. On the issue of justice, there is surprisingly little in the book on movements for social justice in Africa in relation to trade, and not even a sketching of alternative and progressive trading relations. Charles Abugre’s characteristically sharp introduction does set out an agenda for Africa’s social movements – it would have been fantastic if these had been handed out to contributors as part of their remit in contributing to the book.

Each of these books provides valuable empirical information on their subjects, (respectively, domestic African business relations with states and experiments with workplace democracy) which will be of relevance to many researchers. Both are, however, weakened by their narrow focus on conceptual frameworks of business and labour relations which have little practical reality in the societies under examination.

Scott Taylor investigates an important and neglected question, namely, why is the indigenous business community so lacking in political influence in its relations with African states? It is unquestionably true that most African governments are unsupportive of their domestic business constituencies, even after the implementation of economic liberalisation programmes ostensibly designed to promote business interests and a market-driven approach to economic development. Taylor investigates this question through well researched case studies on Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Taylor claims that ‘Two decades of comparative research clearly demonstrates the potential benefits of business-state coalitions in the developing world.’ (p.2) Little evidence exists, however, that such coalitions have led to economic growth or development in Africa. Indeed, the evidence provided here suggests that temporarily strong state-business relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe in the early 1990s resulted in the implementa-
tion of liberalisation programmes that presaged significant economic decline. Despite being initially supported by domestic businesses, economic liberalisation proved in practice to be against their interests; exposed to the full force of international competition, many were unable to compete and were forced to close down and/or cut jobs. Taylor blames such problems on the faulty implementation of liberalisation, for which states are responsible. He largely disregards the role of donor conditionality and the international financial institutions for forcing liberalisation on Zambia (although, admittedly, not Zimbabwe). Although he admits that actual liberalisation is not always beneficial, Taylor assumes that ‘a strong dose of neo-liberal orthodoxy ... should be considered a vital component of a late-late developing state in an overwhelmingly capitalist global environment’ (p. 220).

Taylor’s binary analysis of ‘strong’ states and weak domestic business interests neglects the role of both international business and the international financial institutions. Although Taylor acknowledges that ‘the prevailing international environment further disadvantages African business actors … ‘ (p.208), this is not central to the case studies. The evidence presented suggests, however, that domestic business is marginal because it plays a negligible role in economic development, job creation and government revenue, relative to these international actors. Taylor admits as much with regard to Zambia: ‘The specific needs of the independent business community are not widely sympathized with or shared by the general populace’ (p.89). In such a context, it is rational for state actors to disregard domestic business, which has yet to prove that it can significantly contribute to Africa’s development.

Taylor fails to offer a single example of effective pro-reform state relations with an indigenous African business community; Zimbabwe and South Africa are the partial exceptions which prove this rule. In each, Taylor suggests that it was white-dominated business which provided the basis for strong post-colonial state-business relations (p. 29). This is an ongoing process in South Africa, but the Zimbabwean honeymoon came to a halt with economic decline in the mid-1990s and Mugabe’s subsequent populist turn. South Africa’s current strong business-state coalition may be, Taylor admits, prone to similar political pressures if it fails to benefit the wider African population.

More generally, Taylor fails to prove his claim that ‘... the lack of business-state cooperation was a significant factor in problems such as the rapid de-industrialization, the failure to advance commercial agricultural potential, and rising unemployment across all economic sectors that accelerated in the 1990’ (p.5). It could certainly be argued that the lack of such cooperation, reflecting as it does the marginality of domestic business, was/is symptomatic of a wider malaise in which economic liberalisation was implemented in the interests of narrow national elites and their cooperating partners in international business and donor institutions, but it can hardly be said to be a major cause of such problems.

Kester examines the equally elusive concept of workplace democracy in Africa. It reflects two decades of research in ten countries and, in its case studies, provides a wealth of useful detail regarding experiments in worker participation in company decision-making that will help address the relative dearth of post-colonial labour studies at the workplace level. Of significant importance are the opinion surveys of workers and trade union representatives, which reflect a convincingly bleak picture of the generalised decline in working conditions and living standards since the 1970s.
However, Kester’s longitudinal approach is also his weakness – as the author makes clear, experiments in worker participation were introduced in the period of state-led economic nationalism in the 1970s, and have virtually disappeared since the late 1980s. Although this is therefore largely a historical study of such projects, the presentation of data does not generally follow a historical structure in the individual country case studies. Insufficient contextualisation is provided of the widely differing post-colonial political and economic frameworks within which the many examples of worker participation occurred.

The study also suffers from a limited analysis of state motivations for introducing worker participation schemes. Kester contrasts the first decade after independence (c.1960-70), during which ‘progressive’ governments (Zambia, for example) planned worker consultation (drawing on Western European and/or Yugoslav models) based on ‘well-intended lofty ideals of co-operation’, with a period of implementation during which ‘the corporatist complex started to more and more confiscate all power and wealth, and the trade unions, who might have been willing to assume government-friendly roles in the beginning, became prisoners of increasingly authoritarian regimes’ (pp. 6-7) Insufficient explanation is offered for why such a shift occurred, and little evidence is provided indicating why such a positive view should be adopted regarding the motivations of rulers, nor why their good intentions were overturned. Given the lack of positive outcomes of worker participation in the cases under examination, an alternative reading of the evidence presented is that post-colonial governments, concerned with the disruptive power of organised labour, sought to introduce state-dominated corporatism to contain unrest and the potential political threat of independent trade unionism. It is evident that in the overwhelming majority of cases in which workers’ committees or councils were introduced, workers did not regard them as having improved labour relations, with most seeking to defend their independent trade union representation.

In the 1990s, liberalisation effectively dismantled such participatory structures (again, a symptom of a wider malaise rather than its cause). In a context of economic decline, effective worker representation has declined, with correlative declines in wages, living standards and levels of employment. Whilst Kester is right to argue for improved worker rights and representation, there is little to indicate that the types of workplace democracy examined here are relevant to addressing these problems in practice.
On one side of this analysis, we have an institution slowly pushing along global efforts towards agreement on the principles of implementing justice across frontiers; on the other, perhaps the most notorious of Africa’s violent cults, a local world seemingly of unreason, cruelty, and no justice at all except excessive vengeance. The International Criminal Court was finally established after decades of hesitant steps towards ‘universal jurisdiction’ following the second world war. Its status was achieved through collaborative agreements between states who signed up to the 1998 Rome Statute, though a number of signatories have not yet ratified the law.

The United States, and the Sudan, are among these. Theoretically the ICC has wider, and more flexible, powers than the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague set up by the Security Council in 1993, which dealt with former Yugoslavia and then established the ICT for Rwanda in Arusha (whose terms of reference are limited to events of 1994, and therefore can appear, in retrospect, one-sided). The first case to be referred to the ICC, in 2004, was that of the leadership of Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. This was prompted by recent massacres attributed to them of displaced people, including women and children – despite efforts towards a ceasefire. The first warrants were issued the following year for the arrest of Joseph Kony and a number of his colleagues.

Allen draws on his earlier years of teaching and research in northern Uganda and the southern Sudan, supplemented by recent consultancies, to illustrate how many-layered these complications are. While himself basically in favour of ICC intervention, he shows that a range of well considered views can be found among Ugandans of all backgrounds. Some argue they have a right to see justice and punishment for the LRA leaders, while others point out that punitive measures smack of ‘revenge’ and might provoke retaliation. These interviewees explained to Allen that real peace can only be found when there is reconciliation. For example, the Ugandan government passed an Amnesty Act in 1999 which encourages, and even rewards, former rebels who turn themselves in. At a local, cultural and religious level, there are traditional ceremonies among the Acholi and Madi through which hostile parties can be brought together, and offences forgiven. Some are pointing out that the entry of the ICC into the complex situation of northern Uganda, with its sharp identifi-
cation of key criminals, is making all modes of amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation more difficult.

Allen touches on the longer history of the LRA and its roots in Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. He also sketches the links between the persisting strength of the LRA and the ups and downs of regional civil wars - specifically the role played by the Sudanese government of Omer el Beshir in supporting it (while the Ugandan regime was lending help to the SPLA). It is very interesting that the Sudan itself has recently gained a high profile vis-à-vis the ICC. In 2005 the Security Council first referred the Sudanese situation to the ICC. Accusations, and later warrants, were directed at the leadership of the Janjawid militias in Darfur and indeed some government leaders. Meanwhile, since the publication of Allen’s book, the Sudan government has been denying the right of the ICC to try their citizens – while Sudanese leaders have been playing a key role in attempting to negotiate peace (on Sudanese territory) with Kony and the LRA. The July, 2008, decision by the ICC chief prosecutor to place the name of President Beshir before the court has dramatically raised the stakes, and it is interesting that Museveni is one of the few African leaders to show reluctance in rallying to Beshir’s ‘support’.

This book, in the new African Arguments series, is quite compact and inevitably dense. It will be a demanding read for those not yet familiar with the history of Uganda/Sudan border relations. But it is not only this region of Africa, or indeed the world, which has become a space in which ordinary citizenship scarcely exists. As a case study, this is a highly revealing snapshot of an important moment in the efforts of the international community to try and confront appalling crimes in the frontierlands of nation-states which do not have the judicial or political capacity to protect the lives of their own people.

Reminiscent of the euphoria that accompanied Ghana’s independence in 1957, we are again witnessing an era of optimism about Ghana’s future. A landmark transition to liberal democratic political stability and a modest economic growth have made Ghana the poster child of liberal democracy in Africa. It is in this context that the anthology of Kwame Boafo Arthur is situated. The central thrust of the book, as Boafo Arthur states, ‘is to put the liberal democratic cum neoliberal processes over the past decade in clear perspective’ (p. 1). To this end, Boafo Arthur assembled a team of seasoned Ghanaian scholars to examine the ‘liberal state’ on a variety of important topical areas: human rights, security, economic development, conflict management, political leadership, gender and politics, labour activism, and foreign policy. This is a lot of ground to cover thoroughly in a single volume, making this an ambitious project.

As is common with edited volumes, the essays vary in quality. There are chapters that are just thick empirical descriptions, without any theoretical framework. Other chapters, namely, Kwame Ninsin’s on the tension between free market and the democratic ideal of equality; Joseph Ayee’s on the comparison of the leadership qualities between Rawlings and Kufuor, Alexander Frempong’s on the liberal democratic peace, and Kwaku Tsikata’s on the gap between constitutional guarantees of human rights and the real life enjoyment of these rights, stand out for their clarity, analytical rigour, and theoretical grounding.

However, the book has some limitations. It is poorly organised: for coherence, flow

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802413582
and easy reading, the essays should have been organised into thematic parts. Similarly, the book is in need of a conclusion on what it has accomplished and what needs further investigations. As the ‘liberal state’ is both the theoretical and empirical referent of the book, one was hoping to see the essays explicitly situated in relation to the fundamental theoretical and political canons of the ‘liberal state’. Except in some few instances, they were not. This might be due to the failure of the editor to lay out the theoretical and political coordinates of the ‘liberal state’ in the introductory chapter. For the individual contributions to form a coherent whole, Boafo-Arthur needed to rigorously unpack the ‘liberal state’, both theoretically and historically. Instead, he allotted a paltry one and half pages to such a vital discussion (pp. 5-6).

The foundational theoretical and political doctrine of the liberal state, namely, the separation between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ is not problematised. Neither is the socio-historical specificity of the ‘liberal state’ addressed. The liberal state emerged in a specific socio-historical context in England, begging the question whether we can talk blithely of the emergence of a ‘liberal state’ in a different socio-historical context in Africa. Therefore, this book not only needed a clear theoretical framework but methodological guidance.

Given this serious oversight, Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors make some assertions which suggest a superficial knowledge of the ‘liberal state’. Boafo Arthur finds ‘the wholesale marginalisation of the state in the management of the market’ (p. 17) baffling and wrong. In reality, there has never been ‘wholesale marginalisation’ of the liberal state, but rather a selective intervention in the interest of the market. Second, the ‘liberal state’ seems to be conflated with a constitutional government. With respect to Ghana, the liberal state is merely distinguished from the praetorian dictatorships which ruled the country at one point; so the First Republic under Kwame Nkrumah is a liberal state while Rawlings’ PNDC is not.

However, the issues are more complex than this. Boafo Arthur correctly points out that the Rawlings PNDC government used ‘draconian’ methods to implement liberal economic policies, and in the process, suppressed ‘the fundamental liberties of the people’ (p. 7). Yet the ‘international community and donor agencies ignored them because the PNDC was implementing to the letter the Bretton Woods-inspired economic management package’ (p.236). To explain away this monumental contradiction and twofacedness of the international community is to skirt the responsibility of asking a central question of this book: why did the Ghanaian liberal state wait until 1993 to emerge?

Answering this question would have thrown into relief a gamut of dynamics – class, new imperialism and the power of liberal discourse – which would have given Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors a pause before jumping on the liberal bandwagon. Similarly, the unrealistic expectations of the liberal state and criticisms of what is misunderstood as transgressions of its doctrines could have been avoided. For example, Boafo Arthur expects the liberal state to ensure ‘the creation of material wealth that will be for the good of the whole society’ (p. 5), and sees inequities as a dilution of the ‘sacrosanct values inherent in liberalism’ (p.12).

Ninsin argues that socioeconomic inequality ‘leaves liberal democracy a distant pedigree of its classical form’ (p.103), and advocates the intervention of the liberal state in the market to redistribute wealth. Surely, they are mistaken. While I am sympathetic to Ninsin’s concerns, he cannot remain in the liberal state straitjacket and simultaneously make these demands. Despite these limita-
tions, the book is a handy and valuable source of information on the Ghanaian state in this era of global neo-liberalism.

---


Sidney Bunting was the privileged child of successful, conscientious Methodist parents. Throughout his childhood they rubbed shoulders with the literally great and good the most distinguished of whom was W.E. Gladstone. It was a home dominated by good works and high culture. Sidney, a clever and musical boy, was expensively educated at St. Paul's School and Magdalen College Oxford. By late 19th century standards his background was liberal even radical.

Like many of his class, the young Sidney was an enthusiast for liberal empire if that is not entirely oxymoronic. Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War he sailed for the Cape and volunteered to fight. After the Peace of Vereeniging he stayed on in South Africa where some of his ancestors had established mission stations in the early 19th century and where there remained a family-owned estate. As he had begun to practise as a solicitor in London before the war, he recommenced his legal career in Johannesburg. He conformed to the expectations of a white professional man in that rich, rough mining town. He joined racially segregated clubs and mixed with the right, white people. While there is no real attempt here to explain this, from the end of the first decade of the 20th century he began to sympathise with the plight of labour, albeit white labour; one suspects that this owed something to the social conscience which surrounded him in childhood. He threw in his lot with the Labour Party, a *soi disant* socialist organisation which perversely preached job and pay discrimination.

The imminent outbreak of war appears to have prodded him leftwards. He took an increasingly unpopular anti-war stand and this brought him into contact with activists like Philip Roux. The author tells us virtually nothing about the emotional and intellectual navigation which took Bunting from a South African own-brand racist faux socialism towards the real thing. But by 1915 he was using the language of the far left, linking up with local activists and beginning to argue that the emancipation of the South African working class required an immediate ending to discriminatory measures such as pass laws, residential discrimination and oppressive labour contracts; he was arguing that the South African workers of all colours were oppressed and must fight that oppression together. He began to work with, and not just condescendingly for, African workers. And by 1915 he is clearly reading Marx and regarding that canon as more than merely instructive.

Revolutionary ideas and an identification with the struggles of black people began to isolate him from many of his old friends, from many of the organised white working class and importantly from the state. He began to be harassed – dogged by detectives and not infrequently taken to court and even imprisoned. The inspiration of the Russian revolution and the Comintern’s direction led to a merger of South Africa’s few and small far left organisations and Bunting became a founder member of the Communist Party of South Africa in October 1920. In the following 16 years of his life he and his wife were to be deeply

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411404
involved with the CPSA, an involvement that involved visiting Weimar Germany and then Moscow for Comintern meetings. But prominent as he was, the last part of his life was spent unrewardingly running uphill. What had been in legal terms for whites at least a relatively liberal state which had tended to tolerate radicals as cranks rather than subversives became increasingly coercive with the reforms introduced by Oswald Pirow; it became more and more dangerous to participate in radical multi-racial politics. But even more damaging was the self-indulgent fraternal infighting which hamstrung radical opposition in the inter-war period; that infighting could descend to the worst depths of personal defamation, racist slander and cruel exclusions. Bunting was a victim of this and although the Party staged a show funeral, a 'Red Funeral', for him, those who professed grief at his graveside included many who had stabbed him in the back.

Sidney Bunting was a fascinating man but much of what made him into a figure straight out of an Ibsen play remains unexplained and even un-interrogated in this biography. There is far too much stodgy and frankly uninteresting detail in the first 60 pages of this book and far too little of the kinds of exploration of a life that one expects from a biographer. Each of the step-changes in his life, and they were huge, remains a mystery; for example was Philip Roux, Eddie Roux’s remarkable father, his mentor? When did Bunting first encounter Marx’s writing? How important to his intellectual development was his wife, Becky Notlewitz a refugee from Tsarist anti-Semitism who had spent time in London’s Whitechapel, a radical hot-spot, before embarking for South Africa in 1914 where she joined the International Socialist League? And what should we make of a man, a passionate advocate of labour struggle, who maintained an active paid involvement as a director of the family estate in Natal, which was clearly NOT a workers’ paradise, until as late as 1923 and continued to bank dividends from that concern until his death? And above all why does the book end so abruptly with his death? There is no attempt to evaluate Bunting’s longer-term contribution to the evolution of not only the CPSA but also the ANC and given the author’s earlier scholarship, this is a real loss.


The starting point and the raison d’etre for ‘Women in African Parliaments’ is the dramatic increase in the percentage of women elected to national parliaments in the past decade. Its opening paragraph details the Rwandan election of 2003 which resulted in a national legislature which was 48.8% female, and meant that Rwanda replaced Sweden as the country with the highest level of female political representation globally. Anyone who is familiar with the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) listing of the percentage of women in parliaments could not but be aware of the shift that has taken place in its rankings. While internationally the percentage of women in parliaments has increased, some of the most dramatic changes have been in the global South, with many states in Latin America, Asia and Africa moving ahead of ‘old’ democracies. This appears more remarkable in the case of Africa, given the ‘development failure’ of the region and its overall declining level of human development. It is in the context of these changes that this book is

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411578
particularly timely. The editors have drawn together some significant original research on the topic and the core of the book is six case study chapters each dealing with an African state: Mozambique; South Africa; Namibia; Uganda; Rwanda; and Senegal. With the exception of Senegal that had a relatively peaceful political transition, the states covered have all come through political transitions after prolonged periods of violent conflict. As a result of this choice, the chapters reflect a key strand of experience that was part of the wave of democratisation in Africa in the 1990s and also the gendered aspects of that experience.

The opening chapter sets up a framework to analyse women’s political engagement in the case study states that has a universalist quality, and could be equally applicable to the democracies in the global North. In dealing specifically with Africa it synthesises the institutional and social movement factors that have impacted on the election of women candidates, and assesses the impact of women in parliament and civil society, the later primarily in the form of the women’s movement. The case study chapters that follow, with minor deviations, adhere to the structural framework provided in the opening chapter covering a brief history of women in the respective state, the path to political office, the impact of women in parliament and the future direction of women’s political engagement. As a result of this discipline the book facilitates both a detailed examination of the individual states and a comparison between them.

In the detail of the case studies a diverse and complex picture of women’s political engagement emerges. With regard to Uganda, Aili Mari Tripp comments that formerly the focus has been on ‘how women have sought to increase their political representation’ and that less ‘has been said of the motivations and objectives of states in adopting such policies’. It is this complex relationship between the goals of women’s activism and the goals of existing political elites, set within the framework of the states’ relationship with the international system and its policy norms, and the pressure that can be put on reconstructing and aid dependent states that is explicitly or implicitly dealt with in the individual chapters. The picture that is built up, while it may have points of similarity with other contexts, is very far removed from the idealised ‘western’ model of women’s political advancement and engagement with parliaments. The concluding chapter returns to a discussion of the feminist concerns alluded to in the opening chapter, asking the question how can women’s representation advance the agenda of gender equality. It presents ‘weak’ versus ‘strong’ conceptualisations of participation, representation and gender equality outcomes – arguing predictably in favour of focusing on strong definitions. Its main strength lies in its application of these definitions to Africa and to the particular circumstances of the case study countries.

‘Women in African Parliaments’ fills a gap in the literature. Without directly addressing the issue it also raises the question of the tensions that exist in this form of analysis between using a common, internationally applicable model, with the inevitable problems of ‘Western’ bias, and examining the particular patterns of women’s political engagement that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. How far can models drawn from western experience aid an understanding of African women’s problematic engagement with the state. In the substantive chapters, the complexity of this relationship is fully dealt with providing a basis for future research and debate. Overall a very welcome, interesting and readable book.

In The Sun By Night, the Ghanaian writer Benjamin Kwakye, one of the most accomplished of a new generation of African novelists, has produced possibly the most important Ghanaian novel since those of Ayi Kwei Armah, establishing Kwakye as a premier African literary voice. Kwakye, born in Accra, is a recipient of the 2000 Afrique Newsmagazine W.E.B. DuBois Award for Literature and his first novel, The Clothes of Nakedness, received the 1999 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book (Africa Region) and was adapted for radio as a BBC play of the Week.

Kwakye’s latest offering, which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2006, is an artistic, deep and thorough treatise of the issues facing post-colonial Ghana. The novel takes the form of a court trial, reported by an enterprising and courageous journalist, in which a wealthy businessman and former politician, Koo Manu, stands accused of the murder of an Accra prostitute named Akwele. The trial merely serves as a window that opens out onto a variety of issues in post-independence Ghana and Africa as a whole that African novelists have long been concerned with: the inequalities between rich and poor; the post independence malaise; the struggle between tradition and modernity; the causes and consequences of prostitution; the relationship between father and son; the role and position of women; the differences between generations; the insensitivity and corruption of political and economic elites; marriage, love and polygamy. Like Armah’s The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Kwakye’s novel provides a very thorough exposure of corruption in various sectors of the Ghanaian state. Whereas Armah dealt with the national liberation period and the rise and fall of Kwame Nkrumah, Kwakye’s novel evolves against the background of political events from the late 1960s (e.g. the period of civilian rule led by Dr. Kobi Abrefa Busia) through to the overthrow of Hilla Liman in the early 1980s in a coup led by Jerry Rawlings.

The novel’s title as well as the headings of the three books within it alert the reader to the possibility that Kwakye intends to explore a complex yet ultimately very bizarre set of circumstances. Apart from the heading of the first book, The Abused Road, these are all suggestive of the paradoxical or even apocalyptic: The Sun by Night, The Eclipse of the Mother and The Rain of Snow. The novel itself, suggests tremendous confusion, upheaval, disaster and despair, but ultimately there is the possibility and hope of better things to come. The journalist’s reporting of the trial provides an enveloping narrative that links together the other threads of the story woven around the main participants or witnesses in the drama. The journalist in this story is rather like Ikem Isodi (in Achebe’s Anthills of the Savannah), in that he is honest and courageous and is not afraid to speak the truth and criticise an immoral and brutal regime regardless of the consequences. Like many writers in Africa before him, he is arrested, beaten and imprisoned.

The Sun By Night is an insightful story in many ways, providing important social commentary. Kwakye explores the social and psychological causes for the bizarre behaviour of most of the characters in the novel and he is not afraid to tackle the important issue of polygamy from both female and male points of view. Kwakye also includes a very thorough exploration of the causes, nature and consequences of prostitution. In this regard, the conversation between Kubi, disguised as Kwamena, and the intelligent prostitute Ama Badu is quite revealing. Al-
though Kwamena depends on prostitutes for the satisfaction of some of his deepest needs he decides to adopt a high moral tone and to castigate the prostitute for doing something for a living that is demonstrably wrong. Kwakye’s novel shows however that the vast majority are forced into prostitution by poverty, lack of opportunity, or by unscrupulous relations or acquaintances. The novel also consistently reflects on the importance of tradition in Ghana, presenting traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices, portraying ceremonies in which the ancestors and the traditional gods are invoked and depicting traditional protocol and traditional beliefs in attitudes towards questions of polygamy and marriage. Adherence to traditional practices is also seen in the celebration of Koo Manu’s betrothal and wedding and in the christening of his first child.

This ambitious and highly imaginative novel offers a compelling revelation of post-colonial concerns. Apart from the manipulation of language and narrative technique, Kwakye evokes some incredibly realistic scenes such as in his presentation of police and military brutality, in the church scenes, and in the sexual encounters between various people. Around the framework of the trial Kwakye brilliantly weaves together events, settings and characterisations in this highly readable and engaging book.


Almost all readers of ROAPE will be regular visitors to the Pambazuka News website. This book – one of a series – takes articles from that web resource (and a few from other places) and organises them around trade-related issues. Consequently, the book reads as a series of short essays in the intellectual tradition of Pambazuka: anti-imperialist and supportive of social movement politics in Africa.

First, a comment on the contributions. These are highly variable in their originality, quality, and focus. Some are general critiques of neo-liberalism which do not add a great deal. Thus, arguments about imposed liberalisation, the limits of primary commodity exporting, neglect of small-scale trade, and the predations of transnationals are all expressed in this book. But, a good deal of these arguments are made in brief and generalised terms, rendering some chapters as rehearsals of familiar points. This is especially the case on the section on Women and Trade.

The stronger chapters are based on some fresh empirical material, all of which highlights the deleterious nature of Africa’s trading relations in the present-day – what Henning Melber rightly calls ‘predatory capitalism’ in his engaging chapter. Patrick Bond presents us with an account of the ‘ghost on the coast’, the Coega industrial zone in South Africa (a neo-liberal white elephant in the making?) which should depress even readers most cynical of the New South Africa. There are large and important issues behind Bond’s account (and reflected in other chapters) which desperately need

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411594
more expansive treatment, most obviously the near-complete subordination of (parts of) African states to private business, and the bullish way in which the transnational corporate class asserts the conditions under which it is prepared to invest. In a world where violence against organised labour is increasing and labour action is seen as in some sense ‘old fashioned’, it is important to remember how threats of ‘capital strike’ (disinvestment, withdrawal of investment, the running down of capital) are part of the mainstream politics of ‘economic openness’.

But, of course, investment is not trade – although both are increasingly controlled by a small number of transnationals that are ever more adept at investing and trading within their own structures. My point here is that the contributions tend to bleed into other areas in ways that lead the reader to lose the focus on trade, and why trade matters especially in the context of new forms of regulation, liberalisation, and commercial norm setting. If there is a certain amount of conceptual fuzziness, one might balance this against the book’s desire to bring the issues to a broad readership in accessible ways. This the book does, but then the website does it far better and at less cost for the reader.

Which brings me to an important question: who is the book for? There is some scope for it to be adopted in development and African politics courses. Some chapters offer short focussed critiques of, say, Firestone’s disgraceful treatment of workers in Liberia, but it is not an ‘academic’ book.

The title of the book is striking, suggesting an association between the Atlantic slave trade and contemporary trading relations in Africa. Clearly, the intellectual traditions of the Left have relied on analogies of slavery for various anti-imperialism campaigns: the various Jubilee organisations have spoken about debt bondage and made explicit comparisons with the anti-debt and anti-slavery campaigns (in Britain based on a curious mix of internationalism and national esteem). But, beyond the rhetorical power of slavery analogies, what are the associations that one can make?

One is that, since the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, Africa has been locked into and subordinated by a capitalist global political economy dominated by the states and capitals of the West. Quite right, and worth repeating despite its self-evident truth until this state of affairs is no longer with us. But, contemporary capitalism bears little relationship to the Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century. So, what resonance does slavery have in the contemporary world?

Although outside the remit of this book, it is vital to note that slavery has hardly gone away; far from it. More complex forms of slavery – very often based in trafficking, domestic labour, and violence against women – are at the heart of the highly ideologised phenomenon that is called ‘globalisation’. Like primitive accumulation, the ‘freedom’ that Marx used ironically to explain proletarianisation is a tendency within capitalist social relations rather than a stage or enabling event and therefore bonded and enslaved labour are likely to persist for as long as capitalism itself. But, it is important to maintain a distinction between the social relations of slavery and wage labour. The chapter by Robtel Pailey, titled ‘Slavery Ain’t Dead’, describes the conditions of work in the now-infamous Liberia Firestone rubber plantation. What he goes on to describe, though, is the violence and exploitation of the waged workers who buckle under extreme collection quotas and live in squalor. Dubbing this slavery is normatively attractive, but politically misleading. These predations are intrinsic to wage-labour capitalism; calling them slavery serves to distract us from a
real facet or tendency within capitalism – the ever-present possibility of working people more or less rapidly to death where socio-economic conditions allow. This happened during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, it is present in the sweatshops that are contracted to produce cheap goods in minimal time to meet the 24-hour quotas and demands of international trading transnationals, and it can be found in Liberia and doubtless many other places in Africa.

The point of this short aside is simply that it is not clear in the book what the history of the Atlantic slave trade teaches us apart from the apparent historical continuities of deleterious Western interventions in Africa. What we have is a vague sense of Western responsibility for poverty and exploitation in Africa and some very general references to justice and reparations. On the issue of justice, there is surprisingly little in the book on movements for social justice in Africa in relation to trade, and not even a sketching of alternative and progressive trading relations. Charles Abugre’s characteristically sharp introduction does set out an agenda for Africa’s social movements – it would have been fantastic if these had been handed out to contributors as part of their remit in contributing to the book.

Each of these books provides valuable empirical information on their subjects, (respectively, domestic African business relations with states and experiments with workplace democracy) which will be of relevance to many researchers. Both are, however, weakened by their narrow focus on conceptual frameworks of business and labour relations which have little practical reality in the societies under examination.

Scott Taylor investigates an important and neglected question, namely, why is the indigenous business community so lacking in political influence in its relations with African states? It is unquestionably true that most African governments are unsupportive of their domestic business constituencies, even after the implementation of economic liberalisation programmes ostensibly designed to promote business interests and a market-driven approach to economic development. Taylor investigates this question through well researched case studies on Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Taylor claims that ‘Two decades of comparative research clearly demonstrates the potential benefits of business-state coalitions in the developing world.’ (p.2) Little evidence exists, however, that such coalitions have led to economic growth or development in Africa. Indeed, the evidence provided here suggests that temporarily strong state-business relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe in the early 1990s resulted in the implementa-
tion of liberalisation programmes that presaged significant economic decline. Despite being initially supported by domestic businesses, economic liberalisation proved in practice to be against their interests; exposed to the full force of international competition, many were unable to compete and were forced to close down and/or cut jobs. Taylor blames such problems on the faulty implementation of liberalisation, for which states are responsible. He largely disregards the role of donor conditionality and the international financial institutions for forcing liberalisation on Zambia (although, admittedly, not Zimbabwe). Although he admits that actual liberalisation is not always beneficial, Taylor assumes that ‘a strong dose of neo-liberal orthodoxy ... should be considered a vital component of a late-late developing state in an overwhelmingly capitalist global environment’ (p. 220).

Taylor’s binary analysis of ‘strong’ states and weak domestic business interests neglects the role of both international business and the international financial institutions. Although Taylor acknowledges that ‘the prevailing international environment further disadvantages African business actors …’ (p.208), this is not central to the case studies. The evidence presented suggests, however, that domestic business is marginal because it plays a negligible role in economic development, job creation and government revenue, relative to these international actors. Taylor admits as much with regard to Zambia: ‘The specific needs of the independent business community are not widely sympathized with or shared by the general populace’ (p.89).

In such a context, it is rational for state actors to disregard domestic business, which has yet to prove that it can significantly contribute to Africa’s development.

Taylor fails to offer a single example of effective pro-reform state relations with an indigenous African business community; Zimbabwe and South Africa are the partial exceptions which prove this rule. In each, Taylor suggests that it was white-dominated business which provided the basis for strong post-colonial state-business relations (p. 29). This is an ongoing process in South Africa, but the Zimbabwean honeymoon came to a halt with economic decline in the mid-1990s and Mugabe’s subsequent populist turn. South Africa’s current strong business-state coalition may be, Taylor admits, prone to similar political pressures if it fails to benefit the wider African population.

More generally, Taylor fails to prove his claim that ‘… the lack of business-state cooperation was a significant factor in problems such as the rapid de-industrialization, the failure to advance commercial agricultural potential, and rising unemployment across all economic sectors that accelerated in the 1990’ (p.5). It could certainly be argued that the lack of such cooperation, reflecting as it does the marginality of domestic business, was/is symptomatic of a wider malaise in which economic liberalisation was implemented in the interests of narrow national elites and their cooperating partners in international business and donor institutions, but it can hardly be said to be a major cause of such problems.

Kester examines the equally elusive concept of workplace democracy in Africa. It reflects two decades of research in ten countries and, in its case studies, provides a wealth of useful detail regarding experiments in worker participation in company decision-making that will help address the relative dearth of post-colonial labour studies at the workplace level. Of significant importance are the opinion surveys of workers and trade union representatives, which reflect a convincingly bleak picture of the generalised decline in working conditions and living standards since the 1970s.
However, Kester’s longitudinal approach is also his weakness – as the author makes clear, experiments in worker participation were introduced in the period of state-led economic nationalism in the 1970s, and have virtually disappeared since the late 1980s. Although this is therefore largely a historical study of such projects, the presentation of data does not generally follow a historical structure in the individual country case studies. Insufficient contextualisation is provided of the widely differing post-colonial political and economic frameworks within which the many examples of worker participation occurred.

The study also suffers from a limited analysis of state motivations for introducing worker participation schemes. Kester contrasts the first decade after independence (c.1960-70), during which ‘progressive’ governments (Zambia, for example) planned worker consultation (drawing on Western European and/or Yugoslav models) based on ‘well-intended lofty ideals of co-operation’, with a period of implementation during which ‘the corporatist complex started to more and more confiscate all power and wealth, and the trade unions, who might have been willing to assume government-friendly roles in the beginning, became prisoners of increasingly authoritarian regimes’ (pp. 6-7) Insufficient explanation is offered for why such a shift occurred, and little evidence is provided indicating why such a positive view should be adopted regarding the motivations of rulers, nor why their good intentions were overturned. Given the lack of positive outcomes of worker participation in the cases under examination, an alternative reading of the evidence presented is that post-colonial governments, concerned with the disruptive power of organised labour, sought to introduce state-dominated corporatism to contain unrest and the potential political threat of independent trade unionism. It is evident that in the overwhelming majority of cases in which workers’ committees or councils were introduced, workers did not regard them as having improved labour relations, with most seeking to defend their independent trade union representation.

In the 1990s, liberalisation effectively dismantled such participatory structures (again, a symptom of a wider malaise rather than its cause). In a context of economic decline, effective worker representation has declined, with correlative declines in wages, living standards and levels of employment. Whilst Kester is right to argue for improved worker rights and representation, there is little to indicate that the types of workplace democracy examined here are relevant to addressing these problems in practice.
On one side of this analysis, we have an institution slowly pushing along global efforts towards agreement on the principles of implementing justice across frontiers; on the other, perhaps the most notorious of Africa’s violent cults, a local world seemingly of unreason, cruelty, and no justice at all except excessive vengeance. The International Criminal Court was finally established after decades of hesitant steps towards ‘universal jurisdiction’ following the second world war. Its status was achieved through collaborative agreements between states who signed up to the 1998 Rome Statute, though a number of signatories have not yet ratified the law.

The United States, and the Sudan, are among these. Theoretically the ICC has wider, and more flexible, powers than the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague set up by the Security Council in 1993, which dealt with former Yugoslavia and then established the ICT for Rwanda in Arusha (whose terms of reference are limited to events of 1994, and therefore can appear, in retrospect, one-sided). The first case to be referred to the ICC, in 2004, was that of the leadership of Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. This was prompted by recent massacres attributed to them of displaced people, including women and children – despite efforts towards a ceasefire. The first warrants were issued the following year for the arrest of Joseph Kony and a number of his colleagues.

Tim Allen considers this remarkable first venture of the ICC as a test case for the whole principle it is supposed to embody. It is quite clear that the political clout of the richer world has, so far, been able to keep the ICC at bay – it does seem likely that even if the USA did accept the authority of the court, there would be many roundabout ways in which US personnel could be kept out of its clutches. The Ugandan case is easier prey. But because this is a poor country, is the prospect of international criminal trials for its citizens necessarily a simpler matter, whether in its moral or practical complications?

Allen draws on his earlier years of teaching and research in northern Uganda and the southern Sudan, supplemented by recent consultancies, to illustrate how many-layered these complications are. While himself basically in favour of ICC intervention, he shows that a range of well considered views can be found among Ugandans of all backgrounds. Some argue they have a right to see justice and punishment for the LRA leaders, while others point out that punitive measures smack of ‘revenge’ and might provoke retaliation. These interviewees explained to Allen that real peace can only be found when there is reconciliation. For example, the Ugandan government passed an Amnesty Act in 1999 which encourages, and even rewards, former rebels who turn themselves in. At a local, cultural and religious level, there are traditional ceremonies among the Acholi and Madi through which hostile parties can be brought together, and offences forgiven. Some are pointing out that the entry of the ICC into the complex situation of northern Uganda, with its sharp identifi-
cation of key criminals, is making all modes of amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation more difficult.

Allen touches on the longer history of the LRA and its roots in Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. He also sketches the links between the persisting strength of the LRA and the ups and downs of regional civil wars - specifically the role played by the Sudanese government of Omer el Beshir in supporting it (while the Ugandan regime was lending help to the SPLA). It is very interesting that the Sudan itself has recently gained a high profile vis-à-vis the ICC. In 2005 the Security Council first referred the Sudanese situation to the ICC. Accusations, and later warrants, were directed at the leadership of the Janjawid militias in Darfur and indeed some government leaders. Meanwhile, since the publication of Allen’s book, the Sudan government has been denying the right of the ICC to try their citizens – while Sudanese leaders have been playing a key role in attempting to negotiate peace (on Sudanese territory) with Kony and the LRA. The July, 2008, decision by the ICC chief prosecutor to place the name of President Beshir before the court has dramatically raised the stakes, and it is interesting that Museveni is one of the few African leaders to show reluctance in rallying to Beshir’s ‘support’.

This book, in the new African Arguments series, is quite compact and inevitably dense. It will be a demanding read for those not yet familiar with the history of Uganda/Sudan border relations. But it is not only this region of Africa, or indeed the world, which has become a space in which ordinary citizenship scarcely exists. As a case study, this is a highly revealing snapshot of an important moment in the efforts of the international community to try and confront appalling crimes in the frontierlands of nation-states which do not have the judicial or political capacity to protect the lives of their own people.


Reminiscent of the euphoria that accompanied Ghana’s independence in 1957, we are again witnessing an era of optimism about Ghana’s future. A landmark transition to liberal democratic political stability and a modest economic growth have made Ghana the poster child of liberal democracy in Africa. It is in this context that the anthology of Kwame Boafo Arthur is situated. The central thrust of the book, as Boafo Arthur states, ‘is to put the liberal democratic cum neoliberal processes over the past decade in clear perspective’ (p. 1). To this end, Boafo Arthur assembled a team of seasoned Ghanaian scholars to examine the ‘liberal state’ on a variety of important topical areas: human rights, security, economic development, conflict management, political leadership, gender and politics, labour activism, and foreign policy. This is a lot of ground to cover thoroughly in a single volume, making this an ambitious project.

As is common with edited volumes, the essays vary in quality. There are chapters that are just thick empirical descriptions, without any theoretical framework. Other chapters, namely, Kwame Ninsin’s on the tension between free market and the democratic ideal of equality; Joseph Ayee’s on the comparison of the leadership qualities between Rawlings and Kufuor, Alexander Frempong’s on the liberal democratic peace, and Kwaku Tsikata’s on the gap between constitutional guarantees of human rights and the real life enjoyment of these rights, stand out for their clarity, analytical rigour, and theoretical grounding.

However, the book has some limitations. It is poorly organised: for coherence, flow...
and easy reading, the essays should have been organised into thematic parts. Similarly, the book is in need of a conclusion on what it has accomplished and what needs further investigations. As the ‘liberal state’ is both the theoretical and empirical referent of the book, one was hoping to see the essays explicitly situated in relation to the fundamental theoretical and political canons of the ‘liberal state’. Except in some few instances, they were not. This might be due to the failure of the editor to lay out the theoretical and political coordinates of the ‘liberal state’ in the introductory chapter. For the individual contributions to form a coherent whole, Boafo-Arthur needed to rigorously unpack the ‘liberal state’, both theoretically and historically. Instead, he allotted a paltry one and half pages to such a vital discussion (pp. 5-6).

The foundational theoretical and political doctrine of the liberal state, namely, the separation between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ is not problematised. Neither is the socio-historical specificity of the ‘liberal state’ addressed. The liberal state emerged in a specific socio-historical context in England, begging the question whether we can talk blithely of the emergence of a ‘liberal state’ in a different socio-historical context in Africa. Therefore, this book not only needed a clear theoretical framework but methodological guidance.

Given this serious oversight, Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors make some assertions which suggest a superficial knowledge of the ‘liberal state’. Boafo Arthur finds ‘the wholesale marginalisation of the state in the management of the market’ (p. 17) baffling and wrong. In reality, there has never been ‘wholesale marginalisation’ of the liberal state, but rather a selective intervention in the interest of the market. Second, the ‘liberal state’ seems to be conflated with a constitutional government. With respect to Ghana, the liberal state is merely distinguished from the praetorian dictatorships which ruled the country at one point; so the First Republic under Kwame Nkrumah is a liberal state while Rawlings’ PNDC is not.

However, the issues are more complex than this. Boafo Arthur correctly points out that the Rawlings PNDC government used ‘draconian’ methods to implement liberal economic policies, and in the process, suppressed ‘the fundamental liberties of the people’ (p. 7). Yet the ‘international community and donor agencies ignored them because the PNDC was implementing to the letter the Bretton Woods-inspired economic management package’ (p.236). To explain away this monumental contradiction and two-facedness of the international community is to skirt the responsibility of asking a central question of this book: why did the Ghanaian liberal state wait until 1993 to emerge?

Answering this question would have thrown into relief a gamut of dynamics – class, new imperialism and the power of liberal discourse – which would have given Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors a pause before jumping on the liberal bandwagon. Similarly, the unrealistic expectations of the liberal state and criticisms of what is misunderstood as transgressions of its doctrines could have been avoided. For example, Boafo Arthur expects the liberal state to ensure ‘the creation of material wealth that will be for the good of the whole society’ (p. 5), and sees inequities as a dilution of the ‘sacrosanct values inherent in liberalism’ (p.12).

Ninsin argues that socioeconomic inequality ‘leaves liberal democracy a distant pedigree of its classical form’ (p.103), and advocates the intervention of the liberal state in the market to redistribute wealth. Surely, they are mistaken. While I am sympathetic to Ninsin’s concerns, he cannot remain in the liberal state straitjacket and simultaneously make these demands. Despite these limita-
the book is a handy and valuable source of information on the Ghanaian state in this era of global neo-liberalism.


Sidney Bunting was the privileged child of successful, conscientious Methodist parents. Throughout his childhood they rubbed shoulders with the literally great and good the most distinguished of whom was W.E. Gladstone. It was a home dominated by good works and high culture. Sidney, a clever and musical boy, was expensively educated at St. Pauls School and Magdalen College Oxford. By late 19th century standards his background was liberal even radical.

Like many of his class, the young Sidney was an enthusiast for liberal empire if that is not entirely oxymoronic. Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War he sailed for the Cape and volunteered to fight. After the Peace of Vereeniging he stayed on in South Africa where some of his ancestors had established mission stations in the early 19th century and where there remained a family-owned estate. As he had begun to practise as a solicitor in London before the war, he recommenced his legal career in Johannesburg. He conformed to the expectations of a white professional man in that rich, rough mining town. He joined racially segregated clubs and mixed with the right, white people. While there is no real attempt here to explain this, from the end of the first decade of the 20th century he began to sympathise with the plight of labour, albeit white labour; one suspects that this owed something to the social conscience which surrounded him in childhood. He threw in his lot with the Labour Party, a soi disant socialist organisation which perversely preached job and pay discrimination.

The imminent outbreak of war appears to have prodded him leftwards. He took an increasingly unpopular anti-war stand and this brought him into contact with activists like Philip Roux. The author tells us virtually nothing about the emotional and intellectual navigation which took Bunting from a South African own-brand racialist faux socialism towards the real thing. But by 1915 he was using the language of the far left, linking up with local activists and beginning to argue that the emancipation of the South African working class required an immediate ending to discriminatory measures such as pass laws, residential discrimination and oppressive labour contracts; he was arguing that the South African workers of all colours were oppressed and must fight that oppression together. He began to work with, and not just condescendingly for, African workers. And by 1915 he is clearly reading Marx and regarding that canon as more than merely instructive.

Revolutionary ideas and an identification with the struggles of black people began to isolate him from many of his old friends, from many of the organised white working class and importantly from the state. He began to be harassed – dogged by detectives and not infrequently taken to court and even imprisoned. The inspiration of the Russian revolution and the Comintern’s direction led to a merger of South Africa’s few and small far left organisations and Bunting became a founder member of the Communist Party of South Africa in October 1920. In the following 16 years of his life he and his wife were to be deeply
involved with the CPSA, an involvement that involved visiting Weimar Germany and then Moscow for Comintern meetings. But prominent as he was, the last part of his life was spent unrewardingly running uphill. What had been in legal terms for whites at least a relatively liberal state which had tended to tolerate radicals as cranks rather than subversives became increasingly coercive with the reforms introduced by Oswald Pirow; it became more and more dangerous to participate in radical multi-racial politics. But even more damaging was the self-indulgent fraternal infighting which hamstrung radical opposition in the inter-war period; that infighting could descend to the worst depths of personal defamation, racist slander and cruel exclusions. Bunting was a victim of this and although the Party staged a show funeral, a ‘Red Funeral’, for him, those who professed grief at his graveside included many who had stabbed him in the back.

Sidney Bunting was a fascinating man but much of what made him into a figure straight out of an Ibsen play remains unexplained and even un-interrogated in this biography. There is far too much stodgy and frankly uninteresting detail in the first 60 pages of this book and far too little of the kinds of exploration of a life that one expects from a biographer. Each of the step-changes in his life, and they were huge, remains a mystery; for example was Philip Roux, Eddie Roux’s remarkable father, his mentor? When did Bunting first encounter Marx’s writing? How important to his intellectual development was his wife, Becky Notlewitz a refugee from Tsarist anti-Semitism who had spent time in London’s Whitechapel, a radical hot-spot, before embarking for South Africa in 1914 where she joined the International Socialist League? And what should we make of a man, a passionate advocate of labour struggle, who maintained an active paid involvement as a director of the family estate in Natal, which was clearly NOT a workers’ paradise, until as late as 1923 and continued to bank dividends from that concern until his death? And above all why does the book end so abruptly with his death? There is no attempt to evaluate Bunting’s longer-term contribution to the evolution of not only the CPSA but also the ANC and given the author’s earlier scholarship, this is a real loss.


The starting point and the raison d’etre for ‘Women in African Parliaments’ is the dramatic increase in the percentage of women elected to national parliaments in the past decade. Its opening paragraph details the Rwandan election of 2003 which resulted in a national legislature which was 48.8% female, and meant that Rwanda replaced Sweden as the country with the highest level of female political representation globally. Anyone who is familiar with the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) listing of the percentage of women in parliaments could not but be aware of the shift that has taken place in its rankings. While internationally the percentage of women in parliaments has increased, some of the most dramatic changes have been in the global South, with many states in Latin America, Asia and Africa moving ahead of ‘old’ democracies. This appears more remarkable in the case of Africa, given the ‘development failure’ of the region and its overall declining level of human development. It is in the context of these changes that this book is
particularly timely. The editors have drawn together some significant original research on the topic and the core of the book is six case study chapters each dealing with an African state: Mozambique; South Africa; Namibia; Uganda; Rwanda; and Senegal. With the exception of Senegal that had a relatively peaceful political transition, the states covered have all come through political transitions after prolonged periods of violent conflict. As a result of this choice, the chapters reflect a key strand of experience that was part of the wave of democratisation in Africa in the 1990s and also the gendered aspects of that experience.

The opening chapter sets up a framework to analyse women’s political engagement in the case study states that has a universalist quality, and could be equally applicable to the democracies in the global North. In dealing specifically with Africa it synthesises the institutional and social movement factors that have impacted on the election of women candidates, and assesses the impact the election of women has had on institutional culture, on legislation, and on civil society, the later primarily in the form of the women’s movement. The case study chapters that follow, with minor deviations, adhere to the structural framework provided in the opening chapter covering a brief history of women in the respective state, the path to political office, the impact of women in parliament and the future direction of women’s political engagement. As a result of this discipline the book facilitates both a detailed examination of the individual states and a comparison between them. In the detail of the case studies a diverse and complex picture of women’s political engagement emerges. With regard to Uganda, Aili Mari Tripp comments that formerly the focus has been on ‘how women have sought to increase their political representation’ and that less ‘has been said of the motivations and objectives of states in adopting such policies’. It is this complex relationship between the goals of women’s activism and the goals of existing political elites, set within the framework of the states’ relationship with the international system and its policy norms, and the pressure that can be put on reconstructing and aid dependent states that is explicitly or implicitly dealt with in the individual chapters. The picture that is built up, while it may have points of similarity with other contexts, is very far removed from the idealised ‘western’ model of women’s political advancement and engagement with parliaments. The concluding chapter returns to a discussion of the feminist concerns alluded to in the opening chapter, asking the question how can women’s representation advance the agenda of gender equality. It presents ‘weak’ versus ‘strong’ conceptualisations of participation, representation and gender equality outcomes – arguing predictably in favour of focusing on strong definitions. Its main strength lies in its application of these definitions to Africa and to the particular circumstances of the case study countries.

‘Women in African Parliaments’ fills a gap in the literature. Without directly addressing the issue it also raises the question of the tensions that exist in this form of analysis between using a common, internationally applicable model, with the inevitable problems of ‘Western’ bias, and examining the particular patterns of women’s political engagement that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. How far can models drawn from western experience aid an understanding of African women’s problematic engagement with the state. In the substantive chapters, the complexity of this relationship is fully dealt with providing a basis for future research and debate. Overall a very welcome, interesting and readable book.

In The Sun By Night, the Ghanaian writer Benjamin Kwakye, one of the most accomplished of a new generation of African novelists, has produced possibly the most important Ghanaian novel since those of Ayi Kwei Armah, establishing Kwakye as a premier African literary voice. Kwakye, born in Accra, is a recipient of the 2000 Afrique Newsmagazine W.E.B. DuBois Award for Literature and his first novel, The Clothes of Nakedness, received the 1999 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book (Africa Region) and was adapted for radio as a BBC play of the Week.

Kwakye’s latest offering, which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2006, is an artistic, deep and thorough treatise of the issues facing post-colonial Ghana. The novel takes the form of a court trial, reported by an enterprising and courageous journalist, in which a wealthy businessman and former politician, Koo Manu, stands accused of the murder of an Accra prostitute named Akwele. The trial merely serves as a window that opens out onto a variety of issues in post-independence Ghana and Africa as a whole that African novelists have long been concerned with: the inequalities between rich and poor; the post independence malaise; the struggle between tradition and modernity; the causes and consequences of prostitution; the relationship between father and son; the role and position of women; the differences between generations; the insensitivity and corruption of political and economic elites; marriage, love and polygamy. Like Armah’s The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Kwakye’s novel provides a very thorough exposure of corruption in various sectors of the Ghanaian state. Whereas Armah dealt with the national liberation period and the rise and fall of Kwame Nkrumah, Kwakye’s novel evokes against the background of political events from the late 1960s (e.g. the period of civilian rule led by Dr. Kobi Abrefa Busia) through to the overthrow of Hilla Liman in the early 1980s in a coup led by Jerry Rawlings.

The novel’s title as well as the headings of the three books within it alert the reader to the possibility that Kwakye intends to explore a complex yet ultimately very bizarre set of circumstances. Apart from the heading of the first book, The Abused Road, these are all suggestive of the paradoxical or even apocalyptic: The Sun by Night, The Eclipse of the Mother and The Rain of Snow. The novel itself, suggests tremendous confusion, upheaval, disaster and despair, but ultimately there is the possibility and hope of better things to come. The journalist’s reporting of the trial provides an enveloping narrative that links together the other threads of the story woven around the main participants or witnesses in the drama. The journalist in this story is rather like Ikem Isodi (in Achebe’s Anthills of the Savannah), in that he is honest and courageous and is not afraid to speak the truth and criticise an immoral and brutal regime regardless of the consequences. Like many writers in Africa before him, he is arrested, beaten and imprisoned.

The Sun By Night is an insightful story in many ways, providing important social commentary. Kwakye explores the social and psychological causes for the bizarre behaviour of most of the characters in the novel and he is not afraid to tackle the important issue of polygamy from both female and male points of view. Kwakye also includes a very thorough exploration of the causes, nature and consequences of prostitution. In this regard, the conversation between Kubi, disguised as Kwamena, and the intelligent prostitute Ama Badu is quite revealing. Al-

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411586
though Kwamena depends on prostitutes for the satisfaction of some of his deepest needs he decides to adopt a high moral tone and to castigate the prostitute for doing something for a living that is demonstrably wrong. Kwakye’s novel shows however that the vast majority are forced into prostitution by poverty, lack of opportunity, or by unscrupulous relations or acquaintances. The novel also consistently reflects on the importance of tradition in Ghana, presenting traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices, portraying ceremonies in which the ancestors and the traditional gods are invoked and depicting traditional protocol and traditional beliefs in attitudes towards questions of polygamy and marriage. Adherence to traditional practices is also seen in the celebration of Koo Manu’s betrothal and wedding and in the christening of his first child.

This ambitious and highly imaginative novel offers a compelling revelation of post-colonial concerns. Apart from the manipulation of language and narrative technique, Kwakye evokes some incredibly realistic scenes such as in his presentation of police and military brutality, in the church scenes, and in the sexual encounters between various people. Around the framework of the trial Kwakye brilliantly weaves together events, settings and characterisations in this highly readable and engaging book.


Almost all readers of ROAPE will be regular visitors to the Pambazuka News website. This book – one of a series – takes articles from that web resource (and a few from other places) and organises them around trade-related issues. Consequently, the book reads as a series of short essays in the intellectual tradition of Pambazuka: anti-imperialist and supportive of social movement politics in Africa.

First, a comment on the contributions. These are highly variable in their originality, quality, and focus. Some are general critiques of neo-liberalism which do not add a great deal. Thus, arguments about imposed liberalisation, the limits of primary commodity exporting, neglect of small-scale trade, and the predations of transnationals are all expressed in this book. But, a good deal of these arguments are made in brief and generalised terms, rendering some chapters as rehearsals of familiar points. This is especially the case on the section on Women and Trade.

The stronger chapters are based on some fresh empirical material, all of which highlights the deleterious nature of Africa’s trading relations in the present-day – what Henning Melber rightly calls ‘predatory capitalism’ in his engaging chapter. Patrick Bond presents us with an account of the ‘ghost on the coast’, the Coega industrial zone in South Africa (a neo-liberal white elephant in the making?) which should depress even readers most cynical of the New South Africa. There are large and important issues behind Bond’s account (and reflected in other chapters) which desperately need
more expansive treatment, most obviously the near-complete subordination of (parts of) African states to private business, and the bullish way in which the transnational corporate class asserts the conditions under which it is prepared to invest. In a world where violence against organised labour is increasing and labour action is seen as in some sense ‘old fashioned’, it is important to remember how threats of ‘capital strike’ (disinvestment, withdrawal of investment, the running down of capital) are part of the mainstream politics of ‘economic openness’.

But, of course, investment is not trade – although both are increasingly controlled by a small number of transnationals that are ever more adept at investing and trading within their own structures. My point here is that the contributions tend to bleed into other areas in ways that lead the reader to lose the focus on trade, and why trade matters especially in the context of new forms of regulation, liberalisation, and commercial norm setting. If there is a certain amount of conceptual fuzziness, one might balance this against the book’s desire to bring the issues to a broad readership in accessible ways. This the book does, but then the website does it far better and at less cost for the reader.

Which brings me to an important question: who is the book for? There is some scope for it to be adopted in development and African politics courses. Some chapters offer short focussed critiques of, say, Firestone’s disgraceful treatment of workers in Liberia, but it is not an ‘academic’ book.

The title of the book is striking, suggesting an association between the Atlantic slave trade and contemporary trading relations in Africa. Clearly, the intellectual traditions of the Left have relied on analogies of slavery for various anti-imperialism campaigns: the various Jubilee organisations have spoken about debt bondage and made explicit comparisons with the anti-debt and anti-slavery campaigns (in Britain based on a curious mix of internationalism and national esteem). But, beyond the rhetorical power of slavery analogies, what are the associations that one can make?

One is that, since the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, Africa has been locked into and subordinated by a capitalist global political economy dominated by the states and capitals of the West. Quite right, and worth repeating despite its self-evident truth until this state of affairs is no longer with us. But, contemporary capitalism bears little relationship to the Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century. So, what resonance does slavery have in the contemporary world?

Although outside the remit of this book, it is vital to note that slavery has hardly gone away; far from it. More complex forms of slavery – very often based in trafficking, domestic labour, and violence against women – are at the heart of the highly ideologised phenomenon that is called ‘globalisation’. Like primitive accumulation, the ‘freedom’ that Marx used ironically to explain proletarianisation is a tendency within capitalist social relations rather than a stage or enabling event and therefore bonded and enslaved labour are likely to persist for as long as capitalism itself. But, it is important to maintain a distinction between the social relations of slavery and wage labour. The chapter by Robtel Pailey, titled ‘Slavery Ain’t Dead’, describes the conditions of work in the now-infamous Liberia Firestone rubber plantation. What he goes on to describe, though, is the violence and exploitation of the waged workers who buckle under extreme collection quotas and live in squalor. Dubbing this slavery is normatively attractive, but politically misleading. These predations are intrinsic to wage-labour capitalism; calling them slavery serves to distract us from a
real facet or tendency within capitalism – the ever-present possibility of working people more or less rapidly to death where socio-economic conditions allow. This happened during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, it is present in the sweatshops that are contracted to produce cheap goods in minimal time to meet the 24-hour quotas and demands of international trading transnationals, and it can be found in Liberia and doubtless many other places in Africa.

The point of this short aside is simply that it is not clear in the book what the history of the Atlantic slave trade teaches us apart from the apparent historical continuities of deleterious Western interventions in Africa. What we have is a vague sense of Western responsibility for poverty and exploitation in Africa and some very general references to justice and reparations. On the issue of justice, there is surprisingly little in the book on movements for social justice in Africa in relation to trade, and not even a sketching of alternative and progressive trading relations. Charles Abugre’s characteristically sharp introduction does set out an agenda for Africa’s social movements – it would have been fantastic if these had been handed out to contributors as part of their remit in contributing to the book.

Each of these books provides valuable empirical information on their subjects, (respectively, domestic African business relations with states and experiments with workplace democracy) which will be of relevance to many researchers. Both are, however, weakened by their narrow focus on conceptual frameworks of business and labour relations which have little practical reality in the societies under examination.

Scott Taylor investigates an important and neglected question, namely, why is the indigenous business community so lacking in political influence in its relations with African states? It is unquestionably true that most African governments are unsupportive of their domestic business constituencies, even after the implementation of economic liberalisation programmes ostensibly designed to promote business interests and a market-driven approach to economic development. Taylor investigates this question through well researched case studies on Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Taylor claims that ‘Two decades of comparative research clearly demonstrates the potential benefits of business-state coalitions in the developing world.’ (p.2) Little evidence exists, however, that such coalitions have led to economic growth or development in Africa. Indeed, the evidence provided here suggests that temporarily strong state-business relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe in the early 1990s resulted in the implementa-

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411610
tion of liberalisation programmes that presaged significant economic decline. Despite being initially supported by domestic businesses, economic liberalisation proved in practice to be against their interests; exposed to the full force of international competition, many were unable to compete and were forced to close down and/or cut jobs. Taylor blames such problems on the faulty implementation of liberalisation, for which states are responsible. He largely disregards the role of donor conditionality and the international financial institutions for forcing liberalisation on Zambia (although, admittedly, not Zimbabwe). Although he admits that actual liberalisation is not always beneficial, Taylor assumes that ‘a strong dose of neo-liberal orthodoxy ... should be considered a vital component of a late-late developing state in an overwhelmingly capitalist global environment’ (p. 220).

Taylor’s binary analysis of ‘strong’ states and weak domestic business interests neglects the role of both international business and the international financial institutions. Although Taylor acknowledges that ‘the prevailing international environment further disadvantages African business actors …’ (p.208), this is not central to the case studies. The evidence presented suggests, however, that domestic business is marginal because it plays a negligible role in economic development, job creation and government revenue, relative to these international actors. Taylor admits as much with regard to Zambia: ‘The specific needs of the independent business community are not widely sympathized with or shared by the general populace’ (p.89). In such a context, it is rational for state actors to disregard domestic business, which has yet to prove that it can significantly contribute to Africa’s development.

Taylor fails to offer a single example of effective pro-reform state relations with an indigenous African business community; Zimbabwe and South Africa are the partial exceptions which prove this rule. In each, Taylor suggests that it was white-dominated business which provided the basis for strong post-colonial state-business relations (p. 29). This is an ongoing process in South Africa, but the Zimbabwean honeymoon came to a halt with economic decline in the mid-1990s and Mugabe’s subsequent populist turn. South Africa’s current strong business-state coalition may be, Taylor admits, prone to similar political pressures if it fails to benefit the wider African population.

More generally, Taylor fails to prove his claim that ‘... the lack of business-state cooperation was a significant factor in problems such as the rapid de-industrialization, the failure to advance commercial agricultural potential, and rising unemployment across all economic sectors that accelerated in the 1990’ (p.5). It could certainly be argued that the lack of such cooperation, reflecting as it does the marginality of domestic business, was/is symptomatic of a wider malaise in which economic liberalisation was implemented in the interests of narrow national elites and their cooperating partners in international business and donor institutions, but it can hardly be said to be a major cause of such problems.

Kester examines the equally elusive concept of workplace democracy in Africa. It reflects two decades of research in ten countries and, in its case studies, provides a wealth of useful detail regarding experiments in worker participation in company decision-making that will help address the relative dearth of post-colonial labour studies at the workplace level. Of significant importance are the opinion surveys of workers and trade union representatives, which reflect a convincingly bleak picture of the generalised decline in working conditions and living standards since the 1970s.
However, Kester’s longitudinal approach is also his weakness – as the author makes clear, experiments in worker participation were introduced in the period of state-led economic nationalism in the 1970s, and have virtually disappeared since the late 1980s. Although this is therefore largely a historical study of such projects, the presentation of data does not generally follow a historical structure in the individual country case studies. Insufficient contextualisation is provided of the widely differing post-colonial political and economic frameworks within which the many examples of worker participation occurred.

The study also suffers from a limited analysis of state motivations for introducing worker participation schemes. Kester contrasts the first decade after independence (c.1960-70), during which ‘progressive’ governments (Zambia, for example) planned worker consultation (drawing on Western European and/or Yugoslav models) based on ‘well-intended lofty ideals of co-operation’, with a period of implementation during which ‘the corporatist complex started to more and more confiscate all power and wealth, and the trade unions, who might have been willing to assume government-friendly roles in the beginning, became prisoners of increasingly authoritarian regimes’ (pp. 6-7) Insufficient explanation is offered for why such a shift occurred, and little evidence is provided indicating why such a positive view should be adopted regarding the motivations of rulers, nor why their good intentions were overturned. Given the lack of positive outcomes of worker participation in the cases under examination, an alternative reading of the evidence presented is that post-colonial governments, concerned with the disruptive power of organised labour, sought to introduce state-dominated corporatism to contain unrest and the potential political threat of independent trade unionism. It is evident that in the overwhelming majority of cases in which workers’ committees or councils were introduced, workers did not regard them as having improved labour relations, with most seeking to defend their independent trade union representation.

In the 1990s, liberalisation effectively dismantled such participatory structures (again, a symptom of a wider malaise rather than its cause). In a context of economic decline, effective worker representation has declined, with correlative declines in wages, living standards and levels of employment. Whilst Kester is right to argue for improved worker rights and representation, there is little to indicate that the types of workplace democracy examined here are relevant to addressing these problems in practice.
On one side of this analysis, we have an institution slowly pushing along global efforts towards agreement on the principles of implementing justice across frontiers; on the other, perhaps the most notorious of Africa’s violent cults, a local world seemingly of unreason, cruelty, and no justice at all except excessive vengeance. The International Criminal Court was finally established after decades of hesitant steps towards ‘universal jurisdiction’ following the second world war. Its status was achieved through collaborative agreements between states who signed up to the 1998 Rome Statute, though a number of signatories have not yet ratified the law.

The United States, and the Sudan, are among these. Theoretically the ICC has wider, and more flexible, powers than the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague set up by the Security Council in 1993, which dealt with former Yugoslavia and then established the ICT for Rwanda in Arusha (whose terms of reference are limited to events of 1994, and therefore can appear, in retrospect, one-sided). The first case to be referred to the ICC, in 2004, was that of the leadership of Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. This was prompted by recent massacres attributed to them of displaced people, including women and children – despite efforts towards a ceasefire. The first warrants were issued the following year for the arrest of Joseph Kony and a number of his colleagues.

Tim Allen considers this remarkable first venture of the ICC as a test case for the whole principle it is supposed to embody. It is quite clear that the political clout of the richer world has, so far, been able to keep the ICC at bay – it does seem likely that even if the USA did accept the authority of the court, there would be many roundabout ways in which US personnel could be kept out of its clutches. The Ugandan case is easier prey. But because this is a poor country, is the prospect of international criminal trials for its citizens necessarily a simpler matter, whether in its moral or practical complications?

Allen draws on his earlier years of teaching and research in northern Uganda and the southern Sudan, supplemented by recent consultancies, to illustrate how many-layered these complications are. While himself basically in favour of ICC intervention, he shows that a range of well considered views can be found among Ugandans of all backgrounds. Some argue they have a right to see justice and punishment for the LRA leaders, while others point out that punitive measures smack of ‘revenge’ and might provoke retaliation. These interviewees explained to Allen that real peace can only be found when there is reconciliation. For example, the Ugandan government passed an Amnesty Act in 1999 which encourages, and even rewards, former rebels who turn themselves in. At a local, cultural and religious level, there are traditional ceremonies among the Acholi and Madi through which hostile parties can be brought together, and offences forgiven. Some are pointing out that the entry of the ICC into the complex situation of northern Uganda, with its sharp identifi-
cation of key criminals, is making all modes of amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation more difficult.

Allen touches on the longer history of the LRA and its roots in Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. He also sketches the links between the persisting strength of the LRA and the ups and downs of regional civil wars - specifically the role played by the Sudanese government of Omer el Beshir in supporting it (while the Ugandan regime was lending help to the SPLA). It is very interesting that the Sudan itself has recently gained a high profile vis-à-vis the ICC. In 2005 the Security Council first referred the Sudanese situation to the ICC. Accusations, and later warrants, were directed at the leadership of the Janjawid militias in Darfur and indeed some government leaders. Meanwhile, since the publication of Allen’s book, the Sudan government has been denying the right of the ICC to try their citizens – while Sudanese leaders have been playing a key role in attempting to negotiate peace (on Sudanese territory) with Kony and the LRA. The July, 2008, decision by the ICC chief prosecutor to place the name of President Beshir before the court has dramatically raised the stakes, and it is interesting that Museveni is one of the few African leaders to show reluctance in rallying to Beshir’s ‘support’.

This book, in the new African Arguments series, is quite compact and inevitably dense. It will be a demanding read for those not yet familiar with the history of Uganda/Sudan border relations. But it is not only this region of Africa, or indeed the world, which has become a space in which ordinary citizenship scarcely exists. As a case study, this is a highly revealing snapshot of an important moment in the efforts of the international community to try and confront appalling crimes in the frontierlands of nation-states which do not have the judicial or political capacity to protect the lives of their own people.


Reminiscent of the euphoria that accompanied Ghana’s independence in 1957, we are again witnessing an era of optimism about Ghana’s future. A landmark transition to liberal democratic political stability and a modest economic growth have made Ghana the poster child of liberal democracy in Africa. It is in this context that the anthology of Kwame Boafo Arthur is situated. The central thrust of the book, as Boafo Arthur states, ‘is to put the liberal democratic cum neoliberal processes over the past decade in clear perspective’ (p. 1). To this end, Boafo Arthur assembled a team of seasoned Ghanaian scholars to examine the ‘liberal state’ on a variety of important topical areas: human rights, security, economic development, conflict management, political leadership, gender and politics, labour activism, and foreign policy. This is a lot of ground to cover thoroughly in a single volume, making this an ambitious project.

As is common with edited volumes, the essays vary in quality. There are chapters that are just thick empirical descriptions, without any theoretical framework. Other chapters, namely, Kwame Ninsin’s on the tension between free market and the democratic ideal of equality; Joseph Ayee’s on the comparison of the leadership qualities between Rawlings and Kufuor, Alexander Frempong’s on the liberal democratic peace, and Kwaku Tsikata’s on the gap between constitutional guarantees of human rights and the real life enjoyment of these rights, stand out for their clarity, analytical rigour, and theoretical grounding.

However, the book has some limitations. It is poorly organised: for coherence, flow

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802413582
and easy reading, the essays should have been organised into thematic parts. Similarly, the book is in need of a conclusion on what it has accomplished and what needs further investigations. As the ‘liberal state’ is both the theoretical and empirical referent of the book, one was hoping to see the essays explicitly situated in relation to the fundamental theoretical and political canons of the ‘liberal state’. Except in some few instances, they were not. This might be due to the failure of the editor to lay out the theoretical and political coordinates of the ‘liberal state’ in the introductory chapter. For the individual contributions to form a coherent whole, Boafo-Arthur needed to rigorously unpack the ‘liberal state’, both theoretically and historically. Instead, he allotted a paltry one and half pages to such a vital discussion (pp. 5-6).

The foundational theoretical and political doctrine of the liberal state, namely, the separation between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ is not problematised. Neither is the socio-historical specificity of the ‘liberal state’ addressed. The liberal state emerged in a specific socio-historical context in England, begging the question whether we can talk blithely of the emergence of a ‘liberal state’ in a different socio-historical context in Africa. Therefore, this book not only needed a clear theoretical framework but methodological guidance.

Given this serious oversight, Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors make some assertions which suggest a superficial knowledge of the ‘liberal state’. Boafo Arthur finds ‘the wholesale marginalisation of the state in the management of the market’ (p. 17) baffling and wrong. In reality, there has never been ‘wholesale marginalisation’ of the liberal state, but rather a selective intervention in the interest of the market. Second, the ‘liberal state’ seems to be conflated with a constitutional government. With respect to Ghana, the liberal state is merely distinguished from the praetorian dictatorships which ruled the country at one point; so the First Republic under Kwame Nkrumah is a liberal state while Rawlings’ PNDC is not.

However, the issues are more complex than this. Boafo Arthur correctly points out that the Rawlings PNDC government used ‘draconian’ methods to implement liberal economic policies, and in the process, suppressed ‘the fundamental liberties of the people’ (p. 7). Yet the ‘international community and donor agencies ignored them because the PNDC was implementing to the letter the Bretton Woods-inspired economic management package’ (p.236). To explain away this monumental contradiction and two-facedness of the international community is to skirt the responsibility of asking a central question of this book: why did the Ghanaian liberal state wait until 1993 to emerge?

Answering this question would have thrown into relief a gamut of dynamics – class, new imperialism and the power of liberal discourse – which would have given Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors a pause before jumping on the liberal bandwagon. Similarly, the unrealistic expectations of the liberal state and criticisms of what is misunderstood as transgressions of its doctrines could have been avoided. For example, Boafo Arthur expects the liberal state to ensure ‘the creation of material wealth that will be for the good of the whole society’ (p. 5), and sees inequities as a dilution of the ‘sacrosanct values inherent in liberalism’ (p.12).

Ninsin argues that socioeconomic inequality ‘leaves liberal democracy a distant pedigree of its classical form’ (p.103), and advocates the intervention of the liberal state in the market to redistribute wealth. Surely, they are mistaken. While I am sympathetic to Ninsin’s concerns, he cannot remain in the liberal state straitjacket and simultaneously make these demands. Despite these limita-
tions, the book is a handy and valuable source of information on the Ghanaian state in this era of global neo-liberalism.


Sidney Bunting was the privileged child of successful, conscientious Methodist parents. Throughout his childhood they rubbed shoulders with the literally great and good the most distinguished of whom was W.E. Gladstone. It was a home dominated by good works and high culture. Sidney, a clever and musical boy, was expensively educated at St. Pauls School and Magdalen College Oxford. By late 19th century standards his background was liberal even radical.

Like many of his class, the young Sidney was an enthusiast for liberal empire if that is not entirely oxymoronic. Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War he sailed for the Cape and volunteered to fight. After the Peace of Vereeniging he stayed on in South Africa where some of his ancestors had established mission stations in the early 19th century and where there remained a family-owned estate. As he had begun to practise as a solicitor in London before the war, he recommenced his legal career in Johannesburg. He conformed to the expectations of a white professional man in that rich, rough mining town. He joined racially segregated clubs and mixed with the right, white people. While there is no real attempt here to explain this, from the end of the first decade of the 20th century he began to sympathise with the plight of labour, albeit white labour; one suspects that this owed something to the social conscience which surrounded him in childhood. He threw in his lot with the Labour Party, a *soi disant* socialist organisation which perversely preached job and pay discrimination.

The imminent outbreak of war appears to have prodded him leftwards. He took an increasingly unpopular anti-war stand and this brought him into contact with activists like Philip Roux. The author tells us virtually nothing about the emotional and intellectual navigation which took Bunting from a South African own-brand racialist *faux* socialism towards the real thing. But by 1915 he was using the language of the far left, linking up with local activists and beginning to argue that the emancipation of the South African working class required an immediate ending to discriminatory measures such as pass laws, residential discrimination and oppressive labour contracts; he was arguing that the South African workers of all colours were oppressed and must fight that oppression together. He began to work with, and not just condescendingly for, African workers. And by 1915 he is clearly reading Marx and regarding that canon as more than merely instructive.

Revolutionary ideas and an identification with the struggles of black people began to isolate him from many of his old friends, from many of the organised white working class and importantly from the state. He began to be harassed – dogged by detectives and not infrequently taken to court and even imprisoned. The inspiration of the Russian revolution and the Comintern’s direction led to a merger of South Africa’s few and small far left organisations and Bunting became a founder member of the Communist Party of South Africa in October 1920. In the following 16 years of his life he and his wife were to be deeply

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411404
involved with the CPSA, an involvement that involved visiting Weimar Germany and then Moscow for Comintern meetings. But prominent as he was, the last part of his life was spent unrewardingly running uphill. What had been in legal terms for whites at least a relatively liberal state which had tended to tolerate radicals as cranks rather than subversives became increasingly coercive with the reforms introduced by Oswald Pirow; it became more and more dangerous to participate in radical multi-racial politics. But even more damaging was the self-indulgent fraternal infighting which hamstrung radical opposition in the inter-war period; that infighting could descend to the worst depths of personal defamation, racist slander and cruel exclusions. Bunting was a victim of this and although the Party staged a show funeral, a ‘Red Funeral’, for him, those who professed grief at his graveside included many who had stabbed him in the back.

Sidney Bunting was a fascinating man but much of what made him into a figure straight out of an Ibsen play remains unexplained and even un-interrogated in this biography. There is far too much stodgy and frankly uninteresting detail in the first 60 pages of this book and far too little of the kinds of exploration of a life that one expects from a biographer. Each of the step-changes in his life, and they were huge, remains a mystery; for example was Philip Roux, Eddie Roux’s remarkable father, his mentor? When did Bunting first encounter Marx’s writing? How important to his intellectual development was his wife, Becky Notlewitz a refugee from Tsarist anti-Semitism who had spent time in London’s Whitechapel, a radical hot-spot, before embarking for South Africa in 1914 where she joined the International Socialist League? And what should we make of a man, a passionate advocate of labour struggle, who maintained an active paid involvement as a director of the family estate in Natal, which was clearly NOT a workers’ paradise, until as late as 1923 and continued to bank dividends from that concern until his death? And above all why does the book end so abruptly with his death? There is no attempt to evaluate Bunting’s longer-term contribution to the evolution of not only the CPSA but also the ANC and given the author’s earlier scholarship, this is a real loss.


The starting point and the raison d’etre for ‘Women in African Parliaments’ is the dramatic increase in the percentage of women elected to national parliaments in the past decade. Its opening paragraph details the Rwandan election of 2003 which resulted in a national legislature which was 48.8% female, and meant that Rwanda replaced Sweden as the country with the highest level of female political representation globally. Anyone who is familiar with the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) listing of the percentage of women in parliaments could not but be aware of the shift that has taken place in its rankings. While internationally the percentage of women in parliaments has increased, some of the most dramatic changes have been in the global South, with many states in Latin America, Asia and Africa moving ahead of ‘old’ democracies. This appears more remarkable in the case of Africa, given the ‘development failure’ of the region and its overall declining level of human development. It is in the context of these changes that this book is

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411578
particularly timely. The editors have drawn together some significant original research on the topic and the core of the book is six case study chapters each dealing with an African state: Mozambique; South Africa; Namibia; Uganda; Rwanda; and Senegal. With the exception of Senegal that had a relatively peaceful political transition, the states covered have all come through political transitions after prolonged periods of violent conflict. As a result of this choice, the chapters reflect a key strand of experience that was part of the wave of democratisation in Africa in the 1990s and also the gendered aspects of that experience.

The opening chapter sets up a framework to analyse women’s political engagement in the case study states that has a universalist quality, and could be equally applicable to the democracies in the global North. In dealing specifically with Africa it synthesises the institutional and social movement factors that have impacted on the election of women candidates, and assesses the impact the election of women has had on institutional culture, on legislation, and on civil society, the later primarily in the form of the women’s movement. The case study chapters that follow, with minor deviations, adhere to the structural framework provided in the opening chapter covering a brief history of women in the respective state, the path to political office, the impact of women in parliament and the future direction of women’s political engagement. As a result of this discipline the book facilitates both a detailed examination of the individual states and a comparison between them.

In the detail of the case studies a diverse and complex picture of women’s political engagement emerges. With regard to Uganda, Aili Mari Tripp comments that formerly the focus has been on ‘how women have sought to increase their political representation’ and that less ‘has been said of the motivations and objectives of states in adopting such policies’. It is this complex relationship between the goals of women’s activism and the goals of existing political elites, set within the framework of the states’ relationship with the international system and its policy norms, and the pressure that can be put on reconstructing and aid dependent states that is explicitly or implicitly dealt with in the individual chapters. The picture that is built up, while it may have points of similarity with other contexts, is very far removed from the idealised ‘western’ model of women’s political advancement and engagement with parliaments. The concluding chapter returns to a discussion of the feminist concerns alluded to in the opening chapter, asking the question how can women’s representation advance the agenda of gender equality. It presents ‘weak’ versus ‘strong’ conceptualisations of participation, representation and gender equality outcomes – arguing predictably in favour of focusing on strong definitions. Its main strength lies in its application of these definitions to Africa and to the particular circumstances of the case study countries.

‘Women in African Parliaments’ fills a gap in the literature. Without directly addressing the issue it also raises the question of the tensions that exist in this form of analysis between using a common, internationally applicable model, with the inevitable problems of ‘Western’ bias, and examining the particular patterns of women’s political engagement that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. How far can models drawn from western experience aid an understanding of African women’s problematic engagement with the state. In the substantive chapters, the complexity of this relationship is fully dealt with providing a basis for future research and debate. Overall a very welcome, interesting and readable book.

In The Sun By Night, the Ghanaian writer Benjamin Kwakye, one of the most accomplished of a new generation of African novelists, has produced possibly the most important Ghanaian novel since those of Ayi Kwei Armah, establishing Kwakye as a premier African literary voice. Kwakye, born in Accra, is a recipient of the 2000 Afrique Newsmagazine W.E.B. DuBois Award for Literature and his first novel, The Clothes of Nakedness, received the 1999 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book (Africa Region) and was adapted for radio as a BBC play of the Week.

Kwakye’s latest offering, which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2006, is an artistic, deep and thorough treatise of the issues facing post-colonial Ghana. The novel takes the form of a court trial, reported by an enterprising and courageous journalist, in which a wealthy businessman and former politician, Koo Manu, stands accused of the murder of an Accra prostitute named Akwele. The trial merely serves as a window that opens out onto a variety of issues in post-colonial Ghana and Africa as a whole that African novelists have long been concerned with: the inequalities between rich and poor; the post independence malaise; the struggle between tradition and modernity; the causes and consequences of prostitution; the relationship between father and son; the role and position of women; the differences between generations; the insensitivity and corruption of political and economic elites; marriage, love and polygamy. Like Armah’s The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Kwakye’s novel provides a very thorough exposure of corruption in various sectors of the Ghanaian state. Whereas Armah dealt with the national liberation period and the rise and fall of Kwame Nkrumah, Kwakye’s novel evolves against the background of political events from the late 1960s (e.g. the period of civilian rule led by Dr. Kobi Abrefa Busia) through to the overthrow of Hilla Liman in the early 1980s in a coup led by Jerry Rawlings.

The novel’s title as well as the headings of the three books within it alert the reader to the possibility that Kwakye intends to explore a complex yet ultimately very bizarre set of circumstances. Apart from the heading of the first book, The Abused Road, these are all suggestive of the paradoxical or even apocalyptic: The Sun by Night, The Eclipse of the Mother and The Rain of Snow. The novel itself, suggests tremendous confusion, upheaval, disaster and despair, but ultimately there is the possibility and hope of better things to come. The journalist’s reporting of the trial provides an enveloping narrative that links together the other threads of the story woven around the main participants or witnesses in the drama. The journalist in this story is rather like Ikem Isodi (in Achebe’s Anthills of the Savannah), in that he is honest and courageous and is not afraid to speak the truth and criticise an immoral and brutal regime regardless of the consequences. Like many writers in Africa before him, he is arrested, beaten and imprisoned.

The Sun By Night is an insightful story in many ways, providing important social commentary. Kwakye explores the social and psychological causes for the bizarre behaviour of most of the characters in the novel and he is not afraid to tackle the important issue of polygamy from both female and male points of view. Kwakye also includes a very thorough exploration of the causes, nature and consequences of prostitution. In this regard, the conversation between Kubi, disguised as Kwamena, and the intelligent prostitute Ama Badu is quite revealing. Al-
though Kwamena depends on prostitutes for the satisfaction of some of his deepest needs he decides to adopt a high moral tone and to castigate the prostitute for doing something for a living that is demonstrably wrong. Kwakye’s novel shows however that the vast majority are forced into prostitution by poverty, lack of opportunity, or by unscrupulous relations or acquaintances. The novel also consistently reflects on the importance of tradition in Ghana, presenting traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices, portraying ceremonies in which the ancestors and the traditional gods are invoked and depicting traditional protocol and traditional beliefs in attitudes towards questions of polygamy and marriage. Adherence to traditional practices is also seen in the celebration of Koo Manu’s betrothal and wedding and in the christening of his first child.

This ambitious and highly imaginative novel offers a compelling revelation of post-colonial concerns. Apart from the manipulation of language and narrative technique, Kwakye evokes some incredibly realistic scenes such as in his presentation of police and military brutality, in the church scenes, and in the sexual encounters between various people. Around the framework of the trial Kwakye brilliantly weaves together events, settings and characterisations in this highly readable and engaging book.


Almost all readers of ROAPE will be regular visitors to the Pambazuka News website. This book – one of a series – takes articles from that web resource (and a few from other places) and organises them around trade-related issues. Consequently, the book reads as a series of short essays in the intellectual tradition of Pambazuka: anti-imperialist and supportive of social movement politics in Africa.

First, a comment on the contributions. These are highly variable in their originality, quality, and focus. Some are general critiques of neo-liberalism which do not add a great deal. Thus, arguments about imposed liberalisation, the limits of primary commodity exporting, neglect of small-scale trade, and the predations of transnationals are all expressed in this book. But, a good deal of these arguments are made in brief and generalised terms, rendering some chapters as rehearsals of familiar points. This is especially the case on the section on Women and Trade.

The stronger chapters are based on some fresh empirical material, all of which highlights the deleterious nature of Africa’s trading relations in the present-day – what Henning Melber rightly calls ‘predatory capitalism’ in his engaging chapter. Patrick Bond presents us with an account of the ‘ghost on the coast’, the Coega industrial zone in South Africa (a neo-liberal white elephant in the making?) which should depress even readers most cynical of the New South Africa. There are large and important issues behind Bond’s account (and reflected in other chapters) which desperately need

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411594
more expansive treatment, most obviously the near-complete subordination of (parts of) African states to private business, and the bullish way in which the transnational corporate class asserts the conditions under which it is prepared to invest. In a world where violence against organised labour is increasing and labour action is seen as in some sense ‘old fashioned’, it is important to remember how threats of ‘capital strike’ (disinvestment, withdrawal of investment, the running down of capital) are part of the mainstream politics of ‘economic openness’.

But, of course, investment is not trade – although both are increasingly controlled by a small number of transnationals that are ever more adept at investing and trading within their own structures. My point here is that the contributions tend to bleed into other areas in ways that lead the reader to lose the focus on trade, and why trade matters especially in the context of new forms of regulation, liberalisation, and commercial norm setting. If there is a certain amount of conceptual fuzziness, one might balance this against the book’s desire to bring the issues to a broad readership in accessible ways. This the book does, but then the website does it far better and at less cost for the reader.

Which brings me to an important question: who is the book for? There is some scope for it to be adopted in development and African politics courses. Some chapters offer short focussed critiques of, say, Firestone’s disgraceful treatment of workers in Liberia, but it is not an ‘academic’ book.

The title of the book is striking, suggesting an association between the Atlantic slave trade and contemporary trading relations in Africa. Clearly, the intellectual traditions of the Left have relied on analogies of slavery for various anti-imperialism campaigns: the various Jubilee organisations have spoken about debt bondage and made explicit comparisons with the anti-debt and anti-slavery campaigns (in Britain based on a curious mix of internationalism and national esteem). But, beyond the rhetorical power of slavery analogies, what are the associations that one can make?

One is that, since the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, Africa has been locked into and subordinated by a capitalist global political economy dominated by the states and capitals of the West. Quite right, and worth repeating despite its self-evident truth until this state of affairs is no longer with us. But, contemporary capitalism bears little relationship to the Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century. So, what resonance does slavery have in the contemporary world?

Although outside the remit of this book, it is vital to note that slavery has hardly gone away; far from it. More complex forms of slavery – very often based in trafficking, domestic labour, and violence against women – are at the heart of the highly ideologised phenomenon that is called ‘globalisation’. Like primitive accumulation, the ‘freedom’ that Marx used ironically to explain proletarianisation is a tendency within capitalist social relations rather than a stage or enabling event and therefore bonded and enslaved labour are likely to persist for as long as capitalism itself. But, it is important to maintain a distinction between the social relations of slavery and wage labour. The chapter by Robtel Pailey, titled ‘Slavery Ain’t Dead’, describes the conditions of work in the now-infamous Liberia Firestone rubber plantation. What he goes on to describe, though, is the violence and exploitation of the waged workers who buckle under extreme collection quotas and live in squalor. Dubbing this slavery is normatively attractive, but politically misleading. These predations are intrinsic to wage-labour capitalism; calling them slavery serves to distract us from a
real facet or tendency within capitalism – the ever-present possibility of working people more or less rapidly to death where socio-economic conditions allow. This happened during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, it is present in the sweatshops that are contracted to produce cheap goods in minimal time to meet the 24-hour quotas and demands of international trading transnationals, and it can be found in Liberia and doubtless many other places in Africa.

The point of this short aside is simply that it is not clear in the book what the history of the Atlantic slave trade teaches us apart from the apparent historical continuities of deleterious Western interventions in Africa. What we have is a vague sense of Western responsibility for poverty and exploitation in Africa and some very general references to justice and reparations. On the issue of justice, there is surprisingly little in the book on movements for social justice in Africa in relation to trade, and not even a sketching of alternative and progressive trading relations. Charles Abugre’s characteristically sharp introduction does set out an agenda for Africa’s social movements – it would have been fantastic if these had been handed out to contributors as part of their remit in contributing to the book.


Each of these books provides valuable empirical information on their subjects, (respectively, domestic African business relations with states and experiments with workplace democracy) which will be of relevance to many researchers. Both are, however, weakened by their narrow focus on conceptual frameworks of business and labour relations which have little practical reality in the societies under examination.

Scott Taylor investigates an important and neglected question, namely, why is the indigenous business community so lacking in political influence in its relations with African states? It is unquestionably true that most African governments are unsupportive of their domestic business constituencies, even after the implementation of economic liberalisation programmes ostensibly designed to promote business interests and a market-driven approach to economic development. Taylor investigates this question through well researched case studies on Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Taylor claims that ‘Two decades of comparative research clearly demonstrates the potential benefits of business-state coalitions in the developing world.’ (p.2) Little evidence exists, however, that such coalitions have led to economic growth or development in Africa. Indeed, the evidence provided here suggests that temporarily strong state-business relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe in the early 1990s resulted in the implementa-
tion of liberalisation programmes that presaged significant economic decline. Despite being initially supported by domestic businesses, economic liberalisation proved in practice to be against their interests; exposed to the full force of international competition, many were unable to compete and were forced to close down and/or cut jobs. Taylor blames such problems on the faulty implementation of liberalisation, for which states are responsible. He largely disregards the role of donor conditionality and the international financial institutions for forcing liberalisation on Zambia (although, admittedly, not Zimbabwe). Although he admits that actual liberalisation is not always beneficial, Taylor assumes that ‘a strong dose of neo-liberal orthodoxy ... should be considered a vital component of a late-late developing state in an overwhelmingly capitalist global environment’ (p. 220).

Taylor’s binary analysis of ‘strong’ states and weak domestic business interests neglects the role of both international business and the international financial institutions. Although Taylor acknowledges that ‘the prevailing international environment further disadvantages African business actors …’ (p.208), this is not central to the case studies. The evidence presented suggests, however, that domestic business is marginal because it plays a negligible role in economic development, job creation and government revenue, relative to these international actors. Taylor admits as much with regard to Zambia: ‘The specific needs of the independent business community are not widely sympathized with or shared by the general populace’ (p.89). In such a context, it is rational for state actors to disregard domestic business, which has yet to prove that it can significantly contribute to Africa’s development.

Taylor fails to offer a single example of effective pro-reform state relations with an indigenous African business community; Zimbabwe and South Africa are the partial exceptions which prove this rule. In each, Taylor suggests that it was white-dominated business which provided the basis for strong post-colonial state-business relations (p. 29). This is an ongoing process in South Africa, but the Zimbabwean honeymoon came to a halt with economic decline in the mid-1990s and Mugabe’s subsequent populist turn. South Africa’s current strong business-state coalition may be, Taylor admits, prone to similar political pressures if it fails to benefit the wider African population.

More generally, Taylor fails to prove his claim that ‘... the lack of business-state cooperation was a significant factor in problems such as the rapid de-industrialization, the failure to advance commercial agricultural potential, and rising unemployment across all economic sectors that accelerated in the 1990’ (p.5). It could certainly be argued that the lack of such cooperation, reflecting as it does the marginality of domestic business, was/is symptomatic of a wider malaise in which economic liberalisation was implemented in the interests of narrow national elites and their cooperating partners in international business and donor institutions, but it can hardly be said to be a major cause of such problems.

Kester examines the equally elusive concept of workplace democracy in Africa. It reflects two decades of research in ten countries and, in its case studies, provides a wealth of useful detail regarding experiments in worker participation in company decision-making that will help address the relative dearth of post-colonial labour studies at the workplace level. Of significant importance are the opinion surveys of workers and trade union representatives, which reflect a convincingly bleak picture of the generalised decline in working conditions and living standards since the 1970s.
However, Kester’s longitudinal approach is also his weakness – as the author makes clear, experiments in worker participation were introduced in the period of state-led economic nationalism in the 1970s, and have virtually disappeared since the late 1980s. Although this is therefore largely a historical study of such projects, the presentation of data does not generally follow a historical structure in the individual country case studies. Insufficient contextualisation is provided of the widely differing post-colonial political and economic frameworks within which the many examples of worker participation occurred.

The study also suffers from a limited analysis of state motivations for introducing worker participation schemes. Kester contrasts the first decade after independence (c.1960-70), during which ‘progressive’ governments (Zambia, for example) planned worker consultation (drawing on Western European and/or Yugoslav models) based on ‘well-intended lofty ideals of co-operation’, with a period of implementation during which ‘the corporatist complex started to more and more confiscate all power and wealth, and the trade unions, who might have been willing to assume government-friendly roles in the beginning, became prisoners of increasingly authoritarian regimes’ (pp. 6-7) Insufficient explanation is offered for why such a shift occurred, and little evidence is provided indicating why such a positive view should be adopted regarding the motivations of rulers, nor why their good intentions were overturned. Given the lack of positive outcomes of worker participation in the cases under examination, an alternative reading of the evidence presented is that post-colonial governments, concerned with the disruptive power of organised labour, sought to introduce state-dominated corporatism to contain unrest and the potential political threat of independent trade unionism. It is evident that in the overwhelming majority of cases in which workers’ committees or councils were introduced, workers did not regard them as having improved labour relations, with most seeking to defend their independent trade union representation.

In the 1990s, liberalisation effectively dismantled such participatory structures (again, a symptom of a wider malaise rather than its cause). In a context of economic decline, effective worker representation has declined, with correlative declines in wages, living standards and levels of employment. Whilst Kester is right to argue for improved worker rights and representation, there is little to indicate that the types of workplace democracy examined here are relevant to addressing these problems in practice.
On one side of this analysis, we have an institution slowly pushing along global efforts towards agreement on the principles of implementing justice across frontiers; on the other, perhaps the most notorious of Africa’s violent cults, a local world seemingly of unreason, cruelty, and no justice at all except excessive vengeance. The International Criminal Court was finally established after decades of hesitant steps towards ‘universal jurisdiction’ following the second world war. Its status was achieved through collaborative agreements between states who signed up to the 1998 Rome Statute, though a number of signatories have not yet ratified the law.

The United States, and the Sudan, are among these. Theoretically the ICC has wider, and more flexible, powers than the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague set up by the Security Council in 1993, which dealt with former Yugoslavia and then established the ICT for Rwanda in Arusha (whose terms of reference are limited to events of 1994, and therefore can appear, in retrospect, one-sided). The first case to be referred to the ICC, in 2004, was that of the leadership of Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. This was prompted by recent massacres attributed to them of displaced people, including women and children – despite efforts towards a ceasefire. The first warrants were issued the following year for the arrest of Joseph Kony and a number of his colleagues.

Tim Allen considers this remarkable first venture of the ICC as a test case for the whole principle it is supposed to embody. It is quite clear that the political clout of the richer world has, so far, been able to keep the ICC at bay – it does seem likely that even if the USA did accept the authority of the court, there would be many roundabout ways in which US personnel could be kept out of its clutches. The Ugandan case is easier prey. But because this is a poor country, is the prospect of international criminal trials for its citizens necessarily a simpler matter, whether in its moral or practical complications?

Allen draws on his earlier years of teaching and research in northern Uganda and the southern Sudan, supplemented by recent consultancies, to illustrate how many-layered these complications are. While himself basically in favour of ICC intervention, he shows that a range of well considered views can be found among Ugandans of all backgrounds. Some argue they have a right to see justice and punishment for the LRA leaders, while others point out that punitive measures smack of ‘revenge’ and might provoke retaliation. These interviewees explained to Allen that real peace can only be found when there is reconciliation. For example, the Ugandan government passed an Amnesty Act in 1999 which encourages, and even rewards, former rebels who turn themselves in. At a local, cultural and religious level, there are traditional ceremonies among the Acholi and Madi through which hostile parties can be brought together, and offences forgiven. Some are pointing out that the entry of the ICC into the complex situation of northern Uganda, with its sharp identifi-
cation of key criminals, is making all modes of amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation more difficult.

Allen touches on the longer history of the LRA and its roots in Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. He also sketches the links between the persisting strength of the LRA and the ups and downs of regional civil wars - specifically the role played by the Sudanese government of Omer el Beshir in supporting it (while the Ugandan regime was lending help to the SPLA). It is very interesting that the Sudan itself has recently gained a high profile vis-à-vis the ICC. In 2005 the Security Council first referred the Sudanese situation to the ICC. Accusations, and later warrants, were directed at the leadership of the Janjawid militias in Darfur and indeed some government leaders. Meanwhile, since the publication of Allen’s book, the Sudan government has been denying the right of the ICC to try their citizens – while Sudanese leaders have been playing a key role in attempting to negotiate peace (on Sudanese territory) with Kony and the LRA. The July, 2008, decision by the ICC chief prosecutor to place the name of President Beshir before the court has dramatically raised the stakes, and it is interesting that Museveni is one of the few African leaders to show reluctance in rallying to Beshir’s ‘support’.

This book, in the new African Arguments series, is quite compact and inevitably dense. It will be a demanding read for those not yet familiar with the history of Uganda/Sudan border relations. But it is not only this region of Africa, or indeed the world, which has become a space in which ordinary citizenship scarcely exists. As a case study, this is a highly revealing snapshot of an important moment in the efforts of the international community to try and confront appalling crimes in the frontiers of nation-states which do not have the judicial or political capacity to protect the lives of their own people.


Reminiscent of the euphoria that accompanied Ghana’s independence in 1957, we are again witnessing an era of optimism about Ghana’s future. A landmark transition to liberal democratic political stability and a modest economic growth have made Ghana the poster child of liberal democracy in Africa. It is in this context that the anthology of Kwame Boafo Arthur is situated. The central thrust of the book, as Boafo Arthur states, ‘is to put the liberal democratic cum neoliberal processes over the past decade in clear perspective’ (p. 1). To this end, Boafo Arthur assembled a team of seasoned Ghanaian scholars to examine the ‘liberal state’ on a variety of important topical areas: human rights, security, economic development, conflict management, political leadership, gender and politics, labour activism, and foreign policy. This is a lot of ground to cover thoroughly in a single volume, making this an ambitious project.

As is common with edited volumes, the essays vary in quality. There are chapters that are just thick empirical descriptions, without any theoretical framework. Other chapters, namely, Kwame Ninsin’s on the tension between free market and the democratic ideal of equality; Joseph Ayee’s on the comparison of the leadership qualities between Rawlings and Kufuor, Alexander Frempong’s on the liberal democratic peace, and Kwaku Tsikata’s on the gap between constitutional guarantees of human rights and the real life enjoyment of these rights, stand out for their clarity, analytical rigour, and theoretical grounding.

However, the book has some limitations. It is poorly organised: for coherence, flow

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802413582
and easy reading, the essays should have been organised into thematic parts. Similarly, the book is in need of a conclusion on what it has accomplished and what needs further investigations. As the ‘liberal state’ is both the theoretical and empirical referent of the book, one was hoping to see the essays explicitly situated in relation to the fundamental theoretical and political canons of the ‘liberal state’. Except in some few instances, they were not. This might be due to the failure of the editor to lay out the theoretical and political coordinates of the ‘liberal state’ in the introductory chapter. For the individual contributions to form a coherent whole, Boafo-Arthur needed to rigorously unpack the ‘liberal state’, both theoretically and historically. Instead, he allotted a paltry one and half pages to such a vital discussion (pp. 5-6).

The foundational theoretical and political doctrine of the liberal state, namely, the separation between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ is not problematised. Neither is the socio-historical specificity of the ‘liberal state’ addressed. The liberal state emerged in a specific socio-historical context in England, begging the question whether we can talk blithely of the emergence of a ‘liberal state’ in a different socio-historical context in Africa. Therefore, this book not only needed a clear theoretical framework but methodological guidance.

Given this serious oversight, Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors make some assertions which suggest a superficial knowledge of the ‘liberal state’. Boafo Arthur finds ‘the wholesale marginalisation of the state in the management of the market’ (p. 17) baffling and wrong. In reality, there has never been ‘wholesale marginalisation’ of the liberal state, but rather a selective intervention in the interest of the market. Second, the ‘liberal state’ seems to be conflated with a constitutional government. With respect to Ghana, the liberal state is merely distinguished from the praetorian dictatorships which ruled the country at one point; so the First Republic under Kwame Nkrumah is a liberal state while Rawlings’ PNDC is not.

However, the issues are more complex than this. Boafo Arthur correctly points out that the Rawlings PNDC government used ‘draconian’ methods to implement liberal economic policies, and in the process, suppressed ‘the fundamental liberties of the people’ (p. 7). Yet the ‘international community and donor agencies ignored them because the PNDC was implementing to the letter the Bretton Woods-inspired economic management package’ (p.236). To explain away this monumental contradiction and two-facedness of the international community is to skirt the responsibility of asking a central question of this book: why did the Ghanaian liberal state wait until 1993 to emerge?

Answering this question would have thrown into relief a gamut of dynamics – class, new imperialism and the power of liberal discourse – which would have given Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors a pause before jumping on the liberal bandwagon. Similarly, the unrealistic expectations of the liberal state and criticisms of what is misunderstood as transgressions of its doctrines could have been avoided. For example, Boafo Arthur expects the liberal state to ensure ‘the creation of material wealth that will be for the good of the whole society’ (p. 5), and sees inequities as a dilution of the ‘sacrosanct values inherent in liberalism’ (p.12).

Ninsin argues that socioeconomic inequality ‘leaves liberal democracy a distant pedigree of its classical form’ (p.103), and advocates the intervention of the liberal state in the market to redistribute wealth. Surely, they are mistaken. While I am sympathetic to Ninsin’s concerns, he cannot remain in the liberal state straitjacket and simultaneously make these demands. Despite these limita-

Sidney Bunting was the privileged child of successful, conscientious Methodist parents. Throughout his childhood they rubbed shoulders with the literally great and good the most distinguished of whom was W.E. Gladstone. It was a home dominated by good works and high culture. Sidney, a clever and musical boy, was expensively educated at St. Pauls School and Magdalen College Oxford. By late 19th century standards his background was liberal even radical.

Like many of his class, the young Sidney was an enthusiast for liberal empire if that is not entirely oxymoronic. Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War he sailed for the Cape and volunteered to fight. After the Peace of Vereeniging he stayed on in South Africa where some of his ancestors had established mission stations in the early 19th century and where there remained a family-owned estate. As he had begun to practise as a solicitor in London before the war, he recommenced his legal career in Johannesburg. He conformed to the expectations of a white professional man in that rich, rough mining town. He joined racially segregated clubs and mixed with the right, white people. While there is no real attempt here to explain this, from the end of the first decade of the 20th century he began to sympathise with the plight of labour, albeit white labour; one suspects that this owed something to the social conscience which surrounded him in childhood. He threw in his lot with the Labour Party, a *soi disant* socialist organisation which perversely preached job and pay discrimination.

The imminent outbreak of war appears to have prodded him leftwards. He took an increasingly unpopular anti-war stand and this brought him into contact with activists like Philip Roux. The author tells us virtually nothing about the emotional and intellectual navigation which took Bunting from a South African own-brand racialist *faux* socialism towards the real thing. But by 1915 he was using the language of the far left, linking up with local activists and beginning to argue that the emancipation of the South African working class required an immediate ending to discriminatory measures such as pass laws, residential discrimination and oppressive labour contracts; he was arguing that the South African workers of all colours were oppressed and must fight that oppression together. He began to work with, and not just condescendingly for, African workers. And by 1915 he is clearly reading Marx and regarding that canon as more than merely instructive.

Revolutionary ideas and an identification with the struggles of black people began to isolate him from many of his old friends, from many of the organised white working class and importantly from the state. He began to be harassed – dogged by detectives and not infrequently taken to court and even imprisoned. The inspiration of the Russian revolution and the Comintern’s direction led to a merger of South Africa’s few and small far left organisations and Bunting became a founder member of the Communist Party of South Africa in October 1920. In the following 16 years of his life he and his wife were to be deeply

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411404
involved with the CPSA, an involvement that involved visiting Weimar Germany and then Moscow for Comintern meetings. But prominent as he was, the last part of his life was spent unrewardingly running uphill. What had been in legal terms for whites at least a relatively liberal state which had tended to tolerate radicals as cranks rather than subversives became increasingly coercive with the reforms introduced by Oswald Pirow; it became more and more dangerous to participate in radical multi-racial politics. But even more damaging was the self-indulgent fraternal infighting which hamstrung radical opposition in the inter-war period; that infighting could descend to the worst depths of personal defamation, racist slander and cruel exclusions. Bunting was a victim of this and although the Party staged a show funeral, a ‘Red Funeral’, for him, those who professed grief at his graveside included many who had stabbed him in the back.

Sidney Bunting was a fascinating man but much of what made him into a figure straight out of an Ibsen play remains unexplained and even un-interrogated in this biography. There is far too much stodgy and frankly uninteresting detail in the first 60 pages of this book and far too little of the kinds of exploration of a life that one expects from a biographer. Each of the step-changes in his life, and they were huge, remains a mystery; for example was Philip Roux, Eddie Roux’s remarkable father, his mentor? When did Bunting first encounter Marx’s writing? How important to his intellectual development was his wife, Becky Notlewitz a refugee from Tsarist anti-Semitism who had spent time in London’s Whitechapel, a radical hot-spot, before embarking for South Africa in 1914 where she joined the International Socialist League? And what should we make of a man, a passionate advocate of labour struggle, who maintained an active paid involvement as a director of the family estate in Natal, which was clearly NOT a workers’ paradise, until as late as 1923 and continued to bank dividends from that concern until his death? And above all why does the book end so abruptly with his death? There is no attempt to evaluate Bunting’s longer-term contribution to the evolution of not only the CPSA but also the ANC and given the author’s earlier scholarship, this is a real loss.


The starting point and the raison d’etre for ‘Women in African Parliaments’ is the dramatic increase in the percentage of women elected to national parliaments in the past decade. Its opening paragraph details the Rwandan election of 2003 which resulted in a national legislature which was 48.8% female, and meant that Rwanda replaced Sweden as the country with the highest level of female political representation globally. Anyone who is familiar with the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) listing of the percentage of women in parliament could not but be aware of the shift that has taken place in its rankings. While internationally the percentage of women in parliaments has increased, some of the most dramatic changes have been in the global South, with many states in Latin America, Asia and Africa moving ahead of ‘old’ democracies. This appears more remarkable in the case of Africa, given the ‘development failure’ of the region and its overall declining level of human development. It is in the context of these changes that this book is
particularly timely. The editors have drawn together some significant original research on the topic and the core of the book is six case study chapters each dealing with an African state: Mozambique; South Africa; Namibia; Uganda; Rwanda; and Senegal. With the exception of Senegal that had a relatively peaceful political transition, the states covered have all come through political transitions after prolonged periods of violent conflict. As a result of this choice, the chapters reflect a key strand of experience that was part of the wave of democratisation in Africa in the 1990s and also the gendered aspects of that experience.

The opening chapter sets up a framework to analyse women’s political engagement in the case study states that has a universalist quality, and could be equally applicable to the democracies in the global North. In dealing specifically with Africa it synthesises the institutional and social movement factors that have impacted on the election of women candidates, and assesses the impact the election of women has had on institutional culture, on legislation, and on civil society, the latter primarily in the form of the women’s movement. The case study chapters that follow, with minor deviations, adhere to the structural framework provided in the opening chapter covering a brief history of women in the respective state, the path to political office, the impact of women in parliament and the future direction of women’s political engagement. As a result of this discipline the book facilitates both a detailed examination of the individual states and a comparison between them.

In the detail of the case studies a diverse and complex picture of women’s political engagement emerges. With regard to Uganda, Aili Mari Tripp comments that formerly the focus has been on ‘how women have sought to increase their political representation’ and that less ‘has been said of the motivations and objectives of states in adopting such policies’. It is this complex relationship between the goals of women’s activism and the goals of existing political elites, set within the framework of the states’ relationship with the international system and its policy norms, and the pressure that can be put on reconstructing and aid dependent states that is explicitly or implicitly dealt with in the individual chapters. The picture that is built up, while it may have points of similarity with other contexts, is very far removed from the idealised ‘western’ model of women’s political advancement and engagement with parliaments. The concluding chapter returns to a discussion of the feminist concerns alluded to in the opening chapter, asking the question how can women’s representation advance the agenda of gender equality. It presents ‘weak’ versus ‘strong’ conceptualisations of participation, representation and gender equality outcomes – arguing predictably in favour of focusing on strong definitions. Its main strength lies in its application of these definitions to Africa and to the particular circumstances of the case study countries.

‘Women in African Parliaments’ fills a gap in the literature. Without directly addressing the issue it also raises the question of the tensions that exist in this form of analysis between using a common, internationally applicable model, with the inevitable problems of ‘Western’ bias, and examining the particular patterns of women’s political engagement that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. How far can models drawn from western experience aid an understanding of African women’s problematic engagement with the state. In the substantive chapters, the complexity of this relationship is fully dealt with providing a basis for future research and debate. Overall a very welcome, interesting and readable book.
In *The Sun By Night*, the Ghanaian writer Benjamin Kwakye, one of the most accomplished of a new generation of African novelists, has produced possibly the most important Ghanaian novel since those of Ayi Kwei Armah, establishing Kwakye as a premier African literary voice. Kwakye, born in Accra, is a recipient of the 2000 Afrique Newsmagazine W.E.B. DuBois Award for Literature and his first novel, *The Clothes of Nakedness*, received the 1999 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book (Africa Region) and was adapted for radio as a BBC play of the Week.

Kwakye's latest offering, which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2006, is an artistic, deep and thorough treatise of the issues facing post-colonial Ghana. The novel takes the form of a court trial, reported by an enterprising and courageous journalist, in which a wealthy businessman and former politician, Koo Manu, stands accused of the murder of an Accra prostitute named Akwele. The trial merely serves as a window that opens out onto a variety of issues in post-independence Ghana and Africa as a whole that African novelists have long been concerned with: the inequalities between rich and poor; the post independence malaise; the struggle between tradition and modernity; the causes and consequences of prostitution; the relationship between father and son; the role and position of women; the differences between generations; the insensitivity and corruption of political and economic elites; marriage, love and polygamy. Like Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Kwakye’s novel provides a very thorough exposure of corruption in various sectors of the Ghanaian state. Whereas Armah dealt with the national liberation period and the rise and fall of Kwame Nkrumah, Kwakye’s novel evolves against the background of political events from the late 1960s (e.g. the period of civilian rule led by Dr. Kobi Abrefa Busia) through to the overthrow of Hilla Liman in the early 1980s in a coup led by Jerry Rawlings.

The novel’s title as well as the headings of the three books within it alert the reader to the possibility that Kwakye intends to explore a complex yet ultimately very bizarre set of circumstances. Apart from the heading of the first book, *The Abused Road*, these are all suggestive of the paradoxical or even apocalyptic: *The Sun by Night*, *The Eclipse of the Mother* and *The Rain of Snow*. The novel itself, suggests tremendous confusion, upheaval, disaster and despair, but ultimately there is the possibility and hope of better things to come. The journalist's reporting of the trial provides an enveloping narrative that links together the other threads of the story woven around the main participants or witnesses in the drama. The journalist in this story is rather like Ikem Isodi (in Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah*), in that he is honest and courageous and is not afraid to speak the truth and criticise an immoral and brutal regime regardless of the consequences. Like many writers in Africa before him, he is arrested, beaten and imprisoned.

*The Sun By Night* is an insightful story in many ways, providing important social commentary. Kwakye explores the social and psychological causes for the bizarre behaviour of most of the characters in the novel and he is not afraid to tackle the important issue of polygamy from both female and male points of view. Kwakye also includes a very thorough exploration of the causes, nature and consequences of prostitution. In this regard, the conversation between Kubi, disguised as Kwamena, and the intelligent prostitute Ama Badu is quite revealing. Al-
though Kwamena depends on prostitutes for the satisfaction of some of his deepest needs he decides to adopt a high moral tone and to castigate the prostitute for doing something for a living that is demonstrably wrong. Kwakye’s novel shows however that the vast majority are forced into prostitution by poverty, lack of opportunity, or by unscrupulous relations or acquaintances. The novel also consistently reflects on the importance of tradition in Ghana, presenting traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices, portraying ceremonies in which the ancestors and the traditional gods are invoked and depicting traditional protocol and traditional beliefs in attitudes towards questions of polygamy and marriage. Adherence to traditional practices is also seen in the celebration of Koo Manu’s betrothal and wedding and in the christening of his first child.

This ambitious and highly imaginative novel offers a compelling revelation of post-colonial concerns. Apart from the manipulation of language and narrative technique, Kwakye evokes some incredibly realistic scenes such as in his presentation of police and military brutality, in the church scenes, and in the sexual encounters between various people. Around the framework of the trial Kwakye brilliantly weaves together events, settings and characterisations in this highly readable and engaging book.


Almost all readers of ROAPE will be regular visitors to the Pambazuka News website. This book – one of a series – takes articles from that web resource (and a few from other places) and organises them around trade-related issues. Consequently, the book reads as a series of short essays in the intellectual tradition of Pambazuka: anti-imperialist and supportive of social movement politics in Africa.

First, a comment on the contributions. These are highly variable in their originality, quality, and focus. Some are general critiques of neo-liberalism which do not add a great deal. Thus, arguments about imposed liberalisation, the limits of primary commodity exporting, neglect of small-scale trade, and the predations of transnationals are all expressed in this book. But, a good deal of these arguments are made in brief and generalised terms, rendering some chapters as rehearsals of familiar points. This is especially the case on the section on Women and Trade.

The stronger chapters are based on some fresh empirical material, all of which highlights the deleterious nature of Africa’s trading relations in the present-day – what Henning Melber rightly calls ‘predatory capitalism’ in his engaging chapter. Patrick Bond presents us with an account of the ‘ghost on the coast’, the Coega industrial zone in South Africa (a neo-liberal white elephant in the making?) which should depress even readers most cynical of the New South Africa. There are large and important issues behind Bond’s account (and reflected in other chapters) which desperately need

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411594
more expansive treatment, most obviously the near-complete subordination of (parts of) African states to private business, and the bullish way in which the transnational corporate class asserts the conditions under which it is prepared to invest. In a world where violence against organised labour is increasing and labour action is seen as in some sense ‘old fashioned’, it is important to remember how threats of ‘capital strike’ (disinvestment, withdrawal of investment, the running down of capital) are part of the mainstream politics of ‘economic openness’.

But, of course, investment is not trade – although both are increasingly controlled by a small number of transnationals that are ever more adept at investing and trading within their own structures. My point here is that the contributions tend to bleed into other areas in ways that lead the reader to lose the focus on trade, and why trade matters especially in the context of new forms of regulation, liberalisation, and commercial norm setting. If there is a certain amount of conceptual fuzziness, one might balance this against the book’s desire to bring the issues to a broad readership in accessible ways. This the book does, but then the website does it far better and at less cost for the reader.

Which brings me to an important question: who is the book for? There is some scope for it to be adopted in development and African politics courses. Some chapters offer short focussed critiques of, say, Firestone’s disgraceful treatment of workers in Liberia, but it is not an ‘academic’ book.

The title of the book is striking, suggesting an association between the Atlantic slave trade and contemporary trading relations in Africa. Clearly, the intellectual traditions of the Left have relied on analogies of slavery for various anti-imperialism campaigns: the various Jubilee organisations have spoken about debt bondage and made explicit comparisons with the anti-debt and anti-slavery campaigns (in Britain based on a curious mix of internationalism and national esteem). But, beyond the rhetorical power of slavery analogies, what are the associations that one can make?

One is that, since the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, Africa has been locked into and subordinated by a capitalist global political economy dominated by the states and capitals of the West. Quite right, and worth repeating despite its self-evident truth until this state of affairs is no longer with us. But, contemporary capitalism bears little relationship to the Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century. So, what resonance does slavery have in the contemporary world?

Although outside the remit of this book, it is vital to note that slavery has hardly gone away; far from it. More complex forms of slavery – very often based in trafficking, domestic labour, and violence against women – are at the heart of the highly ideologised phenomenon that is called ‘globalisation’. Like primitive accumulation, the ‘freedom’ that Marx used ironically to explain proletarianisation is a tendency within capitalist social relations rather than a stage or enabling event and therefore bonded and enslaved labour are likely to persist for as long as capitalism itself. But, it is important to maintain a distinction between the social relations of slavery and wage labour. The chapter by Robtel Pailey, titled ‘Slavery Ain’t Dead’, describes the conditions of work in the now-infamous Liberia Firestone rubber plantation. What he goes on to describe, though, is the violence and exploitation of the waged workers who buckle under extreme collection quotas and live in squalor. Dubbing this slavery is normatively attractive, but politically misleading. These predations are intrinsic to wage-labour capitalism; calling them slavery serves to distract us from a
real facet or tendency within capitalism – the ever-present possibility of working people more or less rapidly to death where socio-economic conditions allow. This happened during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, it is present in the sweatshops that are contracted to produce cheap goods in minimal time to meet the 24-hour quotas and demands of international trading transnationals, and it can be found in Liberia and doubtless many other places in Africa.

The point of this short aside is simply that it is not clear in the book what the history of the Atlantic slave trade teaches us apart from the apparent historical continuities of deleterious Western interventions in Africa. What we have is a vague sense of Western responsibility for poverty and exploitation in Africa and some very general references to justice and reparations. On the issue of justice, there is surprisingly little in the book on movements for social justice in Africa in relation to trade, and not even a sketching of alternative and progressive trading relations. Charles Abugre’s characteristically sharp introduction does set out an agenda for Africa’s social movements – it would have been fantastic if these had been handed out to contributors as part of their remit in contributing to the book.

Each of these books provides valuable empirical information on their subjects, (respectively, domestic African business relations with states and experiments with workplace democracy) which will be of relevance to many researchers. Both are, however, weakened by their narrow focus on conceptual frameworks of business and labour relations which have little practical reality in the societies under examination.

Scott Taylor investigates an important and neglected question, namely, why is the indigenous business community so lacking in political influence in its relations with African states? It is unquestionably true that most African governments are unsupportive of their domestic business constituencies, even after the implementation of economic liberalisation programmes ostensibly designed to promote business interests and a market-driven approach to economic development. Taylor investigates this question through well researched case studies on Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Taylor claims that ‘Two decades of comparative research clearly demonstrates the potential benefits of business-state coalitions in the developing world.’ (p.2) Little evidence exists, however, that such coalitions have led to economic growth or development in Africa. Indeed, the evidence provided here suggests that temporarily strong state-business relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe in the early 1990s resulted in the implementa-
tion of liberalisation programmes that presaged significant economic decline. Despite being initially supported by domestic businesses, economic liberalisation proved in practice to be against their interests; exposed to the full force of international competition, many were unable to compete and were forced to close down and/or cut jobs. Taylor blames such problems on the faulty implementation of liberalisation, for which states are responsible. He largely disregards the role of donor conditionality and the international financial institutions for forcing liberalisation on Zambia (although, admittedly, not Zimbabwe). Although he admits that actual liberalisation is not always beneficial, Taylor assumes that ‘a strong dose of neo-liberal orthodoxy ... should be considered a vital component of a late-late developing state in an overwhelmingly capitalist global environment’ (p. 220).

Taylor’s binary analysis of ‘strong’ states and weak domestic business interests neglects the role of both international business and the international financial institutions. Although Taylor acknowledges that ‘the prevailing international environment further disadvantages African business actors ...’ (p.208), this is not central to the case studies. The evidence presented suggests, however, that domestic business is marginal because it plays a negligible role in economic development, job creation and government revenue, relative to these international actors. Taylor admits as much with regard to Zambia: ‘The specific needs of the independent business community are not widely sympathized with or shared by the general populace’ (p.89). In such a context, it is rational for state actors to disregard domestic business, which has yet to prove that it can significantly contribute to Africa’s development.

Taylor fails to offer a single example of effective pro-reform state relations with an indigenous African business community; Zimbabwe and South Africa are the partial exceptions which prove this rule. In each, Taylor suggests that it was white-dominated business which provided the basis for strong post-colonial state-business relations (p. 29). This is an ongoing process in South Africa, but the Zimbabwean honeymoon came to a halt with economic decline in the mid-1990s and Mugabe’s subsequent populist turn. South Africa’s current strong business-state coalition may be, Taylor admits, prone to similar political pressures if it fails to benefit the wider African population.

More generally, Taylor fails to prove his claim that ‘... the lack of business-state cooperation was a significant factor in problems such as the rapid de-industrialization, the failure to advance commercial agricultural potential, and rising unemployment across all economic sectors that accelerated in the 1990’ (p.5). It could certainly be argued that the lack of such cooperation, reflecting as it does the marginality of domestic business, was/is symptomatic of a wider malaise in which economic liberalisation was implemented in the interests of narrow national elites and their cooperating partners in international business and donor institutions, but it can hardly be said to be a major cause of such problems.

Kester examines the equally elusive concept of workplace democracy in Africa. It reflects two decades of research in ten countries and, in its case studies, provides a wealth of useful detail regarding experiments in worker participation in company decision-making that will help address the relative dearth of post-colonial labour studies at the workplace level. Of significant importance are the opinion surveys of workers and trade union representatives, which reflect a convincingly bleak picture of the generalised decline in working conditions and living standards since the 1970s.
However, Kester’s longitudinal approach is also his weakness – as the author makes clear, experiments in worker participation were introduced in the period of state-led economic nationalism in the 1970s, and have virtually disappeared since the late 1980s. Although this is therefore largely a historical study of such projects, the presentation of data does not generally follow a historical structure in the individual country case studies. Insufficient contextualisation is provided of the widely differing post-colonial political and economic frameworks within which the many examples of worker participation occurred.

The study also suffers from a limited analysis of state motivations for introducing worker participation schemes. Kester contrasts the first decade after independence (c.1960-70), during which ‘progressive’ governments (Zambia, for example) planned worker consultation (drawing on Western European and/or Yugoslav models) based on ‘well-intended lofty ideals of co-operation’, with a period of implementation during which ‘the corporatist complex started to more and more confiscate all power and wealth, and the trade unions, who might have been willing to assume government-friendly roles in the beginning, became prisoners of increasingly authoritarian regimes’ (pp. 6-7) Insufficient explanation is offered for why such a shift occurred, and little evidence is provided indicating why such a positive view should be adopted regarding the motivations of rulers, nor why their good intentions were overturned. Given the lack of positive outcomes of worker participation in the cases under examination, an alternative reading of the evidence presented is that post-colonial governments, concerned with the disruptive power of organised labour, sought to introduce state-dominated corporatism to contain unrest and the potential political threat of independent trade unionism. It is evident that in the overwhelming majority of cases in which workers’ committees or councils were introduced, workers did not regard them as having improved labour relations, with most seeking to defend their independent trade union representation.

In the 1990s, liberalisation effectively dismantled such participatory structures (again, a symptom of a wider malaise rather than its cause). In a context of economic decline, effective worker representation has declined, with correlative declines in wages, living standards and levels of employment. Whilst Kester is right to argue for improved worker rights and representation, there is little to indicate that the types of workplace democracy examined here are relevant to addressing these problems in practice.
On one side of this analysis, we have an institution slowly pushing along global efforts towards agreement on the principles of implementing justice across frontiers; on the other, perhaps the most notorious of Africa’s violent cults, a local world seemingly of unreason, cruelty, and no justice at all except excessive vengeance. The International Criminal Court was finally established after decades of hesitant steps towards ‘universal jurisdiction’ following the second world war. Its status was achieved through collaborative agreements between states who signed up to the 1998 Rome Statute, though a number of signatories have not yet ratified the law.

The United States, and the Sudan, are among these. Theoretically the ICC has wider, and more flexible, powers than the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague set up by the Security Council in 1993, which dealt with former Yugoslavia and then established the ICT for Rwanda in Arusha (whose terms of reference are limited to events of 1994, and therefore can appear, in retrospect, one-sided). The first case to be referred to the ICC, in 2004, was that of the leadership of Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. This was prompted by recent massacres attributed to them of displaced people, including women and children – despite efforts towards a ceasefire. The first warrants were issued the following year for the arrest of Joseph Kony and a number of his colleagues.

Tim Allen considers this remarkable first venture of the ICC as a test case for the whole principle it is supposed to embody. It is quite clear that the political clout of the richer world has, so far, been able to keep the ICC at bay – it does seem likely that even if the USA did accept the authority of the court, there would be many roundabout ways in which US personnel could be kept out of its clutches. The Ugandan case is easier prey. But because this is a poor country, is the prospect of international criminal trials for its citizens necessarily a simpler matter, whether in its moral or practical complications?

Allen draws on his earlier years of teaching and research in northern Uganda and the southern Sudan, supplemented by recent consultancies, to illustrate how many-layered these complications are. While himself basically in favour of ICC intervention, he shows that a range of well considered views can be found among Ugandans of all backgrounds. Some argue they have a right to see justice and punishment for the LRA leaders, while others point out that punitive measures smack of ‘revenge’ and might provoke retaliation. These interviewees explained to Allen that real peace can only be found when there is reconciliation. For example, the Ugandan government passed an Amnesty Act in 1999 which encourages, and even rewards, former rebels who turn themselves in. At a local, cultural and religious level, there are traditional ceremonies among the Acholi and Madi through which hostile parties can be brought together, and offences forgiven. Some are pointing out that the entry of the ICC into the complex situation of northern Uganda, with its sharp identifi-
cation of key criminals, is making all modes of amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation more difficult.

Allen touches on the longer history of the LRA and its roots in Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. He also sketches the links between the persisting strength of the LRA and the ups and downs of regional civil wars - specifically the role played by the Sudanese government of Omer el Beshir in supporting it (while the Ugandan regime was lending help to the SPLA). It is very interesting that the Sudan itself has recently gained a high profile vis-a-vis the ICC. In 2005 the Security Council first referred the Sudanese situation to the ICC. Accusations, and later warrants, were directed at the leadership of the Janjawid militias in Darfur and indeed some government leaders. Meanwhile, since the publication of Allen’s book, the Sudan government has been denying the right of the ICC to try their citizens – while Sudanese leaders have been playing a key role in attempting to negotiate peace (on Sudanese territory) with Kony and the LRA. The July, 2008, decision by the ICC chief prosecutor to place the name of President Beshir before the court has dramatically raised the stakes, and it is interesting that Museveni is one of the few African leaders to show reluctance in rallying to Beshir’s ‘support’.

As is common with edited volumes, the essays vary in quality. There are chapters that are just thick empirical descriptions, without any theoretical framework. Other chapters, namely, Kwame Ninsin’s on the tension between free market and the democratic ideal of equality; Joseph Ayee’s on the comparison of the leadership qualities between Rawlings and Kufuor, Alexander Frempong’s on the liberal democratic peace, and Kwaku Tsikata’s on the gap between constitutional guarantees of human rights and the real life enjoyment of these rights, stand out for their clarity, analytical rigour, and theoretical grounding.

However, the book has some limitations. It is poorly organised: for coherence, flow...
and easy reading, the essays should have been organised into thematic parts. Similarly, the book is in need of a conclusion on what it has accomplished and what needs further investigations. As the ‘liberal state’ is both the theoretical and empirical referent of the book, one was hoping to see the essays explicitly situated in relation to the fundamental theoretical and political canons of the ‘liberal state’. Except in some few instances, they were not. This might be due to the failure of the editor to lay out the theoretical and political coordinates of the ‘liberal state’ in the introductory chapter. For the individual contributions to form a coherent whole, Boafo-Arthur needed to rigorously unpack the ‘liberal state’, both theoretically and historically. Instead, he allotted a paltry one and half pages to such a vital discussion (pp. 5-6).

The foundational theoretical and political doctrine of the liberal state, namely, the separation between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ is not problematised. Neither is the socio-historical specificity of the ‘liberal state’ addressed. The liberal state emerged in a specific socio-historical context in England, begging the question whether we can talk blithely of the emergence of a ‘liberal state’ in a different socio-historical context in Africa. Therefore, this book not only needed a clear theoretical framework but methodological guidance.

Given this serious oversight, Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors make some assertions which suggest a superficial knowledge of the ‘liberal state’. Boafo Arthur finds ‘the wholesale marginalisation of the state in the management of the market’ (p. 17) baffling and wrong. In reality, there has never been ‘wholesale marginalisation’ of the liberal state, but rather a selective intervention in the interest of the market. Second, the ‘liberal state’ seems to be conflated with a constitutional government. With respect to Ghana, the liberal state is merely distinguished from the praetorian dictatorships which ruled the country at one point; so the First Republic under Kwame Nkrumah is a liberal state while Rawlings’ PNDC is not.

However, the issues are more complex than this. Boafo Arthur correctly points out that the Rawlings PNDC government used ‘draconian’ methods to implement liberal economic policies, and in the process, suppressed ‘the fundamental liberties of the people’ (p. 7). Yet the ‘international community and donor agencies ignored them because the PNDC was implementing to the letter the Bretton Woods-inspired economic management package’ (p.236). To explain away this monumental contradiction and two-facedness of the international community is to skirt the responsibility of asking a central question of this book: why did the Ghanaian liberal state wait until 1993 to emerge?

Answering this question would have thrown into relief a gamut of dynamics – class, new imperialism and the power of liberal discourse – which would have given Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors a pause before jumping on the liberal bandwagon. Similarly, the unrealistic expectations of the liberal state and criticisms of what is misunderstood as transgressions of its doctrines could have been avoided. For example, Boafo Arthur expects the liberal state to ensure ‘the creation of material wealth that will be for the good of the whole society’ (p. 5), and sees inequities as a dilution of the ‘sacrosanct values inherent in liberalism’ (p.12).

Ninsin argues that socioeconomic inequality ‘leaves liberal democracy a distant pedigree of its classical form’ (p.103), and advocates the intervention of the liberal state in the market to redistribute wealth. Surely, they are mistaken. While I am sympathetic to Ninsin’s concerns, he cannot remain in the liberal state straitjacket and simultaneously make these demands. Despite these limita-
tions, the book is a handy and valuable source of information on the Ghanaian state in this era of global neo-liberalism.

______________________________


Sidney Bunting was the privileged child of successful, conscientious Methodist parents. Throughout his childhood they rubbed shoulders with the literally great and good the most distinguished of whom was W.E. Gladstone. It was a home dominated by good works and high culture. Sidney, a clever and musical boy, was expensively educated at St. Pauls School and Magdalen College Oxford. By late 19th century standards his background was liberal even radical.

Like many of his class, the young Sidney was an enthusiast for liberal empire if that is not entirely oxymoronic. Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War he sailed for the Cape and volunteered to fight. After the Peace of Vereeniging he stayed on in South Africa where some of his ancestors had established mission stations in the early 19th century and where there remained a family-owned estate. As he had begun to practise as a solicitor in London before the war, he recommenced his legal career in Johannesburg. He conformed to the expectations of a white professional man in that rich, rough mining town. He joined racially segregated clubs and mixed with the right, white people. While there is no real attempt here to explain this, from the end of the first decade of the 20th century he began to sympathise with the plight of labour, albeit white labour; one suspects that this owed something to the social conscience which surrounded him in childhood. He threw in his lot with the Labour Party, a soi disant socialist organisation which perversely preached job and pay discrimination.

The imminent outbreak of war appears to have prodded him leftwards. He took an increasingly unpopular anti-war stand and this brought him into contact with activists like Philip Roux. The author tells us virtually nothing about the emotional and intellectual navigation which took Bunting from a South African own-brand racialist faux socialism towards the real thing. But by 1915 he was using the language of the far left, linking up with local activists and beginning to argue that the emancipation of the South African working class required an immediate ending to discriminatory measures such as pass laws, residential discrimination and oppressive labour contracts; he was arguing that the South African workers of all colours were oppressed and must fight that oppression together. He began to work with, and not just condescendingly for, African workers. And by 1915 he is clearly reading Marx and regarding that canon as more than merely instructive.

Revolutionary ideas and an identification with the struggles of black people began to isolate him from many of his old friends, from many of the organised white working class and importantly from the state. He began to be harassed – dogged by detectives and not infrequently taken to court and even imprisoned. The inspiration of the Russian revolution and the Comintern’s direction led to a merger of South Africa’s few and small far left organisations and Bunting became a founder member of the Communist Party of South Africa in October 1920. In the following 16 years of his life he and his wife were to be deeply

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411404
involved with the CPSA, an involvement that involved visiting Weimar Germany and then Moscow for Comintern meetings. But prominent as he was, the last part of his life was spent unrewardingly running uphill. What had been in legal terms for whites at least a relatively liberal state which had tended to tolerate radicals as cranks rather than subversives became increasingly coercive with the reforms introduced by Oswald Pirow; it became more and more dangerous to participate in radical multi-racial politics. But even more damaging was the self-indulgent fraternal infighting which hamstrung radical opposition in the inter-war period; that infighting could descend to the worst depths of personal defamation, racist slander and cruel exclusions. Bunting was a victim of this and although the Party staged a show funeral, a ‘Red Funeral’, for him, those who professed grief at his graveside included many who had stabbed him in the back.

Sidney Bunting was a fascinating man but much of what made him into a figure straight out of an Ibsen play remains unexplained and even un-interrogated in this biography. There is far too much stodgy and frankly uninteresting detail in the first 60 pages of this book and far too little of the kinds of exploration of a life that one expects from a biographer. Each of the step-changes in his life, and they were huge, remains a mystery; for example was Philip Roux, Eddie Roux’s remarkable father, his mentor? When did Bunting first encounter Marx’s writing? How important to his intellectual development was his wife, Becky Notlewitz a refugee from Tsarist anti-Semitism who had spent time in London’s Whitechapel, a radical hot-spot, before embarking for South Africa in 1914 where she joined the International Socialist League? And what should we make of a man, a passionate advocate of labour struggle, who maintained an active paid involvement as a director of the family estate in Natal, which was clearly NOT a workers’ paradise, until as late as 1923 and continued to bank dividends from that concern until his death? And above all why does the book end so abruptly with his death? There is no attempt to evaluate Bunting’s longer-term contribution to the evolution of not only the CPSA but also the ANC and given the author’s earlier scholarship, this is a real loss.


The starting point and the raison d’etre for ‘Women in African Parliaments’ is the dramatic increase in the percentage of women elected to national parliaments in the past decade. Its opening paragraph details the Rwandan election of 2003 which resulted in a national legislature which was 48.8% female, and meant that Rwanda replaced Sweden as the country with the highest level of female political representation globally. Anyone who is familiar with the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) listing of the percentage of women in parliaments could not but be aware of the shift that has taken place in its rankings. While internationally the percentage of women in parliaments has increased, some of the most dramatic changes have been in the global South, with many states in Latin America, Asia and Africa moving ahead of ‘old’ democracies. This appears more remarkable in the case of Africa, given the ‘development failure’ of the region and its overall declining level of human development. It is in the context of these changes that this book is

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411578
particularly timely. The editors have drawn together some significant original research on the topic and the core of the book is six case study chapters each dealing with an African state: Mozambique; South Africa; Namibia; Uganda; Rwanda; and Senegal. With the exception of Senegal that had a relatively peaceful political transition, the states covered have all come through political transitions after prolonged periods of violent conflict. As a result of this choice, the chapters reflect a key strand of experience that was part of the wave of democratisation in Africa in the 1990s and also the gendered aspects of that experience.

The opening chapter sets up a framework to analyse women’s political engagement in the case study states that has a universalist quality, and could be equally applicable to the democracies in the global North. In dealing specifically with Africa it synthesises the institutional and social movement factors that have impacted on the election of women candidates, and assesses the impact the election of women has had on institutional culture, on legislation, and on civil society, the later primarily in the form of the women’s movement. The case study chapters that follow, with minor deviations, adhere to the structural framework provided in the opening chapter covering a brief history of women in the respective state, the path to political office, the impact of women in parliament and the future direction of women’s political engagement. As a result of this discipline the book facilitates both a detailed examination of the individual states and a comparison between them.

In the detail of the case studies a diverse and complex picture of women’s political engagement emerges. With regard to Uganda, Aili Mari Tripp comments that formerly the focus has been on ‘how women have sought to increase their political representation’ and that less ‘has been said of the motivations and objectives of states in adopting such policies’. It is this complex relationship between the goals of women’s activism and the goals of existing political elites, set within the framework of the states’ relationship with the international system and its policy norms, and the pressure that can be put on reconstructing and aid dependent states that is explicitly or implicitly dealt with in the individual chapters. The picture that is built up, while it may have points of similarity with other contexts, is very far removed from the idealised ‘western’ model of women’s political advancement and engagement with parliaments. The concluding chapter returns to a discussion of the feminist concerns alluded to in the opening chapter, asking the question how can women’s representation advance the agenda of gender equality. It presents ‘weak’ versus ‘strong’ conceptualisations of participation, representation and gender equality outcomes – arguing predictably in favour of focusing on strong definitions. Its main strength lies in its application of these definitions to Africa and to the particular circumstances of the case study countries.

‘Women in African Parliaments’ fills a gap in the literature. Without directly addressing the issue it also raises the question of the tensions that exist in this form of analysis between using a common, internationally applicable model, with the inevitable problems of ‘Western’ bias, and examining the particular patterns of women’s political engagement that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. How far can models drawn from western experience aid an understanding of African women’s problematic engagement with the state. In the substantive chapters, the complexity of this relationship is fully dealt with providing a basis for future research and debate. Overall a very welcome, interesting and readable book.
In *The Sun By Night*, the Ghanaian writer Benjamin Kwakye, one of the most accomplished of a new generation of African novelists, has produced possibly the most important Ghanaian novel since those of Ayi Kwei Armah, establishing Kwakye as a premier African literary voice. Kwakye, born in Accra, is a recipient of the 2000 Afrique Newsmagazine W.E.B. DuBois Award for Literature and his first novel, *The Clothes of Nakedness*, received the 1999 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book (Africa Region) and was adapted for radio as a BBC play of the Week.

Kwakye’s latest offering, which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2006, is an artistic, deep and thorough treatise of the issues facing post-colonial Ghana. The novel takes the form of a court trial, reported by an enterprising and courageous journalist, in which a wealthy businessman and former politician, Koo Manu, stands accused of the murder of an Accra prostitute named Akwele. The trial merely serves as a window that opens out onto a variety of issues in post-independence Ghana and Africa as a whole that African novelists have long been concerned with: the inequalities between rich and poor; the post independence malaise; the struggle between tradition and modernity; the causes and consequences of prostitution; the relationship between father and son; the role and position of women; the differences between generations; the insensitivity and corruption of political and economic elites; marriage, love and polygamy. Like Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Kwakye’s novel provides a very thorough exposure of corruption in various sectors of the Ghanaian state. Whereas Armah dealt with the national liberation period and the rise and fall of Kwame Nkrumah, Kwakye’s novel evolves against the background of political events from the late 1960s (e.g. the period of civilian rule led by Dr. Kobi Abrefa Busia) through to the overthrow of Hilla Liman in the early 1980s in a coup led by Jerry Rawlings.

The novel’s title as well as the headings of the three books within it alert the reader to the possibility that Kwakye intends to explore a complex yet ultimately very bizarre set of circumstances. Apart from the heading of the first book, *The Abused Road*, these are all suggestive of the paradoxical or even apocalyptic: *The Sun by Night, The Eclipse of the Mother* and *The Rain of Snow*. The novel itself, suggests tremendous confusion, upheaval, disaster and despair, but ultimately there is the possibility and hope of better things to come. The journalist’s reporting of the trial provides an enveloping narrative that links together the other threads of the story woven around the main participants or witnesses in the drama. The journalist in this story is rather like Ikem Isodi (in Achebe’s *Anthrills of the Savannah*), in that he is honest and courageous and is not afraid to speak the truth and criticise an immoral and brutal regime regardless of the consequences. Like many writers in Africa before him, he is arrested, beaten and imprisoned.

*The Sun By Night* is an insightful story in many ways, providing important social commentary. Kwakye explores the social and psychological causes for the bizarre behaviour of most of the characters in the novel and he is not afraid to tackle the important issue of polygamy from both female and male points of view. Kwakye also includes a very thorough exploration of the causes, nature and consequences of prostitution. In this regard, the conversation between Kubi, disguised as Kwamena, and the intelligent prostitute Ama Badu is quite revealing. Al-
though Kwamena depends on prostitutes for the satisfaction of some of his deepest needs he decides to adopt a high moral tone and to castigate the prostitute for doing something for a living that is demonstrably wrong. Kwakye’s novel shows however that the vast majority are forced into prostitution by poverty, lack of opportunity, or by unscrupulous relations or acquaintances. The novel also consistently reflects on the importance of tradition in Ghana, presenting traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices, portraying ceremonies in which the ancestors and the traditional gods are invoked and depicting traditional protocol and traditional beliefs in attitudes towards questions of polygamy and marriage. Adherence to traditional practices is also seen in the celebration of Koo Manu’s betrothal and wedding and in the christening of his first child.

This ambitious and highly imaginative novel offers a compelling revelation of post-colonial concerns. Apart from the manipulation of language and narrative technique, Kwakye evokes some incredibly realistic scenes such as in his presentation of police and military brutality, in the church scenes, and in the sexual encounters between various people. Around the framework of the trial Kwakye brilliantly weaves together events, settings and characterisations in this highly readable and engaging book.


Almost all readers of ROAPE will be regular visitors to the Pambazuka News website. This book – one of a series – takes articles from that web resource (and a few from other places) and organises them around trade-related issues. Consequently, the book reads as a series of short essays in the intellectual tradition of Pambazuka: anti-imperialist and supportive of social movement politics in Africa.

First, a comment on the contributions. These are highly variable in their originality, quality, and focus. Some are general critiques of neo-liberalism which do not add a great deal. Thus, arguments about imposed liberalisation, the limits of primary commodity exporting, neglect of small-scale trade, and the predations of transnationals are all expressed in this book. But, a good deal of these arguments are made in brief and generalised terms, rendering some chapters as rehearsals of familiar points. This is especially the case on the section on Women and Trade.

The stronger chapters are based on some fresh empirical material, all of which highlights the deleterious nature of Africa’s trading relations in the present-day – what Henning Melber rightly calls ‘predatory capitalism’ in his engaging chapter. Patrick Bond presents us with an account of the ‘ghost on the coast’, the Coega industrial zone in South Africa (a neo-liberal white elephant in the making?) which should depress even readers most cynical of the New South Africa. There are large and important issues behind Bond’s account (and reflected in other chapters) which desperately need

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411594
more expansive treatment, most obviously the near-complete subordination of (parts of) African states to private business, and the bullish way in which the transnational corporate class asserts the conditions under which it is prepared to invest. In a world where violence against organised labour is increasing and labour action is seen as in some sense ‘old fashioned’, it is important to remember how threats of ‘capital strike’ (disinvestment, withdrawal of investment, the running down of capital) are part of the mainstream politics of ‘economic openness’.

But, of course, investment is not trade – although both are increasingly controlled by a small number of transnationals that are ever more adept at investing and trading within their own structures. My point here is that the contributions tend to bleed into other areas in ways that lead the reader to lose the focus on trade, and why trade matters especially in the context of new forms of regulation, liberalisation, and commercial norm setting. If there is a certain amount of conceptual fuzziness, one might balance this against the book’s desire to bring the issues to a broad readership in accessible ways. This the book does, but then the website does it far better and at less cost for the reader.

Which brings me to an important question: who is the book for? There is some scope for it to be adopted in development and African politics courses. Some chapters offer short focused critiques of, say, Firestone’s disgraceful treatment of workers in Liberia, but it is not an ‘academic’ book.

The title of the book is striking, suggesting an association between the Atlantic slave trade and contemporary trading relations in Africa. Clearly, the intellectual traditions of the Left have relied on analogies of slavery for various anti-imperialism campaigns: the various Jubilee organisations have spoken about debt bondage and made explicit comparisons with the anti-debt and anti-slavery campaigns (in Britain based on a curious mix of internationalism and national esteem). But, beyond the rhetorical power of slavery analogies, what are the associations that one can make?

One is that, since the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, Africa has been locked into and subordinated by a capitalist global political economy dominated by the states and capitals of the West. Quite right, and worth repeating despite its self-evident truth until this state of affairs is no longer with us. But, contemporary capitalism bears little relationship to the Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century. So, what resonance does slavery have in the contemporary world?

Although outside the remit of this book, it is vital to note that slavery has hardly gone away; far from it. More complex forms of slavery – very often based in trafficking, domestic labour, and violence against women – are at the heart of the highly ideologised phenomenon that is called ‘globalisation’. Like primitive accumulation, the ‘freedom’ that Marx used ironically to explain proletarianisation is a tendency within capitalist social relations rather than a stage or enabling event and therefore bonded and enslaved labour are likely to persist for as long as capitalism itself. But, it is important to maintain a distinction between the social relations of slavery and wage labour. The chapter by Robtel Pailey, titled ‘Slavery Ain’t Dead’, describes the conditions of work in the now-infamous Liberia Firestone rubber plantation. What he goes on to describe, though, is the violence and exploitation of the waged workers who buckle under extreme collection quotas and live in squalor. Dubbing this slavery is normatively attractive, but politically misleading. These predations are intrinsic to wage-labour capitalism; calling them slavery serves to distract us from a
real facet or tendency within capitalism – the ever-present possibility of working people more or less rapidly to death where socio-economic conditions allow. This happened during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, it is present in the sweatshops that are contracted to produce cheap goods in minimal time to meet the 24-hour quotas and demands of international trading transnationals, and it can be found in Liberia and doubtless many other places in Africa.

The point of this short aside is simply that it is not clear in the book what the history of the Atlantic slave trade teaches us apart from the apparent historical continuities of deleterious Western interventions in Africa. What we have is a vague sense of Western responsibility for poverty and exploitation in Africa and some very general references to justice and reparations. On the issue of justice, there is surprisingly little in the book on movements for social justice in Africa in relation to trade, and not even a sketching of alternative and progressive trading relations. Charles Abugre’s characteristically sharp introduction does set out an agenda for Africa’s social movements – it would have been fantastic if these had been handed out to contributors as part of their remit in contributing to the book.


Each of these books provides valuable empirical information on their subjects, (respectively, domestic African business relations with states and experiments with workplace democracy) which will be of relevance to many researchers. Both are, however, weakened by their narrow focus on conceptual frameworks of business and labour relations which have little practical reality in the societies under examination.

Scott Taylor investigates an important and neglected question, namely, why is the indigenous business community so lacking in political influence in its relations with African states? It is unquestionably true that most African governments are unsupportive of their domestic business constituencies, even after the implementation of economic liberalisation programmes ostensibly designed to promote business interests and a market-driven approach to economic development. Taylor investigates this question through well researched case studies on Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Taylor claims that ‘Two decades of comparative research clearly demonstrates the potential benefits of business-state coalitions in the developing world.’ (p.2) Little evidence exists, however, that such coalitions have led to economic growth or development in Africa. Indeed, the evidence provided here suggests that temporarily strong state-business relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe in the early 1990s resulted in the implementa-
tion of liberalisation programmes that presaged significant economic decline. Despite being initially supported by domestic businesses, economic liberalisation proved in practice to be against their interests; exposed to the full force of international competition, many were unable to compete and were forced to close down and/or cut jobs. Taylor blames such problems on the faulty implementation of liberalisation, for which states are responsible. He largely disregards the role of donor conditionality and the international financial institutions for forcing liberalisation on Zambia (although, admittedly, not Zimbabwe). Although he admits that actual liberalisation is not always beneficial, Taylor assumes that ‘a strong dose of neo-liberal orthodoxy ... should be considered a vital component of a late-late developing state in an overwhelmingly capitalist global environment’ (p. 220).

Taylor’s binary analysis of ‘strong’ states and weak domestic business interests neglects the role of both international business and the international financial institutions. Although Taylor acknowledges that ‘the prevailing international environment further disadvantages African business actors …’ (p.208), this is not central to the case studies. The evidence presented suggests, however, that domestic business is marginal because it plays a negligible role in economic development, job creation and government revenue, relative to these international actors. Taylor admits as much with regard to Zambia: ‘The specific needs of the independent business community are not widely sympathized with or shared by the general populace’ (p.89). In such a context, it is rational for state actors to disregard domestic business, which has yet to prove that it can significantly contribute to Africa’s development.

Taylor fails to offer a single example of effective pro-reform state relations with an indigenous African business community; Zimbabwe and South Africa are the partial exceptions which prove this rule. In each, Taylor suggests that it was white-dominated business which provided the basis for strong post-colonial state-business relations (p. 29). This is an ongoing process in South Africa, but the Zimbabwean honeymoon came to a halt with economic decline in the mid-1990s and Mugabe’s subsequent populist turn. South Africa’s current strong business-state coalition may be, Taylor admits, prone to similar political pressures if it fails to benefit the wider African population.

More generally, Taylor fails to prove his claim that ‘... the lack of business-state cooperation was a significant factor in problems such as the rapid de-industrialization, the failure to advance commercial agricultural potential, and rising unemployment across all economic sectors that accelerated in the 1990’ (p.5). It could certainly be argued that the lack of such cooperation, reflecting as it does the marginality of domestic business, was/is symptomatic of a wider malaise in which economic liberalisation was implemented in the interests of narrow national elites and their cooperating partners in international business and donor institutions, but it can hardly be said to be a major cause of such problems.

Kester examines the equally elusive concept of workplace democracy in Africa. It reflects two decades of research in ten countries and, in its case studies, provides a wealth of useful detail regarding experiments in worker participation in company decision-making that will help address the relative dearth of post-colonial labour studies at the workplace level. Of significant importance are the opinion surveys of workers and trade union representatives, which reflect a convincingly bleak picture of the generalised decline in working conditions and living standards since the 1970s.
However, Kester’s longitudinal approach is also his weakness – as the author makes clear, experiments in worker participation were introduced in the period of state-led economic nationalism in the 1970s, and have virtually disappeared since the late 1980s. Although this is therefore largely a historical study of such projects, the presentation of data does not generally follow a historical structure in the individual country case studies. Insufficient contextualisation is provided of the widely differing post-colonial political and economic frameworks within which the many examples of worker participation occurred.

The study also suffers from a limited analysis of state motivations for introducing worker participation schemes. Kester contrasts the first decade after independence (c.1960-70), during which ‘progressive’ governments (Zambia, for example) planned worker consultation (drawing on Western European and/or Yugoslav models) based on ‘well-intended lofty ideals of co-operation’, with a period of implementation during which ‘the corporatist complex started to more and more confiscate all power and wealth, and the trade unions, who might have been willing to assume government-friendly roles in the beginning, became prisoners of increasingly authoritarian regimes’ (pp. 6-7) Insufficient explanation is offered for why such a shift occurred, and little evidence is provided indicating why such a positive view should be adopted regarding the motivations of rulers, nor why their good intentions were overturned. Given the lack of positive outcomes of worker participation in the cases under examination, an alternative reading of the evidence presented is that post-colonial governments, concerned with the disruptive power of organised labour, sought to introduce state-dominated corporatism to contain unrest and the potential political threat of independent trade unionism. It is evident that in the overwhelming majority of cases in which workers’ committees or councils were introduced, workers did not regard them as having improved labour relations, with most seeking to defend their independent trade union representation.

In the 1990s, liberalisation effectively dismantled such participatory structures (again, a symptom of a wider malaise rather than its cause). In a context of economic decline, effective worker representation has declined, with correlative declines in wages, living standards and levels of employment. Whilst Kester is right to argue for improved worker rights and representation, there is little to indicate that the types of workplace democracy examined here are relevant to addressing these problems in practice.
On one side of this analysis, we have an institution slowly pushing along global efforts towards agreement on the principles of implementing justice across frontiers; on the other, perhaps the most notorious of Africa’s violent cults, a local world seemingly of unreason, cruelty, and no justice at all except excessive vengeance. The International Criminal Court was finally established after decades of hesitant steps towards ‘universal jurisdiction’ following the second world war. Its status was achieved through collaborative agreements between states who signed up to the 1998 Rome Statute, though a number of signatories have not yet ratified the law.

The United States, and the Sudan, are among these. Theoretically the ICC has wider, and more flexible, powers than the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague set up by the Security Council in 1993, which dealt with former Yugoslavia and then established the ICT for Rwanda in Arusha (whose terms of reference are limited to events of 1994, and therefore can appear, in retrospect, one-sided). The first case to be referred to the ICC, in 2004, was that of the leadership of Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. This was prompted by recent massacres attributed to them of displaced people, including women and children – despite efforts towards a ceasefire. The first warrants were issued the following year for the arrest of Joseph Kony and a number of his colleagues.

Tim Allen considers this remarkable first venture of the ICC as a test case for the whole principle it is supposed to embody. It is quite clear that the political clout of the richer world has, so far, been able to keep the ICC at bay – it does seem likely that even if the USA did accept the authority of the court, there would be many roundabout ways in which US personnel could be kept out of its clutches. The Ugandan case is easier prey. But because this is a poor country, is the prospect of international criminal trials for its citizens necessarily a simpler matter, whether in its moral or practical complications?

Allen draws on his earlier years of teaching and research in northern Uganda and the southern Sudan, supplemented by recent consultancies, to illustrate how many-layered these complications are. While himself basically in favour of ICC intervention, he shows that a range of well considered views can be found among Ugandans of all backgrounds. Some argue they have a right to see justice and punishment for the LRA leaders, while others point out that punitive measures smack of ‘revenge’ and might provoke retaliation. These interviewees explained to Allen that real peace can only be found when there is reconciliation. For example, the Ugandan government passed an Amnesty Act in 1999 which encourages, and even rewards, former rebels who turn themselves in. At a local, cultural and religious level, there are traditional ceremonies among the Acholi and Madi through which hostile parties can be brought together, and offences forgiven. Some are pointing out that the entry of the ICC into the complex situation of northern Uganda, with its sharp identifi-
cation of key criminals, is making all modes of amnesty, forgiveness, and reconciliation more difficult.

Allen touches on the longer history of the LRA and its roots in Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. He also sketches the links between the persisting strength of the LRA and the ups and downs of regional civil wars - specifically the role played by the Sudanese government of Omer el Beshir in supporting it (while the Ugandan regime was lending help to the SPLA). It is very interesting that the Sudan itself has recently gained a high profile vis-à-vis the ICC. In 2005 the Security Council first referred the Sudanese situation to the ICC. Accusations, and later warrants, were directed at the leadership of the Janjawid militias in Darfur and indeed some government leaders. Meanwhile, since the publication of Allen’s book, the Sudan government has been denying the right of the ICC to try their citizens – while Sudanese leaders have been playing a key role in attempting to negotiate peace (on Sudanese territory) with Kony and the LRA. The July, 2008, decision by the ICC chief prosecutor to place the name of President Beshir before the court has dramatically raised the stakes, and it is interesting that Museveni is one of the few African leaders to show reluctance in rallying to Beshir’s ‘support’.

This book, in the new African Arguments series, is quite compact and inevitably dense. It will be a demanding read for those not yet familiar with the history of Uganda/Sudan border relations. But it is not only this region of Africa, or indeed the world, which has become a space in which ordinary citizenship scarcely exists. As a case study, this is a highly revealing snapshot of an important moment in the efforts of the international community to try and confront appalling crimes in the frontierlands of nation-states which do not have the judicial or political capacity to protect the lives of their own people.


Reminiscent of the euphoria that accompanied Ghana’s independence in 1957, we are again witnessing an era of optimism about Ghana’s future. A landmark transition to liberal democratic political stability and a modest economic growth have made Ghana the poster child of liberal democracy in Africa. It is in this context that the anthology of Kwame Boafo Arthur is situated. The central thrust of the book, as Boafo Arthur states, ‘is to put the liberal democratic cum neo-liberal processes over the past decade in clear perspective’ (p. 1). To this end, Boafo Arthur assembled a team of seasoned Ghanaian scholars to examine the ‘liberal state’ on a variety of important topical areas: human rights, security, economic development, conflict management, political leadership, gender and politics, labour activism, and foreign policy. This is a lot of ground to cover thoroughly in a single volume, making this an ambitious project.

As is common with edited volumes, the essays vary in quality. There are chapters that are just thick empirical descriptions, without any theoretical framework. Other chapters, namely, Kwame Ninsin’s on the tension between free market and the democratic ideal of equality; Joseph Ayee’s on the comparison of the leadership qualities between Rawlings and Kufuor, Alexander Frempong’s on the liberal democratic peace, and Kwaku Tsikata’s on the gap between constitutional guarantees of human rights and the real life enjoyment of these rights, stand out for their clarity, analytical rigour, and theoretical grounding.

However, the book has some limitations. It is poorly organised: for coherence, flow...
and easy reading, the essays should have been organised into thematic parts. Similarly, the book is in need of a conclusion on what it has accomplished and what needs further investigations. As the ‘liberal state’ is both the theoretical and empirical referent of the book, one was hoping to see the essays explicitly situated in relation to the fundamental theoretical and political canons of the ‘liberal state’. Except in some few instances, they were not. This might be due to the failure of the editor to lay out the theoretical and political coordinates of the ‘liberal state’ in the introductory chapter. For the individual contributions to form a coherent whole, Boafo-Arthur needed to rigorously unpack the ‘liberal state’, both theoretically and historically. Instead, he allotted a paltry one and half pages to such a vital discussion (pp. 5-6).

The foundational theoretical and political doctrine of the liberal state, namely, the separation between the ‘economic’ and the ‘political’ is not problematised. Neither is the socio-historical specificity of the ‘liberal state’ addressed. The liberal state emerged in a specific socio-historical context in England, begging the question whether we can talk blithely of the emergence of a ‘liberal state’ in a different socio-historical context in Africa. Therefore, this book not only needed a clear theoretical framework but methodological guidance.

Given this serious oversight, Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors make some assertions which suggest a superficial knowledge of the ‘liberal state’. Boafo Arthur finds ‘the wholesale marginalisation of the state in the management of the market’ (p. 17) baffling and wrong. In reality, there has never been ‘wholesale marginalisation’ of the liberal state, but rather a selective intervention in the interest of the market. Second, the ‘liberal state’ seems to be conflated with a constitutional government. With respect to Ghana, the liberal state is merely distinguished from the praetorian dictatorships which ruled the country at one point; so the First Republic under Kwame Nkrumah is a liberal state while Rawlings’ PNDC is not.

However, the issues are more complex than this. Boafo Arthur correctly points out that the Rawlings PNDC government used ‘draconian’ methods to implement liberal economic policies, and in the process, suppressed ‘the fundamental liberties of the people’ (p. 7). Yet the ‘international community and donor agencies ignored them because the PNDC was implementing to the letter the Bretton Woods-inspired economic management package’ (p.236). To explain away this monumental contradiction and two-facedness of the international community is to skirt the responsibility of asking a central question of this book: why did the Ghanaian liberal state wait until 1993 to emerge?

Answering this question would have thrown into relief a gamut of dynamics – class, new imperialism and the power of liberal discourse – which would have given Boafo Arthur and some of his contributors a pause before jumping on the liberal bandwagon. Similarly, the unrealistic expectations of the liberal state and criticisms of what is misunderstood as transgressions of its doctrines could have been avoided. For example, Boafo Arthur expects the liberal state to ensure ‘the creation of material wealth that will be for the good of the whole society’ (p. 5), and sees inequities as a dilution of the ‘sacrosanct values inherent in liberalism’ (p.12).

Ninsin argues that socioeconomic inequality ‘leaves liberal democracy a distant pedigree of its classical form’ (p.103), and advocates the intervention of the liberal state in the market to redistribute wealth. Surely, they are mistaken. While I am sympathetic to Ninsin’s concerns, he cannot remain in the liberal state straitjacket and simultaneously make these demands. Despite these limita-
tions, the book is a handy and valuable source of information on the Ghanaian state in this era of global neo-liberalism.


Sidney Bunting was the privileged child of successful, conscientious Methodist parents. Throughout his childhood they rubbed shoulders with the literally great and good the most distinguished of whom was W.E. Gladstone. It was a home dominated by good works and high culture. Sidney, a clever and musical boy, was expensively educated at St. Pauls School and Magdalen College Oxford. By late 19th century standards his background was liberal even radical.

Like many of his class, the young Sidney was an enthusiast for liberal empire if that is not entirely oxymoronic. Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War he sailed for the Cape and volunteered to fight. After the Peace of Vereeniging he stayed on in South Africa where some of his ancestors had established mission stations in the early 19th century and where there remained a family-owned estate. As he had begun to practise as a solicitor in London before the war, he recommenced his legal career in Johannesburg. He conformed to the expectations of a white professional man in that rich, rough mining town. He joined racially segregated clubs and mixed with the right, white people. While there is no real attempt here to explain this, from the end of the first decade of the 20th century he began to sympathise with the plight of labour, albeit white labour; one suspects that this owed something to the social conscience which surrounded him in childhood. He threw in his lot with the Labour Party, a *soi disant* socialist organisation which perversely preached job and pay discrimination.

The imminent outbreak of war appears to have prodded him leftwards. He took an increasingly unpopular anti-war stand and this brought him into contact with activists like Philip Roux. The author tells us virtually nothing about the emotional and intellectual navigation which took Bunting from a South African own-brand racialist *faux socialism* towards the real thing. But by 1915 he was using the language of the far left, linking up with local activists and beginning to argue that the emancipation of the South African working class required an immediate ending to discriminatory measures such as pass laws, residential discrimination and oppressive labour contracts; he was arguing that the South African workers of all colours were oppressed and must fight that oppression together. He began to work with, and not just condescendingly for, African workers. And by 1915 he is clearly reading Marx and regarding that canon as more than merely instructive.

Revolutionary ideas and an identification with the struggles of black people began to isolate him from many of his old friends, from many of the organised white working class and importantly from the state. He began to be harassed – dogged by detectives and not infrequently taken to court and even imprisoned. The inspiration of the Russian revolution and the Comintern’s direction led to a merger of South Africa’s few and small far left organisations and Bunting became a founder member of the Communist Party of South Africa in October 1920. In the following 16 years of his life he and his wife were to be deeply
involved with the CPSA, an involvement that involved visiting Weimar Germany and then Moscow for Comintern meetings. But prominent as he was, the last part of his life was spent unrewardingly running uphill. What had been in legal terms for whites at least a relatively liberal state which had tended to tolerate radicals as cranks rather than subversives became increasingly coercive with the reforms introduced by Oswald Pirow; it became more and more dangerous to participate in radical multi-racial politics. But even more damaging was the self-indulgent fraternal infighting which hamstrung radical opposition in the inter-war period; that infighting could descend to the worst depths of personal defamation, racist slander and cruel exclusions. Bunting was a victim of this and although the Party staged a show funeral, a ‘Red Funeral’, for him, those who professed grief at his graveside included many who had stabbed him in the back.

Sidney Bunting was a fascinating man but much of what made him into a figure straight out of an Ibsen play remains unexplained and even un-interrogated in this biography. There is far too much stodgy and frankly uninteresting detail in the first 60 pages of this book and far too little of the kinds of exploration of a life that one expects from a biographer. Each of the step-changes in his life, and they were huge, remains a mystery; for example was Philip Roux, Eddie Roux’s remarkable father, his mentor? When did Bunting first encounter Marx’s writing? How important to his intellectual development was his wife, Becky Notlewitz a refugee from Tsarist anti-Semitism who had spent time in London’s Whitechapel, a radical hot-spot, before embarking for South Africa in 1914 where she joined the International Socialist League? And what should we make of a man, a passionate advocate of labour struggle, who maintained an active paid involvement as a director of the family estate in Natal, which was clearly NOT a workers’ paradise, until as late as 1923 and continued to bank dividends from that concern until his death? And above all why does the book end so abruptly with his death? There is no attempt to evaluate Bunting’s longer-term contribution to the evolution of not only the CPSA but also the ANC and given the author’s earlier scholarship, this is a real loss.


The starting point and the raison d’être for ‘Women in African Parliaments’ is the dramatic increase in the percentage of women elected to national parliaments in the past decade. Its opening paragraph details the Rwandan election of 2003 which resulted in a national legislature which was 48.8% female, and meant that Rwanda replaced Sweden as the country with the highest level of female political representation globally. Anyone who is familiar with the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) listing of the percentage of women in parliament could not but be aware of the shift that has taken place in its rankings. While internationally the percentage of women in parliaments has increased, some of the most dramatic changes have been in the global South, with many states in Latin America, Asia and Africa moving ahead of ‘old’ democracies. This appears more remarkable in the case of Africa, given the ‘development failure’ of the region and its overall declining level of human development. It is in the context of these changes that this book is

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411578
particularly timely. The editors have drawn together some significant original research on the topic and the core of the book is six case study chapters each dealing with an African state: Mozambique; South Africa; Namibia; Uganda; Rwanda; and Senegal. With the exception of Senegal that had a relatively peaceful political transition, the states covered have all come through political transitions after prolonged periods of violent conflict. As a result of this choice, the chapters reflect a key strand of experience that was part of the wave of democratisation in Africa in the 1990s and also the gendered aspects of that experience.

The opening chapter sets up a framework to analyse women’s political engagement in the case study states that has a universalist quality, and could be equally applicable to the democracies in the global North. In dealing specifically with Africa it synthesises the institutional and social movement factors that have impacted on the election of women candidates, and assesses the impact the election of women has had on institutional culture, on legislation, and on civil society, the later primarily in the form of the women’s movement. The case study chapters that follow, with minor deviations, adhere to the structural framework provided in the opening chapter covering a brief history of women in the respective state, the path to political office, the impact of women in parliament and the future direction of women’s political engagement. As a result of this discipline the book facilitates both a detailed examination of the individual states and a comparison between them.

In the detail of the case studies a diverse and complex picture of women’s political engagement emerges. With regard to Uganda, Aili Mari Tripp comments that formerly the focus has been on ‘how women have sought to increase their political representation’ and that less ‘has been said of the motivations and objectives of states in adopting such policies’. It is this complex relationship between the goals of women’s activism and the goals of existing political elites, set within the framework of the states’ relationship with the international system and its policy norms, and the pressure that can be put on reconstructing and aid dependent states that is explicitly or implicitly dealt with in the individual chapters. The picture that is built up, while it may have points of similarity with other contexts, is very far removed from the idealised ‘western’ model of women’s political advancement and engagement with parliaments. The concluding chapter returns to a discussion of the feminist concerns alluded to in the opening chapter, asking the question how can women’s representation advance the agenda of gender equality. It presents ‘weak’ versus ‘strong’ conceptualisations of participation, representation and gender equality outcomes – arguing predictably in favour of focusing on strong definitions. Its main strength lies in its application of these definitions to Africa and to the particular circumstances of the case study countries.

‘Women in African Parliaments’ fills a gap in the literature. Without directly addressing the issue it also raises the question of the tensions that exist in this form of analysis between using a common, internationally applicable model, with the inevitable problems of ‘Western’ bias, and examining the particular patterns of women’s political engagement that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. How far can models drawn from western experience aid an understanding of African women’s problematic engagement with the state. In the substantive chapters, the complexity of this relationship is fully dealt with providing a basis for future research and debate. Overall a very welcome, interesting and readable book.

In The Sun By Night, the Ghanaian writer Benjamin Kwakye, one of the most accomplished of a new generation of African novelists, has produced possibly the most important Ghanaian novel since those of Ayi Kwei Armah, establishing Kwakye as a premier African literary voice. Kwakye, born in Accra, is a recipient of the 2000 Afrique Newsmagazine W.E.B. DuBois Award for Literature and his first novel, The Clothes of Nakedness, received the 1999 Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book (Africa Region) and was adapted for radio as a BBC play of the Week.

Kwakye’s latest offering, which won the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2006, is an artistic, deep and thorough treatise of the issues facing post-colonial Ghana. The novel takes the form of a court trial, reported by an enterprising and courageous journalist, in which a wealthy businessman and former politician, Koo Manu, stands accused of the murder of an Accra prostitute named Akwele. The trial merely serves as a window that opens out onto a variety of issues in post-independence Ghana and Africa as a whole that African novelists have long been concerned with: the inequalities between rich and poor; the post independence malaise; the struggle between tradition and modernity; the causes and consequences of prostitution; the relationship between father and son; the role and position of women; the differences between generations; the insensitivity and corruption of political and economic elites; marriage, love and polygamy. Like Armah’s The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, Kwakye’s novel provides a very thorough exposure of corruption in various sectors of the Ghanaian state. Whereas Armah dealt with the national liberation period and the rise and fall of Kwame Nkrumah, Kwakye’s novel evolves against the background of political events from the late 1960s (e.g. the period of civilian rule led by Dr. Kobi Abrefa Busia) through to the overthrow of Hilla Liman in the early 1980s in a coup led by Jerry Rawlings.

The novel’s title as well as the headings of the three books within it alert the reader to the possibility that Kwakye intends to explore a complex yet ultimately very bizarre set of circumstances. Apart from the heading of the first book, The Abused Road, these are all suggestive of the paradoxical or even apocalyptic: The Sun by Night, The Eclipse of the Mother and The Rain of Snow. The novel itself, suggests tremendous confusion, upheaval, disaster and despair, but ultimately there is the possibility and hope of better things to come. The journalist’s reporting of the trial provides an enveloping narrative that links together the other threads of the story woven around the main participants or witnesses in the drama. The journalist in this story is rather like Ikem Isodi (in Achebe’s Anthills of the Savannah), in that he is honest and courageous and is not afraid to speak the truth and criticise an immoral and brutal regime regardless of the consequences. Like many writers in Africa before him, he is arrested, beaten and imprisoned.

The Sun By Night is an insightful story in many ways, providing important social commentary. Kwakye explores the social and psychological causes for the bizarre behaviour of most of the characters in the novel and he is not afraid to tackle the important issue of polygamy from both female and male points of view. Kwakye also includes a very thorough exploration of the causes, nature and consequences of prostitution. In this regard, the conversation between Kubi, disguised as Kwamena, and the intelligent prostitute Ama Badu is quite revealing. Al-
though Kwamena depends on prostitutes for the satisfaction of some of his deepest needs he decides to adopt a high moral tone and to castigate the prostitute for doing something for a living that is demonstrably wrong. Kwakye’s novel shows however that the vast majority are forced into prostitution by poverty, lack of opportunity, or by unscrupulous relations or acquaintances. The novel also consistently reflects on the importance of tradition in Ghana, presenting traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices, portraying ceremonies in which the ancestors and the traditional gods are invoked and depicting traditional protocol and traditional beliefs in attitudes towards questions of polygamy and marriage. Adherence to traditional practices is also seen in the celebration of Koo Manu’s betrothal and wedding and in the christening of his first child.

This ambitious and highly imaginative novel offers a compelling revelation of post-colonial concerns. Apart from the manipulation of language and narrative technique, Kwakye evokes some incredibly realistic scenes such as in his presentation of police and military brutality, in the church scenes, and in the sexual encounters between various people. Around the framework of the trial Kwakye brilliantly weaves together events, settings and characterisations in this highly readable and engaging book.


Almost all readers of ROAPE will be regular visitors to the Pambazuka News website. This book – one of a series – takes articles from that web resource (and a few from other places) and organises them around trade-related issues. Consequently, the book reads as a series of short essays in the intellectual tradition of Pambazuka: anti-imperialist and supportive of social movement politics in Africa.

First, a comment on the contributions. These are highly variable in their originality, quality, and focus. Some are general critiques of neo-liberalism which do not add a great deal. Thus, arguments about imposed liberalisation, the limits of primary commodity exporting, neglect of small-scale trade, and the predations of transnationals are all expressed in this book. But, a good deal of these arguments are made in brief and generalised terms, rendering some chapters as rehearsals of familiar points. This is especially the case on the section on Women and Trade.

The stronger chapters are based on some fresh empirical material, all of which highlights the deleterious nature of Africa’s trading relations in the present-day – what Henning Melber rightly calls ‘predatory capitalism’ in his engaging chapter. Patrick Bond presents us with an account of the ‘ghost on the coast’, the Coega industrial zone in South Africa (a neo-liberal white elephant in the making?) which should depress even readers most cynical of the New South Africa. There are large and important issues behind Bond’s account (and reflected in other chapters) which desperately need

DOI: 10.1080/03056240802411594
more expansive treatment, most obviously the near-complete subordination of (parts of) African states to private business, and the bullish way in which the transnational corporate class asserts the conditions under which it is prepared to invest. In a world where violence against organised labour is increasing and labour action is seen as in some sense ‘old fashioned’, it is important to remember how threats of ‘capital strike’ (disinvestment, withdrawal of investment, the running down of capital) are part of the mainstream politics of ‘economic openness’.

But, of course, investment is not trade – although both are increasingly controlled by a small number of transnationals that are ever more adept at investing and trading within their own structures. My point here is that the contributions tend to bleed into other areas in ways that lead the reader to lose the focus on trade, and why trade matters especially in the context of new forms of regulation, liberalisation, and commercial norm setting. If there is a certain amount of conceptual fuzziness, one might balance this against the book’s desire to bring the issues to a broad readership in accessible ways. This the book does, but then the website does it far better and at less cost for the reader.

Which brings me to an important question: who is the book for? There is some scope for it to be adopted in development and African politics courses. Some chapters offer short focussed critiques of, say, Firestone’s disgraceful treatment of workers in Liberia, but it is not an ‘academic’ book.

The title of the book is striking, suggesting an association between the Atlantic slave trade and contemporary trading relations in Africa. Clearly, the intellectual traditions of the Left have relied on analogies of slavery for various anti-imperialism campaigns: the various Jubilee organisations have spoken about debt bondage and made explicit comparisons with the anti-debt and anti-slavery campaigns (in Britain based on a curious mix of internationalism and national esteem). But, beyond the rhetorical power of slavery analogies, what are the associations that one can make?

One is that, since the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, Africa has been locked into and subordinated by a capitalist global political economy dominated by the states and capitals of the West. Quite right, and worth repeating despite its self-evident truth until this state of affairs is no longer with us. But, contemporary capitalism bears little relationship to the Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century. So, what resonance does slavery have in the contemporary world?

Although outside the remit of this book, it is vital to note that slavery has hardly gone away; far from it. More complex forms of slavery – very often based in trafficking, domestic labour, and violence against women – are at the heart of the highly ideologised phenomenon that is called ‘globalisation’. Like primitive accumulation, the ‘freedom’ that Marx used ironically to explain proletarianisation is a tendency within capitalist social relations rather than a stage or enabling event and therefore bonded and enslaved labour are likely to persist for as long as capitalism itself. But, it is important to maintain a distinction between the social relations of slavery and wage labour. The chapter by Robtel Pailey, titled ‘Slavery Ain’t Dead’, describes the conditions of work in the now-infamous Liberia Firestone rubber plantation. What he goes on to describe, though, is the violence and exploitation of the waged workers who buckle under extreme collection quotas and live in squalor. Dubbing this slavery is normatively attractive, but politically misleading. These predations are intrinsic to wage-labour capitalism; calling them slavery serves to distract us from a
real facet or tendency within capitalism – the ever-present possibility of working people more or less rapidly to death where socio-economic conditions allow. This happened during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, it is present in the sweatshops that are contracted to produce cheap goods in minimal time to meet the 24-hour quotas and demands of international trading transnationals, and it can be found in Liberia and doubtless many other places in Africa.

The point of this short aside is simply that it is not clear in the book what the history of the Atlantic slave trade teaches us apart from the apparent historical continuities of deleterious Western interventions in Africa. What we have is a vague sense of Western responsibility for poverty and exploitation in Africa and some very general references to justice and reparations. On the issue of justice, there is surprisingly little in the book on movements for social justice in Africa in relation to trade, and not even a sketching of alternative and progressive trading relations. Charles Abugre’s characteristically sharp introduction does set out an agenda for Africa’s social movements – it would have been fantastic if these had been handed out to contributors as part of their remit in contributing to the book.

Each of these books provides valuable empirical information on their subjects, (respectively, domestic African business relations with states and experiments with workplace democracy) which will be of relevance to many researchers. Both are, however, weakened by their narrow focus on conceptual frameworks of business and labour relations which have little practical reality in the societies under examination.

Scott Taylor investigates an important and neglected question, namely, why is the indigenous business community so lacking in political influence in its relations with African states? It is unquestionably true that most African governments are unsupportive of their domestic business constituencies, even after the implementation of economic liberalisation programmes ostensibly designed to promote business interests and a market-driven approach to economic development. Taylor investigates this question through well researched case studies on Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Taylor claims that ‘Two decades of comparative research clearly demonstrates the potential benefits of business-state coalitions in the developing world.’ (p.2) Little evidence exists, however, that such coalitions have led to economic growth or development in Africa. Indeed, the evidence provided here suggests that temporarily strong state-business relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe in the early 1990s resulted in the implementa-
tion of liberalisation programmes that presaged significant economic decline. Despite being initially supported by domestic businesses, economic liberalisation proved in practice to be against their interests; exposed to the full force of international competition, many were unable to compete and were forced to close down and/or cut jobs. Taylor blames such problems on the faulty implementation of liberalisation, for which states are responsible. He largely disregards the role of donor conditionality and the international financial institutions for forcing liberalisation on Zambia (although, admittedly, not Zimbabwe). Although he admits that actual liberalisation is not always beneficial, Taylor assumes that ‘a strong dose of neo-liberal orthodoxy … should be considered a vital component of a late-late developing state in an overwhelmingly capitalist global environment’ (p. 220).

Taylor’s binary analysis of ‘strong’ states and weak domestic business interests neglects the role of both international business and the international financial institutions. Although Taylor acknowledges that ‘the prevailing international environment further disadvantages African business actors …’ (p.208), this is not central to the case studies. The evidence presented suggests, however, that domestic business is marginal because it plays a negligible role in economic development, job creation and government revenue, relative to these international actors. Taylor admits as much with regard to Zambia: ‘The specific needs of the independent business community are not widely sympathized with or shared by the general populace’ (p.89). In such a context, it is rational for state actors to disregard domestic business, which has yet to prove that it can significantly contribute to Africa’s development.

Taylor fails to offer a single example of effective pro-reform state relations with an indigenous African business community; Zimbabwe and South Africa are the partial exceptions which prove this rule. In each, Taylor suggests that it was white-dominated business which provided the basis for strong post-colonial state-business relations (p. 29). This is an ongoing process in South Africa, but the Zimbabwean honeymoon came to a halt with economic decline in the mid-1990s and Mugabe’s subsequent populist turn. South Africa’s current strong business-state coalition may be, Taylor admits, prone to similar political pressures if it fails to benefit the wider African population.

More generally, Taylor fails to prove his claim that ‘… the lack of business-state cooperation was a significant factor in problems such as the rapid de-industrialization, the failure to advance commercial agricultural potential, and rising unemployment across all economic sectors that accelerated in the 1990’ (p.5). It could certainly be argued that the lack of such cooperation, reflecting as it does the marginality of domestic business, was/is symptomatic of a wider malaise in which economic liberalisation was implemented in the interests of narrow national elites and their cooperating partners in international business and donor institutions, but it can hardly be said to be a major cause of such problems.

Kester examines the equally elusive concept of workplace democracy in Africa. It reflects two decades of research in ten countries and, in its case studies, provides a wealth of useful detail regarding experiments in worker participation in company decision-making that will help address the relative dearth of post-colonial labour studies at the workplace level. Of significant importance are the opinion surveys of workers and trade union representatives, which reflect a convincingly bleak picture of the generalised decline in working conditions and living standards since the 1970s.
However, Kester's longitudinal approach is also his weakness – as the author makes clear, experiments in worker participation were introduced in the period of state-led economic nationalism in the 1970s, and have virtually disappeared since the late 1980s. Although this is therefore largely a historical study of such projects, the presentation of data does not generally follow a historical structure in the individual country case studies. Insufficient contextualisation is provided of the widely differing post-colonial political and economic frameworks within which the many examples of worker participation occurred.

The study also suffers from a limited analysis of state motivations for introducing worker participation schemes. Kester contrasts the first decade after independence (c.1960-70), during which ‘progressive’ governments (Zambia, for example) planned worker consultation (drawing on Western European and/or Yugoslav models) based on ‘well-intended lofty ideals of co-operation’, with a period of implementation during which ‘the corporatist complex started to more and more confiscate all power and wealth, and the trade unions, who might have been willing to assume government-friendly roles in the beginning, became prisoners of increasingly authoritarian regimes’ (pp. 6-7) Insufficient explanation is offered for why such a shift occurred, and little evidence is provided indicating why such a positive view should be adopted regarding the motivations of rulers, nor why their good intentions were overturned. Given the lack of positive outcomes of worker participation in the cases under examination, an alternative reading of the evidence presented is that post-colonial governments, concerned with the disruptive power of organised labour, sought to introduce state-dominated corporatism to contain unrest and the potential political threat of independent trade unionism. It is evident that in the overwhelming majority of cases in which workers’ committees or councils were introduced, workers did not regard them as having improved labour relations, with most seeking to defend their independent trade union representation.

In the 1990s, liberalisation effectively dismantled such participatory structures (again, a symptom of a wider malaise rather than its cause). In a context of economic decline, effective worker representation has declined, with correlative declines in wages, living standards and levels of employment. Whilst Kester is right to argue for improved worker rights and representation, there is little to indicate that the types of workplace democracy examined here are relevant to addressing these problems in practice.