Understanding the ‘Zuma Tsunami’

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Jacob Zuma’s defeat of Thabo Mbeki’s bid to serve a third term as the president of the African National Congress (ANC) at the party’s 52nd National Conference in Polokwane in December 2007 provoked a torrent of analysis. In large part, this was because Zuma himself was a highly controversial and contradictory figure. On the one hand, the ANC’s new president was at the time having to fight against myriad charges of corruption through the courts; on the other, although highly patriarchal and conservative, he had earned the backing of the political left within the Tripartite Alliance and, apparently, the enthusiastic support of many among the poor. This article identifies eight ways in which the ‘Zuma tsunami’ was represented in the public discourse in South Africa, identifying their sources, motivations, limitations and overlaps, and concludes that the confusion around the issue of ‘what Zuma means’ represents a moment of extreme political fluidity within the ANC.

Introduction

Although South Africa’s constitution limits tenure of office by the country’s president to two terms, President Thabo Mbeki opted to stand for a third term as the leader of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in opposition to Jacob Zuma. The outcome, at the party’s 52nd National Conference in Polokwane in December 2007, was victory for the latter, and humiliation for the former. Mbeki, whose term of office was due to expire at the latest by June 2009, now remained state president while having lost the confidence of his party. This culminated in his ‘recall’ by the ANC from the presidency in September 2008 following an opinion delivered in the High Court by Judge Christopher Nicholson that Mbeki had politically interfered with the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and its investigative body, popularly known as the Scorpions, to ensure the prosecution of Zuma for corruption, fraud and tax evasion. Mbeki was succeeded as president by Kgalema Motlanthe, elected at Polokwane as party deputy president, Zuma not wanting to become president until after the forthcoming election in 2009.

Although the ANC claimed that party tradition did not allow for formal campaigning, the battle between Mbeki and Zuma had been visceral. The two men were fighting not only over power, but also over the ANC’s ‘political project’, Zuma drawing much of his popular backing from the ANC’s allies, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), which had long registered objection from the left towards Mbeki’s pro-market economic strategy. Zuma was also fighting to stay out of jail because for a considerable period he had been fending off attempts by the NPA to prosecute him. These had come to a head in September 2005 when it was indicated in the High Court that he had been in

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a corrupt relationship with Mo Shaik, upon whom he was financially dependent, and whom Judge Hilary Squires proceeded to convict upon charges of corruption relating to the arms deal which the government had concluded with European arms companies in 1998. Mbeki proclaimed this situation as one which required him to ‘recall’ Zuma, then deputy president, from his state office.

Mbeki was widely hailed as striking a blow for constitutional propriety. Yet Zuma’s dismissal was far from being unanimously popular. Within days the ANC’s National Working Committee was to slap Mbeki down by confirming Zuma as party deputy president. Nonetheless, the NPA launched a high profile campaign to pursue Zuma through the courts, only for his lawyers to throw up one legal obstacle after another to moves to bring their client to trial. Zuma also received the vigorous support of the party’s left, notably COSATU, whose secretary-general, Zwelinzima Vavi, had pronounced previously that efforts to stop Zuma from succeeding Mbeki as president of South Africa would be ‘like trying to fight against the big wave of the tsunami’ (Mail & Guardian Online, 7 March 2005).

Central to the left’s campaign was that the NPA’s attempts to prosecute Zuma were politically motivated. When Judge Nicholson backed this allegation in September 2008, the Zuma camp was triumphant. Zuma himself proclaimed that Mbeki should see out his second term, but the forces behind him were less conciliatory. Although the ANC’s National Executive Committee (NEC) was divided, the majority that the Zuma camp had enjoyed on that body since Polokwane decided that Mbeki should be ‘recalled’ from the presidency.

The NEC was following the line that the party had ‘deployed’ Mbeki to the presidency and therefore had the right to recall him, although it recognised that constitutionally only Parliament had the authority to end a president’s tenure of office before its legally constituted end – either by passing a vote of confidence, requiring a simple majority (which would necessitate the calling of a general election), or by a complex process of impeachment. Mbeki could have challenged the ANC to a battle in parliament. However, either steeped in the ways of the ANC, or reluctant to risk humiliation, he acceded to the NEC’s instruction.

Even as spare an outline of the political drama as the above is likely to be contested. Certainly, there is widespread agreement that Zuma’s ascent represents a watershed in South African democracy. In particular, Mbeki’s dismissal triggered a significant defection from the ANC of those either loyal to Mbeki or offended by Zuma, and their formation of a new party, the Congress of the People (COPE), which sought to pose a significant electoral challenge to the ruling party. Nonetheless, apart from such generalities, there is a remarkable diversity of opinion about how Zuma’s rise should be interpreted. This article is therefore devoted to identifying alternative interpretations of the ‘Zuma tsunami’, the extent to which they are compatible and the extent to which they clash.

Interpretations of the ‘Zuma Tsunami’

Any interpretation of the ‘Zuma tsunami’ is perilous. Considered academic assessments are few, in contrast to a mega-flow of media analysis. Nonetheless, some eight perspectives appear to have taken root, some striking out clearly along branches of their own, others distinctive yet intimately entangled.
The Overthrow of Mbeki as a Restoration of Democracy

The first interpretation celebrates the triumph of South Africa in dispensing with a sitting president through political rather than unconstitutional means. At one level, this is located in a comparative African framework, contrasting Mbeki’s fall with the obduracy of Kibaki in Kenya and Mugabe in Zimbabwe, both of whom clung to power in 2008 in the face of adverse elections (Southall 2008a). At another, it points to the saliency of the constitution, not least in the manner in which the fate of Mbeki was significantly determined by the courts (Southall 2008b).

The perspective is sustained by two further dimensions. First, there is the insightful portrayal of Mbeki’s end as constituting a political and a personal tragedy. This interpretation is most strongly associated with Mark Gevisser, who has suggested that in updating his biography of Mbeki (Gevisser 2007), he will be writing ‘a fifth act, perhaps of a Shakespearian tragedy, in which a courageous and very brilliant man has been unable to overcome his fatal flaws’ (Gevisser 2008a). Mbeki had come to the presidency with a mission of modernising both South Africa and the ANC. Furthermore, he had come to believe that a Zuma presidency would be disastrous, and that it was his duty to stop it. Yet in his psychological insecurities he had alienated many within the ANC, and surrounded himself with sycophants who had weaved together an ‘edifice of bad intelligence’ that glued denialism together. He had therefore ignored the signs that, in the build-up to Polokwane, it was time for him to go. ‘Not only because he saw himself as a king … but [because] the ANC had made him into a king, … the only way to move on was by decapitating him’ (Star, 22 February 2008). Polokwane thus constituted ‘a regicide’ (Gevisser 2008a).

For Mbeki, there was a large element of personal hurt because the ANC had been the only family he had ever really had. At Polokwane, he was to feel that he had not only been fired, but ‘cast out’ (Gevisser 2008a). Hence when he was ‘recalled’ from the presidency, his resignation speech proclaimed his dismay that he had been treated in an undignified manner not befitting the traditions of the political family he knew (Gevisser 2008b). There was also irony, for unlike his hero Coriolanus, who after his banishment from Rome had raised an army to vanquish his enemies, Mbeki would never want to be remembered for having collapsed ‘the old struggle hegemony’ of the ANC. However, his authoritarian rule had done precisely that, and had created the conditions for the emergence of COPE, presenting a real choice other than the ANC for the majority of black voters.

The second dimension, proffered most strongly from within the Zuma camp, stresses the freedom that has come from the overthrow of a dictator. Not many would go as far as Malegapuru Makgoba, the erratic vice-chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, who has condemned Mbeki as no better than Idi Amin, Robert Mugabe and Mobutu Sese Seko (Sunday Independent, 13 July 2008). Nonetheless, they exult in the idea of the restoration of internal democracy within the ANC. Gevisser (2008a) cites Cyril Ramaphosa, notoriously sidelined by Mbeki, as proclaiming Polokwane ‘a breath of fresh air’. Equally, struggle veteran Mac Maharaj has presented Polokwane as having ‘breathed life’ into South African politics. Bystanders were transformed into participants, fear was gone and people were now saying what they liked. For his part, Zuma was a victim of Mbeki’s machinations and ‘a symbol of those who felt marginalised and isolated’ (Star, 22 February 2008).

Polokwane is also presented as a return to the more open ANC of Mandela. For Ngoako Ramatlhodi (former premier of Limpopo), the move away from this
halcyon state was orchestrated by Mbeki, finding its most vicious expression in the open attack made upon the movement’s iconic former president at a meeting of the NEC in 2002, at which Mandela had complained about fear pervading the party. Those who had attacked Mandela had been genuinely fearful of Mbeki, who ‘had become larger than the movement’. Eventually, ‘it had become our revolutionary duty to defend the revolution’ (Ramatlhodi 2008).

The problem with such approaches is that they miss so much out: Gevisser’s focus upon the person of Mbeki subordinates the wider context, while the latter approach is too partial. For example, while Ramaphosa has long standing grievances against Mbeki, Maharaj and Ramatlhodi have themselves received the attention of the National Prosecuting Authority concerning allegations of corruption. In other words, while Mbeki’s overthrow may indeed herald ‘a second transition’ (Gevisser 2008a), the motive forces behind it appear to be more ambiguous than this interpretation suggests. However, the article now turns to a related narrative which, if not heroic, is at least cautiously optimistic.

The Tsunami as Rebellion from Below Led by COSATU and the SACP

A second perspective views the overthrow of Mbeki as principally a triumph of the poor and dispossessed, specifically via mobilisation of support for Zuma within ANC structures by COSATU and the SACP. From this standpoint, the organised left has not only asserted itself but stands to exert significant influence upon a Zuma Government in favour of a more collectivist, pro-poor programme.

The argument has been most unambiguously put forward by Webster, who has depicted COSATU and the SACP as ‘the elephant in the room’ at Polokwane, exerting a determining influence over events, but never formally visible. ‘Neither had voting rights, but both organisations were at the centre of the challenge’ (Webster 2008, p. 7), both having felt marginalised within the Alliance from as far back as 1996. Webster locates COSATU and the SACP as having placed themselves at the head of a rebellion from below. It was through Zuma, who had proved able to articulate multiple and often contradictory leanings that appealed to a range of groupings, that a social movement of the excluded had expressed their shared sense of moral indignation about the neoliberal modernisation project of Mbeki.

Depth to Webster’s argument has been provided by Ceruti (2008), who identifies three nodes of support behind Zuma. The first features an ethnic dimension, revealed by a survey of Zuma supporters in Soweto, whereby support for Zuma was strongest amongst people whose mother-tongue was either Zulu or Ndebele (Ceruti 2007, p. 47). The second revolved around a sense of exclusion that came to a head prior to the local government elections of 2005, when township residents all over South Africa took to the streets in protest against failures of service delivery (Ceruti 2008, p. 110), and translated into pressure upon ANC local councillors. The third challenge came from the unions, which were bearing the burdens of retrenchments, unemployment and wage restraint, expressed by a COSATU stay away from work by 2 million people in June 2005. This was preceded by 14 days by Zuma’s dismissal as deputy president. ‘Vavi perceived the suspension as a direct attack on the unions’, and although Zuma’s worker credentials were thin, when COSATU highlighted him as another of
Mbeki’s victims, his name became synonymous ‘with the imagery of resistance to inequality’ (Ceruti 2008, p. 111).

COSATU’s strategy has been further analysed by Sikwebu (2007), who traces how the federation campaigned to influence the outcome of Polokwane from the time of its own national congress in September 2006. At that occasion, having recorded that the ANC had shifted from an earlier working-class bias ‘as adopted in its Morogoro Congress in 1969’, COSATU resolved that Polokwane presented an opportunity for the working class to reassert its leadership of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). This required first developing a programme to unite the liberation movement; and second, identifying an ANC leadership that could best pursue the interests of the working class. Thereafter, and notably around the ANC’s policy conference in June 2007, COSATU produced detailed responses to draft ANC documents, and dispersed these to its members to promote in ANC branches. These featured a return to the demands of the Freedom Charter, an end to commodified service delivery, and programmes aimed at ending unemployment and poverty. In addition, they demanded that a political centre drawn from the ANC, COSATU and the SACP should determine policy and deployment to government and the state.

Sikwebu, writing before Polokwane, was uncertain as to the outcome, yet was doubtful as to its long-term viability. In particular, he claims that COSATU has failed to develop an understanding of the role of political parties in post-independence situations. Rather than adopting policies that would significantly empower voters and democratic institutions, COSATU opted for resolutions that would work to reinforce the status of the ANC as a ‘cartel party’ whose principal role after 1994 had been to manage voter expectations and pass policy making to regulatory bodies insulated from the electorate. In short, Sikwebu implied that COSATU’s capturing control of the ANC would change little or nothing.

In contrast, Webster, while acknowledging dangers of populism, suggests that Polokwane opens up the possibility of greater social inclusion and popular participation. His optimism has in some measure been endorsed by Butler (2008), who interprets Polokwane as the ‘second communist coup’ of the post-apartheid ANC. The first, in 1991, had seen the edging out of a hard-line exile faction in control of the organisation by a new left axis, comprising leaders of COSATU and the United Democratic Front with certain exile cadres from the SACP. The successes of the left axis included the National Union of Mineworkers’ Cyril Ramaphosa’s election as Secretary-General of the ANC, and the ousting of Mbeki from centrality in the transitional negotiation process. However, the exile right reconstituted its hold on power through new alliances with internal conservatives, while Mbeki’s rise marginalised popular constituencies and instituted a sharp division between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. It was the latter who linked up with wider constituencies, inclusive latterly of the former Mbeki ally Jacob Zuma, to achieve the triumph of the left at Polokwane. Thus it was that this ‘second communist coup’ saved the ANC from itself, from the exclusive authoritarian tendencies of Mbeki. Even so, Butler presents the left’s triumph as ironic, for rather than launching South Africa upon a path to socialism, historians are likely to look back at Polokwane as having rescued liberal democracy.

This second perspective as a democratic thrust headed by COSATU and the SACP offers considerable historical and sociological insight. However, it is lacking in at least three regards. First, it provides little in the way of evidence of how COSATU and the SACP managed to secure control of the ANC on the ground. While it is
assumed that militants battled their way into office from the ANC branch level upwards, we as yet await detailed case studies. Second, there is something of an unwarranted assumption of COSATU and SACP internal unity, when it seems that there was considerable dissonance within both organisations. Third, there is a failure to elaborate the actual relationship between COSATU and SACP, rendering their distinct roles in the making of the tsunami opaque.

The Tsunami as a Communist Putsch

This next perspective constitutes a right-wing variant of the preceding one, distinguished by its assertion of the role of the SACP. Thus according to Ken Owen (2008a), Polokwane saw ‘2,300 disciplined cadres organised mainly by COSATU and the SA Communist Party’ impose a party oligarchy upon the country. ‘Henceforth, policy was to be set, and political control exercised, by 80 apparatchiks meeting in secret conclave’, even though they still needed Zuma ‘naive and pliable’, to head the government. Polokwane was thus

*a putsch in which a gang of communists and criminals imposed on the country an overweening vanguard party . . . the SA Communist Party’s long-planned “second stage of revolution” is now close to being accomplished.* (Owen 2008b)

This takeover features the closure rather than re-establishment of internal democracy within the ruling party, for the communists ‘have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams in embedding themselves in the innards of the ANC’, with Gwede Mantashe, the SACP chairman, now running the day-to-day affairs of the ANC as Secretary-General, Blade Nzimande, SACP Secretary-General, sitting on the ANC’s highest decision-making body and destined for greater influence, and Ncumisa Nkondlo, another SACP stalwart, appointed as chairman of the ANC caucus in parliament. In short, the SACP has now regained the influence over the ANC that it had in exile: ‘Not since Militant Tendency tried to take over the British Labour Party has this sort of entryism been so successful’ (Mthombothi 2008a). In other words, ‘The Zanuификаtion of the ANC is complete’ (Mthombothi 2008b).

The ‘communist takeover’ is seen as having two major implications. First, it is viewed as presenting threats to the constitution. The most immediate issue post-Polokwane was whether there was to be just one (the ANC) or two (the party and the state) ‘centres of power’, the substantive issue being whether Mbeki, as president, retained autonomy, or whether he had to take instructions from Luthuli House, the ANC’s headquarters. His ‘recall’ from the presidency was, by this token, evidence of the party having imposed its supremacy, with Motlanthe replacing Mbeki as ‘just another poodle’ (Mthombothi 2008b). Inherent in this interpretation was the notion that the ANC had vanquished the supremacy of parliament, with the ANC caucus simply processing instructions from the top (this ignoring the fact that government leaders in parliamentary systems who lose their parties customarily resign without taking their fate to the legislature). Meanwhile, the putsch thesis also fed into wider concerns that the post-Polokwane ANC was determined to go to anti-democratic lengths to protect Zuma from prosecution.

The second fear was that the ‘putsch’ would lead to ‘a sharp turn to the left’, notably by increasing state intervention in the economy and undermining Mbeki’s fiscal discipline. Although it was recognised that, as president, global pressures would force Zuma
to perform a balancing act between conservative and radical positions within the ANC (for support for Mbeki’s macro-economic caution had not melted away), ‘Nzimande’s and Mantashe’s influential roles’ would now be in ‘stark contrast with their virtual isolation from the levers of power under Mbeki’s presidency’ (Naidoo 2008). COSATU and SACP were seen as attempting to formalise their greater influence through their conclusion of an ‘alliance pact’ backed up by their direct ex-officio representation on the ANC’s NEC where they would not be bound by ANC decisions. In addition, both bodies would put up individuals for the ANC’s election list who, after election, would be accountable first to COSATU and the SACP, and only after that to the ANC (Paton 2008a). Zuma had become a ‘prisoner’ of the left (Mothombothi 2008c).

The problem with such analyses was that they were based upon conjecture. Indeed they were to be contradicted by Mantashe himself, who was reported as insisting that the ANC, not the Alliance, would remain the centre of power. In any case, COSATU and the SACP would be limited to sharing only 20 per cent of the places on the ANC’s election lists with bodies such as the Youth and Women’s Leagues. Clearly, analysis of the actual extent of left influence within the Zuma ANC cannot be presumed by the mere presence of COSATU and SACP personnel in high places. Even so, for all its exaggeration, the ‘communist putsch’ does raise legitimate questions about the relationship between the SACP and COSATU, and their role in making the tsunami. In addition, it also demands clearer specification of their relationships with other elements of the pro-Zuma coalition.

The Tsunami as a ‘Coalition of the Aggrieved’

The ANC has always been conceived of as a ‘broad church’ spanning the different classes among the racially oppressed in league with other elements committed to non-racial democracy. Within this context, party documentation pays obeisance to the leading role within the NDR of the black, especially African, working class, yet care is taken, nonetheless, to promote the idea of the ANC as ‘a home for all’. It is therefore unsurprising that, while the tsunami can be presented as a ‘revolt from below’, it can also be portrayed as a ‘coalition of the aggrieved’. From this perspective, there is a significant sense in which Mbeki brought his fall upon himself. At one level, his ‘responsible’ economic policies were never going to appeal to the left and the poor. More particularly, his rule had consistently alienated his power base: ‘He isolated various powerful individuals to the point of victimisation; insisted on appointing premiers and directors-general from the centre; and refused to reshuffle his cabinet, thus shutting out new blood and sheltering incompetence’, as well as treating backbench ANC MPs as ‘voting cattle’ (Financial Mail, 26 September 2008). In consequence, ambitious ANC members who remained outside his favoured circle looked around for other avenues of advancement. No wonder that they congregated around Zuma in a loose coalition for deposing Mbeki!

As already noted, COSATU and the SACP are consistently viewed as the leading elements of the Zuma coalition. But Gumede (2008) identifies three other groups as crucial. First, the ANC Youth League; second, pro-Zuma black economic empowerment (BEE) oligarchs hoping to secure future patronage; and third, ANC leaders under investigation for corruption who hope that if Zuma’s case is quashed, theirs will be too. Friedman (2008) throws in for good measure ‘part of the KwaZulu-Natal ANC elite, former intelligence operatives who served under [Zuma], and politicians who were sidelined by Mbeki’. Diverse elements can also be added, such
as veterans of Umhonto we Sizwe, and the new leadership of the ANC’s Women’s League. Suffice it here to focus upon the three groups identified by Gumede.

Traditionally the ANCYL has modelled itself upon the Young Lions of 1948 who replaced the then conservative ANC leadership with the radical generation of Tambo and Mandela. They are therefore regularly presented as ‘king-makers’ in any change of national ANC leadership, their leaning being towards the most ‘militant’ and ‘revolutionary’ candidates. Consequently, in the build up to the ANCYL national conference in April 2008, the Youth League was viewed as being divided between not Mbeki vs. Zuma factions, but two pro-Zuma factions, the one being more stridently behind him than the other. The so-called Mbalula faction, named after outgoing president Fikile Mbalula, wanted the organisation’s provincial secretary, Julius Malema, to assume the leadership; the alternative Zikalala group, named after the outgoing secretary-general, wanted the league’s national organiser, Saki Mofokeng. The latter group was said to be more diverse, and to include people who ranged from those who supported Mbeki’s bid for a third term to business people (the ANC’s definition of youth extending up to 30 years of age). Ultimately, it was Malema who emerged as victorious and whose slate achieved a clean sweep-out of Mbeki supporters from the League’s national executive (Mail & Guardian, 20–27 March, 4–10 April, 4–10 July 2008). Subsequently, Malema was to repay the refusal of Luthuli House to re-run the elections (following protests about irregularities by the losing faction) by the militance of his pro-Zuma statements. Whilst attracting outraged comment from the media and various established figures within the ANC, Malema is said to be popular with working class (The Weekender, 22–23 November 2008). Malema has also played a key role in forging linkages with, notably, MK Military Veterans.

Mbeki is celebrated as the principal champion of BEE, yet Zuma has attracted significant support from this constituency. To understand this, it is necessary to appreciate that black business is by no means homogeneous, being made up of large-scale moguls and more modest entrepreneurs, and those with closer and more distant ties to the ANC. It is therefore important to be wary of blanket statements that a Zuma presidency will see one set of business people who are at present politically connected replaced by those with better contacts with the new ANC leadership (Johwa 2008). Although this has a kernel of truth, it proffers too sharp a distinction between ‘ins’ and ‘outs’. Business typically displays a willingness to deal with the ruling powers whoever they may be. Today, there is evidence that black moguls who rose to prominence under Mbeki are switching their support to Zuma. Principal amongst these is Tokyo Sexwale, chairman of the major mining company Mvelaphanda Holdings. Prior to Polokwane, Sexwale had thrown his hat into the ring, hoping to emerge as a compromise candidate for the leadership.

When this bid failed, he switched his support to Zuma. Other openly pro-Zuma moguls include Johnny Copelyn and Marcel Golding of the multi-billion rand trade union investment company Hoskens Consolidated Investments, while co-funding of the ANCYL conference by Patrice Motsepe, chairman of African Rainbow Minerals, with Sexwale (and others) suggests someone keen to sustain his political credentials (Paton 2008b, Mail & Guardian, 19–25 May 2008).

There are four other overlapping groups. First, there are those businesspersons who have always been close to Zuma, some of them (such as Don Mkhwananzi, a key player in the Black Management Forum and Sandile Zungu, Chairman of Zungu Investments) who have their roots in KwaZulu-Natal soil. Second, there are some
who, although having initially prospered during the Mbeki era, subsequently found themselves excluded from the circle securing government-related deals. These include Jayendra Naidoo and Jay Naidoo, former trade unionists who distanced themselves from GEAR (the latter having previously held ministerial responsibility for the implementation of the RDP). They had gone on to form the J&J group, a broad-based empowerment group, which in 2005 had lost out on the purchase of 15 per cent of Telkom when US and Malaysian shareholders sold their stake to a consortium packed with ANC heavyweights. Sandile Zungu similarly lost out when Transnet backed out of a deal to sell its large holding of shares in MTN to a consortium of which he was a member. Third, there are those who, while having done well enough without close connections to government, felt disadvantaged by the Mbeki-era pecking order (Paton 2008b). Fourth, Zuma is reaching out to the Indian business community, with Vivian Reddy, a Durban-based tycoon with major interests in casinos and shopping malls, a key financial backer (Business Day, 9 March 2008). Collectively, these groups constitute formidable business backing for Zuma, expressed by significant financial backing for the ANC election campaign: R30 million was raised at a dinner in Johannesburg and R11 million from local business in a Zuma tour of the Northern Cape (Business Day, 6 November 2008, Star, 17 November 2008).

Gumede’s third major group is that of the criminal and corrupt. He would seem to be pointing to a number of the post-Polokwane ANC NEC who have had serious criminal convictions upheld against them (Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Tony Yengeni), inclusive of the notorious ‘Travelgate’ scam whereby MPs defrauded the parliamentary travel scheme (Ruth Bhengu, Ndleleni Duma). Others are under investigation for criminal acts, some of these for alleged involvement in tendering scams (Ngoako Ramathlodi, Angie Motsheka, Sibongile Manana) (Mail & Guardian, 18–25 January 2008). While it is difficult to argue that Zuma is any more inclined to cohabit with the morally dubious than Mbeki (who, notoriously, shielded Chief of Police Jackie Selebi from investigation for apparent linkages to organised crime), this category nonetheless poses awkward questions about the moral character of a new party leadership headed by an individual who was facing some 783 criminal charges involving fraud, corruption and racketeering. It would seem to suggest that the Zuma-led ANC is unlikely to move beyond the decline in its financial probity which was openly deplored by Motlanthe when still general secretary (Southall 2008c).

Overall, the notion of the ‘coalition of the aggrieved’ argues a more politically fluid backing behind Zuma than those interpretations highlighting the primacy of the left. From this perspective, the coalition is not merely disparate but incoherent, united less in policy terms than in its desire to get rid of Mbeki. While Zuma is perceived as performing a balancing act, he is also seen as the glue holding the alliance together.

The Tsunami as Populist

The notion of the Zuma tsunami as ‘populist’ is characterised first by suggestions of a personality cult around Zuma, his appeal to the poor, and his efforts to appeal simultaneously to diverse elements of the population, regardless of contradictions this might embody; and second, by concerns that the mobilisation of support behind him holds inherent dangers to constitutionalism and democracy. As this second thrust suggests, the use of the term ‘populist’ is overwhelmingly negative in its
connotations, implying that those susceptible to populism are driven by emotion, attracted by demagogic promises that are unlikely to be fulfilled. From this perspective, populism is not only likely to serve as a ploy by manipulative elites, but also likely to veer off in a politically authoritarian direction (Sitas 2008).

The ‘populist’ approach builds upon the notion of a coalition of ‘the aggrieved’, yet emphasises Zuma’s capacity to breach the gap between ANC elites and the poor that opened up under Mbeki. In part, this is ascribed to the marked contrast in style and personality of the two men. Mbeki is portrayed as intellectual, aloof, uncomfortable in anything but a dark suit, and awkward amongst ordinary people. In contrast, Zuma is presented as ‘charismatic’, open, uncomplicated and as happy in a leopard skin as in the trappings of the elite. While Mbeki aspires to being ‘pan-African’, Zuma, the polygamist, is more uncomplicatedly ‘African’. Zuma is also viewed as a master of political theatre which appeals to ‘the masses’, his rallies a colourful mixture of homilies, parables, dancing and song.

Furthermore, Zuma is presented as appealing to diverse constituencies. At one level, this is viewed positively. In contrast with their perceived political exclusion under Mbeki, Zuma is celebrated for his courting of Afrikaners and poor white people. Similarly, his direct appeals to African indigenous churches are seen as seeking conservative backing to counter the left. Against this, he is also portrayed as both a ‘chameleon’ and not fully in control of his own coalition: Zuma, ‘has neither the finesse to pretend that he has any principles, nor the Machiavellian understanding – necessary in any cynical politician – that insincerity can only be sustained by consistency’. In short, ‘he’s an empty shell, an opportunist. … prepared to do or say whatever his minders or paymasters [i.e. the left] want him to’ (Financial Mail, 7 March 2008). Such a man, not surprisingly, now heads a party which is ‘fast sinking into a morass of sycophancy, cultism, populism and hooliganism’ (du Preez 2008).

Such analysis rests heavily upon the notion of the collapse of the values of the ‘old ANC’. Traditionally, the strength of the party was that it had been able to hold populist tendencies in check (Paton and Mabanga 2008, p. 34). However, Zuma’s ascendancy has opened Pandora’s box, giving rise to a style and content of politics which is not merely vulgar and disrespectful of party traditions, but explicitly dangerous to democracy and the constitution. Encouraged by Zuma’s praise song Lethu Mshini Wami (‘Bring me my machine gun’), this most notoriously surfaced in statements by both Youth League and COSATU leaders, notably Malema and Vavi, that they would ‘kill for Zuma’. Even if merely a metaphor, these were widely deemed politically irresponsible. Yet most concern has been aroused by attacks launched by leading members of the ANC against the judiciary following adverse judgements against Zuma, the most notorious of which was Mantashe’s labelling members of the Constitutional Court ‘counter-revolutionary’ (a slogan backed up by similar statements by the ANCYL, SACP and COSATU) (e.g. Louw 2008). For all that the resulting uproar propelled Mantashe and others to claim misquotation, such statements were widely viewed as evidence of the ANC’s preparedness to go to unwarranted lengths to protect Zuma from prosecution, as well as of its disrespect for the constitution. With Mbeki’s rule having already promoted the dominance of party over the state, the prospects under Zuma are now seen as ‘truly frightening’ (Leon 2008). Meanwhile, Zuma himself has done nothing to quell such fears by making statements which, in appealing to conservative audiences regarding capital punishment, homosexuals and curbing youthful sexual behaviour, appear to contradict the values of the constitution.
Ultimately, the overwhelming concern about ANC populism is that it will reap a political whirlwind (Sparks 2008). This fear has been expressed most potently by Nobel Laureate Nadine Gordimer:

>To me, Zuma is the ultimate dangerous politician. When you hear him ranting and calling for his machine gun, I think of Hitler in the Munich beer hall. We have all these poor, unemployed people and someone who promises you the moon. You believe him because there is nothing else to believe. Perhaps if he reaches office, Zuma will have learned things. He is a clever man. But then, the Germans had great intellect and they swallowed Nazism (cited by Bills 2008).

Predictions of the relapse of South Africa into Afro-fascism may be elitist, yet they strike a chord among those who point to the ANC’s sympathies with ZANU-PF, as well as those who fear that the brutal attacks which took place against black foreigners and ‘aliens’ during 2008 were symptomatic of a massive social crisis amongst the poor which is available for exploitation by ruthless politicians. From this perspective, the Zuma tsunami represents little more than a vicious struggle for power, privilege and wealth.

‘A “Loota” Continua’: the Tsunami as the Struggle for Resources

Moeletsi Mbeki views ANC policies under his brother’s government as having done little to transform the fundamentals of apartheid political economy. The ANC may now control the state, but the state is subordinate to white capital. The ANC has enabled politicians to get into business through BEE, yet the government has very little power, so people are fighting over ‘crumbs’. The new ANC leadership find themselves in a quandary. They want to preserve largely intact the economic system they inherited which allows them to draw financial benefits; on the other hand, they hanker for change that will ameliorate growing inequalities. The danger is therefore that the party will become susceptible to interventions by ambitious individuals ‘such as Zuma’ who, while not promoting social change, will pursue witch hunts against those labelled wrongdoers. Instability within the ANC will therefore be from financial rather than ideological motivation, as marginal groups see government as a vehicle to gain easy access to state finances. Meanwhile, because educated black people opt for work in the private sector, it is the uneducated within the trade unions and SACP who aspire to positions within government. It can be predicted that, in the wake of the 2009 election, there will be an exodus of qualified people from public positions, leaving the state to those who have no education, reinforcing the country’s downward spiral (Mbeki 2008).

ANC stalwart Raymond Suttner (2008) agrees. There was no programmatic difference between the winners and losers at Polokwane: the struggle was ‘a battle for loot’ between those who sought to benefit from continued Mbeki rule as opposed to those who sought to win out under Zuma. COSATU and SACP leaders dogged Zuma’s heels to share the applause that greeted him as the ‘deliverer’.

Support for this thesis is offered by multiple battles that have taken place within the ANC after Polokwane, notably at provincial and local levels. Struggles have been around deployment of individuals to positions and chains of procurement, and have involved extensive fraud, violence, intimidation and even assassination. Mbeki had acquired powers to appoint provincial premiers and municipal mayors, but the revolt against presidential centralisation at Polokwane had seen these devolve to
party structures. Henceforth, provincial executive committees (PECs) would put forward three candidates for premier, one of whom would be selected by the NEC. Likewise, regional executive committees would put forward three mayoral candidates for each municipality in their region, one of which would be appointed by the PEC. The outcome was numerous attempts to eject various premiers and mayors from office, the immediate motivation being that they were identified as pro-Mbeki.

There were major struggles for party position within six provinces where provincial conferences had not been held in the run up to Polokwane. Following the conference, it was now expected that those elected provincial chairs would become premiers after the 2009 election. In Limpopo, Premier Sello Moloto, who had rallied behind Mbeki, faced a campaign to displace him by Youth League-led Zuma supporters and lost his provincial chairpersonship. In Northern Cape, pro-Zuma Provincial Chairperson John Block faced down competition from Provincial Secretary Neville Mompati, and imposed party control over the Mbeki-appointed Premier Dipuo Peters. In Mpumalanga, pro-Mbeki Thabang Makweta retained his premiership, but lost out in party contest to pro-Zuma Provincial Agriculture Minister David Mabuza. Similar struggles took place in North West State and Free State. For the moment, the majority of Mbeki’s appointees as premier retained their state positions. However, a major factor keeping them in their jobs was the fear of the national leadership that if provincial power plays were allowed to result in their ejection, they would defect to COPE.

Only two pro-Mbeki premiers actually lost their position, in both cases because the NEC feared that their continuation would endanger the party’s performance in the 2009 elections. In Eastern Cape, Nosimo Balindlela was ‘recalled’ following strong demands by COSATU and the SACP and replaced by Provincial Minister for Economic Affairs, Mbulelo Sogoni. In Western Cape, the ANC was deeply divided into factions under Premier Ebrahim Rasool and Mcebesi Skwatsha which appealed to coloured and African party supporters respectively. The NEC intervened to forge unity by appointing Lynn Brown, Provincial Minister for Finance, as premier. Elsewhere, even where provinces were strongly behind Zuma, as in KwaZulu-Natal, there were brutal battles for party ascendancy (Star 15 March, 21 July 2008, Mail & Guardian, 28 March–3 April, 11–17 July, 7–13 November 2008, Sunday Independent, 15 June, 20 July 2008).

Numerous battles also took place at local level. In the Western Cape, struggles were particularly vicious, reflecting the schism between Rasool and Skwatshwa, the two factions reputedly well funded by supporters in business. In Boland region, for example, the pro-Skwatsha faction was replaced by a Rasool-supporting one, which subsequently supplied the mayor of Worcester with names of people they wanted him to appoint, and instructions to restructure the procurement unit and reverse tenders already awarded. In Paarl, the mayor was fired from the ANC to unseat her in the council, only for the pro-Skwatsha PEC to suspend the regional executive. At a meeting called by the PEC to explain their decision, Skwatsha was stabbed (Paton 2008c). Although such cases are not directly linked to the major fault-lines within the ANC, they suggest how divisions around control of resources relate to shadowy chains of influence and authority (Paton 2008c). ‘People’, indicated a mayor of Kimberley who stood down for fear of assassination, want municipalities ‘to be their ATMs’ (Paton 2008d).

The extent of resource-driven factionalism within the ANC appears to be far-reaching. However, having to put out fires across 284 municipalities, 52 party regions and nine provinces, the ANC leadership would be hard pressed to impose integrity on all. But
the real problem would seem to be not so much a lack of regulation, as the party’s unifying mission of liberation having been replaced by its turning into an instrument of office, power, tenders and jobs (Mthombeni 2008d). Yet what happens when the wells of patronage run dry?

The Tsunami as the Decline of the Liberation Movement

Giliomee *et al.* (2001) present the ANC as driven by an ‘historical project’ of ‘liberation’, as well as the notion of a party-state whereby cadres are deployed to key positions in the public service. The combination of these factors has been the centralisation of decision making, politicisation of the public service and erosion of the independence of supposedly neutral institutions such as the national broadcaster and the judiciary. However, a variant of this approach proposes that, rather than the ANC having imposed a quasi totalitarianism, it has transmogrified from a liberation movement into a party of patronage. Once centred around ideals, today it revolves around an internal struggle for jobs, privileges, procurements and perks. Under Mbeki, it became a party of ‘ins’ and ‘outs’, resentment amongst the latter fuelled by the President’s personal appointment of ministers, senior civil servants, premiers and mayors, and by their exclusion from the small circle of cronies who were favoured under BEE. It was this that shaped the power struggle between Mbeki and Zuma, and the breakaway of defeated malcontents into COPE (Laurence 2008a, Sparks 2008).

The story is presented as having a peculiarly South African dimension, with the trajectory of the ANC after 1994 akin to that of the National Party (NP) after 1948. The NP’s demise was preceded by an embourgeoisement of the party’s elite, the decay of its moral values, a loss of its sense of mission, and the defection of its right wing into the Conservative Party in 1982. Similarly, today, the ANC elite has become aligned to large-scale capital, mired in corruption and distanced from the ethos of past struggles, with the formation of COPE indicating its inability to keep its broad support together. Furthermore, the ANC’s problems are amplified by economic liberalisation alongside the revolution in international connectivity. It took 30 years for the Kenya African National Union to lose its grip on the electorate, but only 20 years for the same fate to befall ZANU-PF. In contrast, the ANC is confronting popular disillusionment within just 15 years (Laurence 2008b).

Ironically, the thrust of such interpretations is sometimes optimistic, arguing that the ANC’s troubles are good for democracy. Major revolutions elsewhere, argues Tilley, have resulted in human disaster. During its years of struggle, a revolutionary movement needs to confront a ruthless enemy through iron discipline that seals ideological differences. Slogans, songs and solidarity bind the masses to the movement, which by posing as the representative of the nation and harbinger of freedom ensures unity against the oppressor. Yet victory renders this obsolete, for now the party stops serving its great cause and begins to serve itself. Promotions are made for loyalty not ability, while corruption soaks throughout the party. In response, popular disillusionment leads to protest and criticism, but this in turn is repudiated as counter-revolutionary. Fourteen years after their revolutions, blood-soaked France had an emperor, the Soviet victory had morphed into the gulag, and Mao’s China was in the grip of the Cultural Revolution. In closer proximity, the promise of national liberation in Zimbabwe has plunged into authoritarianism, economic collapse and humanitarian disaster. In contrast, South Africa is facing this same post-revolutionary crisis.
merely in the form of a major party split’. It is thus entirely to the ANC’s credit that COPE is invoking the historic values of the ANC (Tilley 2008).

However, this raises the issue of whether the new leadership is capable of implementing necessary reform. Much would seem to depend upon the quality of leadership, a matter of considerable concern to key party elders.

The Tsunami as a Failure of Leadership

The formation of COPE is an outcome of Mbeki’s removal from the presidency. Yet not all who deplored his dismissal have departed for the new party. Some are locked into patronage networks and others are sitting on the fence, yet there are also those bemoan the party’s present condition and worry for its future. Their concerns have been expressed by individuals who profess loyalty to the ANC rather than to either Mbeki or Zuma.

There is amongst this group an acknowledgement of the crisis afflicting the ANC. Ben Turok (2008a), a long-term party servant, has written of ‘our once proud liberation movement’ being marked by ‘division, threats and abuse’, with the formation of COPE by ‘respected leaders’ being a result of ‘deterioration in our democratic culture and the stifling of dissenting voices’. Similarly, Jabu Molekete, who resigned both as Deputy Minister of Finance and from parliament after Mbeki’s removal from the presidency, views the ANC as having entered ‘a man-made winter’ (Forde 2008).

Such internal critics recognise that the thrust behind Mbeki’s unseating was driven, in part at least, by generational change, just as Mandela and Tambo replaced their predecessors and as the infusion of black consciousness activists into the party during the 1970s brought fresh blood and new ideas. Yet they deplore the crudity of the present leadership cohort of the Youth League. Zola Skwewiya, the highly respected Minister of Social Development who stayed in his position after September 2008, was especially critical. Remarking that a resurrected Tambo would recoil from the ANC’s present condition, he has spoken particularly upon the disrespect shown to Mbeki by Youth Leaguers. He has also singled out Julius Malema as an ‘embarrassment’, a ‘child’ and ‘unAfrican’, while the attacks made upon the judiciary he labels as ‘painful’ (Business Day, 28 September 2008). Skwewiya’s complaints were reiterated by earlier leaders of the ANCYL who have deplored not merely the behaviour of the current leadership crop but their replacement of an ethos of service with that of ‘the pursuit of business and self-advancement’ (Forrest 2008).

Despite their being unenthusiastic about Zuma’s leadership, these critics find themselves unable to contemplate leaving the ANC. For some, like Moleketi, disillusion extends to a decision not to campaign for the party. For Turok, the ANC – for all its faults – remains the principal locus of progressive tendencies, for which a breakaway from the mainstream organisation represents many dangers. For Pallo Jordan, who disagreed openly with the decision to remove Mbeki, COPE is little more than a vehicle of those who have lost power, patronage and resources.

For these individuals, the ANC’s condition represents a chronic failure of the ‘core leadership’. Jordan blames the NEC (of which he is a member) for failing to contain the tensions that led to COPE’s breakaway, describing discussions within the party as a ‘dialogue of the deaf’. The ANC was a broad group of people with conflicting interests,
yet failed to contain the contradictions. Similarly, for Moleketi, the ANC’s capacity for self-correction has gone, wrecked upon the rocks of self-interest (Forde 2008).

In this final interpretation there are echoes of the first, with Polokwane being viewed as an assertion of internal democracy (even if the style of its expression was regrettable). Jordan, for example, has warned Zuma that what happened to Mbeki could happen to him if he loses touch with the party membership (Mbanjwa 2008). However, while Turok (2008b) has issued an extended plea for a return to the socially inclusive economics of the RDP, there is little of anything substantial emanating from these critics than implied calls for better leadership and a return to established values if the organisation’s crisis is to be addressed.

**Conclusion: Assessing the ‘Zuma Tsunami’**

This overview has sketched out eight different ways in which the ‘Zuma tsunami’ has been presented. Some violently conflict, notably the view of Polokwane as a communist putsch and those which perceive it as an expression of democracy; some view it as broadly progressive, while others see it as a danger to constitutionalism; and at least one is potentially dialectical, a decline of the ANC being heralded as a harbinger of wider democracy. Yet diverse aspects of these interpretations significantly overlap. In particular, they share a perception that Polokwane constituted a major turning point, a ruction to which future historians will look back as a key moment in either the un-making or re-making of the ANC as well as of South African democracy. Against this, the simultaneous fluidity, overlap and contradictions of the manner in which the tsunami is interpreted indicate something of an impasse in our understanding of the class composition, political direction and programme of the ANC after 15 years in power.

This inconclusive conclusion raises yet further questions about Zuma the man and the tsunami as a movement. In his recent, sympathetic biography of Zuma, Gordin (2008, p. 306) portrays a figure who, although above all ‘a party man’, is simultaneously an individual of remarkable agency, who apart from having an extraordinary ability to attract popular support from diverse constituencies, provokes astonishing levels of discomfort amongst his detractors. Gordin suggests that this is because in Zuma, the self-image of South Africa as civilised, liberal and forward looking, as represented by its constitution, is overturned, and in its place, the elite is forced to confront the ugly realities of inequality, poverty, racism, ethnic sectarianism and male chauvinism. Yet in this Gordin does not go far enough, because it can be argued equally that in Zuma, his supporters have a leader who speaks to their own images, fears and hopes, however contradictory the diverse ideological underpinnings of such imaginings amongst his support might be: on the one hand, his message is replete with socio-economic pragmatism and cultural conservatism, on the other his rise can be presented as the triumph of the left. Nonetheless, Gordin (2008, p. 307) is correct in arguing that Zuma forces us to look beneath the surface of South African society, to ponder the shifting social forces within its political economy, and indeed, within the ANC. In absence of any consensus about what the Zuma tsunami ‘means’, and the extent to which Zuma can or will himself rewrite the scripts presented to him, we will have to await history.

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Defence Expenditures, Arms Procurement and Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa

Susan Willett

In November 2007, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) launched its ‘Transparency in Defence Expenditure’, or TIDE, initiative, designed to fight corruption in military expenditures and arms procurement. Its initial focus was on sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), a region regarded as the most corrupt in the world. By focusing solely on the bribe-takers in SSA while studiously avoiding reference to the bribe-makers, DFID has opened itself up to accusations of double standards and hypocrisy. Corruption in arms procurement in SSA represents a small segment of a complex global pipeline that links Western arms firms and licensing governments to corrupt foreign officials and offshore financial institutions; tackling this web of corruption requires major reforms at the level of global governance, not just in governance procedures in SSA. With an analysis limited by inappropriate neoliberal methodologies and tainted by the alleged corrupt practices of British arms firms operating within SSA, DFID has been forced to put its TIDE initiative on the back burner.

Introduction

Within neoliberal discourse, corruption, understood as the ‘misuse of public power for private or political gain’, has been identified as a major obstacle to development in that it reduces domestic investment, discourages foreign direct investment (FDI), inflates government expenditures and distorts public spending by shifting resources from education, health and infrastructural investment into sectors more malleable to corruption, such as the security sector.

In its 2006 Development White Paper, DFID committed itself to scrutinising public spending and procurement in the defence sector in developing countries as part of its broader anti-corruption campaign and as an extension of its work on security sector reform. The goal was to improve transparency and accountability in military budgeting and arms procurement in developing countries. In November 2007, DFID tentatively launched its Transparency in Defence Expenditures (TIDE) initiative. The stimulus for this initiative was inspired by a paper produced by the IMF economists Gupta et al. (2000), who hypothesised that corruption is highly correlated with (1) high shares of military expenditure in both GDP and overall government expenditure; and (2) high levels of military procurement spending in relation to both GDP and total government spending. Without evaluating the suitability of their methodology to the
context of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), DFID officials commissioned a series of consultancy papers from defence economic ‘experts’ to explore the extent of corruption in military expenditures and arms procurement in sub-Saharan Africa, using the quantitative methodologies favoured by Gupta et al. (2000).

This article attempts to show that DFID’s neoliberal assumptions about the nature of corruption in arms procurement are highly biased, and that studies based on neoliberal methodologies produce a prejudicial picture of the nature of corruption in military procurement in SSA. In much of the development literature, corruption in the security sector has been treated as though it was exclusive to emerging market economies and poorer developing economies. However, there is a growing body of evidence which suggests that misgovernance and corruption in the security sector are more widespread (Kaufman 2004) than the neoliberal institutions have been willing to acknowledge. Multinational companies, including British-based companies operating outside the OECD region, have been implicated in providing lucrative bribes to government officials in developing countries, in gross violation of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention. A number of high-profile arms procurement corruption cases in SSA highlight the role that multinational companies have played in arms corruption on the continent, strongly suggesting that corruption in arms procurement is far more complex and more common than DFID is willing to acknowledge.

Furthermore, for corruption in arms procurement to thrive, there have to be financial institutions willing to launder the ill-gotten gains of graft. This implies that a web of transnational corruption exists that links transnational arms companies to corrupt foreign officials and global financial institutions. Given this global pipeline of corruption, a focus that seeks solely to demonise political and military elites in the developing countries can only provide a very partial picture of what is actually going on in the world of corrupt arms transactions. Such partiality leaves donors open to accusations of hypocrisy and discrimination, thus undermining the supposed solidity and consistency of their good governance, anti-corruption and security-sector reform programmes.

The Challenge of Measuring Military Expenditures and Corruption in SSA

The IMF Working Paper produced by Gupta et al. (2000) relies on the elegant algorithms of econometric analysis that seek observable patterns in quantitative data in order to reveal significant statistical correlations. The models are built upon probabilistic assumptions, e.g. when $x$ occurs, $y$ will follow. Gupta et al. hypothesised that corruption is correlated with high shares of military expenditure in both GDP and overall government expenditure, as well as with high levels of military procurement spending in relation to both GDP and total government spending. To be able to test this hypothesis in the sub-Saharan African context, reliable statistical data on military expenditures and arms procurement in SSA needed to exist, but as Hartley (2007) revealed, statistics on defence expenditure and arms procurement in sub-Saharan Africa are weak and, in some cases, non-existent. Datasets on military expenditures in SSA, while being available from a number of sources including the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), are often incomplete, rarely correspond with each other and, as the collators of the data admit, are often unreliable, as transparency and accountability in military budgeting in SSA are notoriously poor.
Currently, the most reliable and consistent time series data on military expenditures in SSA is supplied by SIPRI, whose data suggest that formal military expenditures and arms procurement levels in SSA are well below the international average. In 2006, total military expenditure for sub-Saharan Africa amounted to just under US$9 billion, or some 0.8 per cent of global military spending (SIPRI military expenditure database 2007). The average military burden — military expenditure measured as a percentage of GDP — for the 30 SSA countries for which SIPRI had data in 2005 was only 1.5 per cent, less than half the average military burden during the height of the Cold War, when SSA military expenditure averaged between 4–5 per cent of GDP. This implies that military expenditure in the region is relatively low. However, reference to regional averages masks the wide variation in country-level military expenditures across the continent. For example, between 1998 and 2004, Gambia averaged a very low rate of military expenditure at 0.6 per cent of GDP, while Eritrea, engaged in a border war with Ethiopia, expended an average of 30 per cent of GDP during this same period. Moreover, there is a marked disparity in absolute levels of military spending. South Africa, for example, spent only 1.5 per cent of its GDP on defence in 2005, but with a budget of US$3.6 billion accounted for over one-third of total military expenditure in sub-Saharan Africa. Compare South Africa with Mali, with a budget of only US$33.6 million, but which spent 2.3 per cent of GDP on military expenditure, and the scale of disparity becomes apparent. This lack of correspondence draws attention to the wide differences on the continent, and cautions against making over-hasty assumptions about cross-country comparisons or correlations between high military expenditures and other variables.

Above all, there is a problem with the reliability of existing country-specific data on military expenditures. Omitoogun and Hutchful (2006, p. 2) conducted a series of case studies on military budgets in SSA and noted that ‘data on military expenditure … were very weak and needed improvement’. Most of their sample countries ‘have been known to engage in collusion to hide the cost of military activities from the general public and donors of economic assistance … who make aid conditional on low military budgets’ (Omitoogun and Hutchful 2006, p. 242). By way of illustration, it would be expected that African states involved in conflict, or having recently emerged from conflict, would record higher levels of military expenditure as a proportion of GDP than those countries not at war. While this assumption certainly holds for the majority of conflict states, as the figures in Table 1 illustrate, certain conflict-bound states, including Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Sudan, record official levels of military expenditure well below 2 per cent of GDP. If we change tack and examine the Corruption Perception Index ranking for SSA states that is produced by Transparency International (Table 2), it is apparent that these same states have a very poor record on corruption, all being listed as among the most corrupt states in the world.

The military burdens of those SSA countries listed by Transparency International (TI) as the least corrupt are recorded in Table 3. Despite lower levels of corruption than most SSA states, Botswana, Namibia and Lesotho have relatively high military burdens. Indeed, they appear to have spent a higher proportion of their GDP on defence than conflict-prone states such as the DRC, Chad, Congo and Nigeria listed in Table 1. How can this phenomenon be explained? The fact that less corrupt countries have a higher military burden may be attributable to the fact that the governments of these countries are committed to greater transparency and accountability in their military budgets than the afore-mentioned fragile states. If this is indeed the case, the whole notion of using the military burden as a benchmark to judge the ‘excessiveness’
Table 1. Military Burden (ME/GDP) of SSA Countries in Conflict 1998–2005

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Note: there are no available figures for Somalia or Côte d’Ivoire, and the figures for Angola should be seen in the context of highly uncertain economic statistics, due to the impact of war on the Angolan economy.


Table 2. Corruption Perception Index for Sub-Saharan Africa

<table>
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<th>Country</th>
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<th>Global ranking in corruption</th>
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<td>Comoros</td>
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Source: Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2007
Available from: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi
of military expenditures is called into question, as is the supposed correlation between military expenditures and corruption.

Data on the share of defence spending in government expenditure are even less readily available. World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers (WMEAT), produced by the US Department of State, provides the only reliable source of time series data on the defence share of government expenditures in SSA. However, collection of these data ended in 2002, and the latest available set are for the year 2000. The WMEAT data reveal some dramatic differences between SSA nations, as Table 4 shows. For 1999, the median share was some 8 per cent, with the highest shares in Eritrea (51.1 per cent) and Sudan (46.8 per cent), and the lowest shares for Cape Verde (2.2 per cent) and Mauritius (0.9 per cent).

The weakness and unreliability of existing data on military expenditure in SSA suggest that the quantitative approach adopted by DFID, and Gupta et al. have limited utility in the SSA context. If the Gupta hypothesis of the relationship between military expenditures and corruption is accepted, it would have to be assumed, on the basis of existing statistical data, that corruption in military affairs in SSA was on the decline. However, the qualitative studies commissioned by SIPRI on the military budget process in selected SSA countries suggest that this is far from the case (Omitoogun 2003, Omitoogun and Hutchful 2006). These studies strongly suggest that corruption in the security sector is increasing, and that this trend appears to be proportional to the amount of military expenditure which has gone ‘off-budget’.

### Donors and Defence Budgets in SSA

During the 1990s, multilateral and bilateral donors attempted to control ‘excessive’ levels of military expenditure in aid-dependent countries, using a ‘benchmark’ of 2 per cent of GDP. According to Omitoogun and Hutchful (2006), this had the unintended consequence of increasing secrecy surrounding military budgets in many
SSA countries. One of the reasons for this was that donors had failed to take into account the legitimate security needs of recipient countries. The net effect was that an increasing amount of military spending was pushed ‘off budget’, thus reducing the reliability of military data upon which donor judgements are based.

The case of Uganda is illustrative of the inability of the state to provide basic security under donor terms of conditionality, which forced it to fund military campaigns with off-budget sources of income. In the 1990s, Museveni’s Government, facing the costly task of attempting to contain the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), was unable to realistically bring its military budget to below 2 per cent of GDP, given the manpower, logistical and arms expenditure needs required to conduct a campaign on its northern border. At the time, President Museveni’s Government was dependent for more than 60 per cent of its expenditures on international aid, and was thus under considerable donor pressure to rein in military spending. In 1998–99 Museveni exceeded the 2 per cent benchmark. The donors, led by the IFIs, suspended aid to Uganda, and only resumed lending when the government returned military expenditure to the 2 per cent ‘acceptable level’. Faced with these intractable demands Museveni implemented several creative accounting techniques to enable him to allocate sufficient resources to his military campaign, while allowing him to keep official military expenditures below the 2 per cent benchmark. Resources earmarked for other government departments were diverted to the Ministry of Defence. In 2001 Museveni openly asked the donors to lift the 2 per cent ceiling, and requested permission to spend twice what the government had officially allocated to the military in 2000. In effect, the request

Table 4. Defence share of government spending (%), 1990–1999

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<td>Swaziland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
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<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(3.9)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Togo</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Uganda</td>
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Source: WMEAT (2002).
Note: NA = not available: figures in brackets are for nearest year to 1990 (e.g. 1989 or 1991).
was merely an attempt to gain permission to officially spend what was already being allocated to the military. Reluctantly, and in the face of international pressure to find some kind of solution to the human rights violations perpetuated by the LRA, the donors agreed. Since then, there has been a steady rise in official military expenditures. Under sustained military pressure from the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF), the LRA has to all intents and purposes been defeated. Peace negotiations are under way at the time of writing.

Where budgets have been kept within donor-defined levels of acceptability, military forces have suffered from chronic under-funding, which is reflected in low pay and allowances, inadequate training, poor living and working conditions, a lack of medical services and an absence of basic equipment (Henke and Rupiya 2001, Omitoogun 2003). In certain circumstances, this state of affairs has proved destabilising on two counts:

- resources are insufficient to sustain effective military capabilities, which limits the capacity of the state to provide basic security; and
- low pay and poor working conditions can lead to severe grievances and even mutiny amongst military personnel which, in extreme cases, can result in full-scale military coups, as in the case of Côte d’Ivoire in 2002.

The experience of Uganda, and to a lesser extent Côte d’Ivoire, forced a realisation among donors that their policy on excessive military expenditures had considerable shortcomings. Donors began to reformulate their policies towards military expenditures in early 2000. The new policy approach, largely formulated by DFID, placed emphasis on the ‘process’ or ‘good governance’ approach to military budgeting. New weight was given to applying sound financial management principles to the military sector (Ball and Fayemi 2004). On paper these reforms sound very plausible, however, as Omitoogun and Hutchful (2006) have noted, a number of serious structural obstacles need to be overcome before sound financial management principles can be applied to the military sector in most SSA countries.

First, there is a general lack of qualified accountants. The systematic downsizing of the civil service, and reductions in public sector pay under the terms of IMF-imposed structural adjustment programmes during the 1980s and 1990s, resulted in a widespread exodus of skilled professionals from public sector employment across Africa, which meant there was an acute shortage of personnel able to audit and reconcile accounts. The outcome has been that, all too often, unqualified personnel perform budget preparation and the reconciliation of accounts. Unless efforts are made to recruit and pay accountants a decent salary, sound financial management of government accounts, including defence budgets, will remain unattainable.

Second, there is a need to introduce integrated defence planning systems. The majority of African states lack the capacity and skills to design and implement defence planning procedures and military budgeting processes. As a consequence, military budgeting is extremely ad hoc and inefficient, often rendering security forces bereft of even the most basic of equipment, such as uniforms and boots, let alone any military equipment.

Finally, the necessary legal and institutional mechanisms that ensure and enforce accountability tend to be weak in almost all SSA countries. Oversight of the military budget is plagued by weak control by the ministry of defence, a lack of coherent defence policy, weak parliamentary control and limited involvement of civil society.
Even where institutional arrangements for accountability and public scrutiny exist, they are often bypassed under the rubric of national security (Adekanye 1999, Omitoogun and Hutchful 2006). The general absence of transparency and accountability mechanisms in the defence budgetary process allows for the systematic manipulation of military data by corrupt officials. The manipulation of military accounts, and the secrecy that surrounds this, have arisen to hide graft and the mismanagement of resources from public scrutiny, but also to deceive donors about the true cost of military activities.

‘Off-budget’ Military Funding and Corruption

As already noted, a significant proportion of arms procurement transactions in SSA occur ‘off budget’. The secret and shadowy nature of ‘off-budget’ funding creates ample opportunity for malfeasance. A variety of highly innovative off-budget mechanisms that enable the funding of procurement and other military ‘excesses’ have evolved in Africa.

- **Asset transfers**: The redistribution of existing assets to the benefit of the armed forces that may involve the reallocation of resources from other budgetary headings or state revenues. Examples include the Ugandan Government’s initial allocation of resources to the police budget, later redirected to the military, to augment the costs of the campaign against the Lord’s Resistance Army in the North of Uganda (Omitoogun 2003). During the border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia (1998–2000), Ethiopia diverted the proceeds of the privatisation of state companies to fund its war effort, in particular the US$300 million purchase of Sukhoi Su-27s from the Russians. (Africa Confidential 1999).

- **Natural resource predation**: The pillage of natural resources such as diamonds, copper, coltan, oil and timber, and the use of revenues for arms procurement and the personal gain of warlords and generals alike, is well documented in the DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Angola (Renton et al. 2007, Global Witness various, UN Security Council 2003). In Nigeria, the notoriously corrupt cash-call system that operated in the state-owned oil industry is thought to have funded Nigeria’s role in the ECOMOG operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone between 1990 and 1999. The figures for these ‘peace’ operations did not appear in Nigeria’s defence accounts, but are thought to have cost an estimated US$12 billion (Adekanye 1999). In Angola, it has been estimated that as much as US$1 billion a year of state oil revenues have been siphoned off into shell companies for use in a tangled web of corruption and backroom arms deals (Global Witness 2004). In the DRC, a total of US$80 million was appropriated from the state-owned diamond mining company (MIBA), of which US$20 million is thought to have been used to buy weapons from Ukrainian and Czech arms suppliers. (Africa Confidential 2004).

- **Taxes and levies**: Soldiers and rebel groups often augment their wages and raise money for weapons through the imposition of informal taxes and levies, and other illegal activities. Warlords in Somalia organised ‘tax zones’ to raise resources to prosecute their clan wars. In Burundi, soldiers augment their wages by imposing taxes on farmers’ crops and levies on border trade (Nimubona and Sebudadi 2007). Soldiers employ road blocks all over Africa to extract payments to embellish their paltry wages.

- **Shadow trade**: In the Niger Delta, officers in the Joint Task Force are reportedly involved in the criminal gangs that are engaged in the illegal bunkering of oil. (Africa Confidential 2007). Some 30,000–100,000 barrels of oil are stolen each day; the revenue from oil is thought to buy arms for the militias.

(Africa Confidential 2004).
2006). West Africa has become a major exporter of cocaine. It is not produced in the region, but the networks linking Colombian and Venezuelan drug barons with their West African business partners, which include senior military officers and government officials, have established complex and lucrative transshipment operations along the West African seaboard. The president and senior military officers in Guinea-Bissau are thought to be at the centre of the cocaine trade in West Africa (Africa Confidential 2007).

- **The diversion of humanitarian assistance and aid:** Humanitarian relief for the victims of armed conflict in SSA opened up opportunities for new income streams for both the military and rebel groups. In Liberia, the widespread diversion of relief supplies and assets was believed to have significantly assisted those involved in the fighting (Atkinson and Leader 2000, Savage 2007). In southern Sudan, the fraudulent ‘redeeming’ or buying-back of slaves, a campaign that raised millions of dollars in charity in the US and other developed countries, enabled the Sudan People’s Liberation Army to use the diverted funds to buy arms and ammunition (Harker 2000). Ethiopia is thought to have diverted humanitarian aid to procure weapons in the build-up to its border war with Eritrea (Cooper & Kyzer 2003).

- **External military assistance:** After years of ignoring Africa, the US has dramatically increased military assistance to the region. The total amount of US military sales to, and financing and training expenditures for, eight African countries considered strategic partners in the ‘war on terror’ has increased from about US$40 million over the five-year period 1997–2001, to over US$130 million between 2002–2006 (LeMelle 2008). Under the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI), the Pentagon supplied US$500 million to increase border security and counter-terrorism capacities in Mali, Chad, Niger and Mauritania. The African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance programme (ACOTA) has provided small arms and training for peacekeeping operations to Benin, Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia. Another source of external support is derived from neighbouring African states. They may supply arms or other forms of military assistance to rebel groups, or state forces, involved in conflict. For example, in the civil war in the Republic of Congo 1993–2002, Angola and Chad provided military assistance to President Sassou-Nguesso. In the DRC, Laurent Kabila received military assistance in the form of arms, training and supplies from neighbouring states, including Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and, in the early days of the war, Rwanda and Uganda.

- **Diaspora contributions:** Funds raised from diasporas are another means of augmenting ‘off-budgetary’ resources. Eritrea was reported to have raised US$400 million for its war effort in the form of donations from the Eritrean diaspora (The Economist 1999). These funds are thought to have been used to purchase MiG-29s from the Ukrainians.

- **Peacekeeping:** Volunteering soldiers for UN or African Union peacekeeping operations (PKOs) is another means of generating extra funds. Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe are among those countries that have volunteered for PKOs. Rarely do UN payments for these forces appear in annual military budgets. The failure to declare payments offers opportunities for malfeasance. In certain cases, corrupt military officers have banked soldiers’ pay (Hutchful 2003). During Nigeria’s involvement in ECOMOG missions in West Africa, generals benefited from revenues written off as expenses (Adebayo 2002). Millions of dollars were diverted into private bank accounts as part of this ruse.

- **Prolonged conflict:** Many conflicts in Africa are purposely prolonged by the military and rebel groups, because the conditions of instability enable warlords and generals
to rob their nations of resources and funds. Plundered resources provide the income with which militias and the armed forces are able to purchase arms so that they can continue to prosecute war.

- The diversity and opacity of these resources makes it almost impossible to monitor off-budgetary procurement trends. Subsequently, little is known about the nature of the arms being procured, how much is being spent, the scale of bribes and kickbacks involved, or where and how the ill-gotten gains from corrupt practices in this form of procurement are laundered.

**Arms Procurement and Opportunities for Corruption**

Even in the context of `best practice` in defence procurement, i.e. with proper systems of public accountability and transparency in decision making and auditing, the large and technically complex nature of defence contracts makes it hard for civilian authorities to fully comprehend and assess whether or not a contract is necessary, appropriate or indeed `value for money`. Challenging equipment specifications is a highly technical process and one that requires a combination of strategic, engineering and accounting expertise. In South Africa, where most of these skills exist and parliamentary oversight mechanisms and auditing procedures have acquired a considerable degree of sophistication, the size and complexity of the recent `Strategic Procurement Package` created an ideal environment for corruption to flourish.

In the 1995 *Defence White Paper*, the South African Ministry of Defence highlighted the need to re-equip the South Africa National Defence Force (SANDF) to meet the national security needs of the new democracy. This resulted in the Strategic Arms Procurement Package, which was signed off in December 1999, costing the South African taxpayer US$4.8 billion. The South African Government claimed that the package would pay for itself in the long run, through counter-trade and offset agreements. There was a huge public outcry about this allocation of scarce public expenditure resources at a time when the Reconstruction and Development Programme, designed to lift poor black people out of poverty, had been abandoned.

Controversy associated with the ‘Arms Deal’, as it has become known, spread, as irregularities in the tendering process and general lack of transparency came to light. Several high level investigations have been conducted into accusations of corruption involving bribe-takers – African Defence Systems (ADS) and senior figures within the ANC, including former Defence Minister Joe Modise, Tony Yengeni, ANC Chief Whip and former chairman of the Parliamentary Defence Committee, and brothers Shamin and Shabir Sheik, who have links to senior ANC officials. Bribe-payers, notably BAE Systems, the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) and Thales/Thompson, have also been implicated. Despite substantial evidence of widespread corruption in the deal, the major players have not been prosecuted to date, and the various phases of the US$4 billion arms deal continue unabated.

The sheer size of ‘Arms Deal’, the South African Department of Defence’s ill-preparedness to manage the simultaneous acquisitions, SANDF’s questionable ability to absorb the state-of-the-art equipment, the choice of expensive, offensive weapon platforms such as the new Gripen JAS 39 fighter aircraft, at a time when the southern African regional security environment has achieved relative stability, all point to a government agenda quite divorced from its stated objective of re-equipment the country’s navy and air force.
Given the resource constraints of most African buyers, including South Africa, a number of non-currency methods of payment for arms procurement have evolved, including counter-trade and offsets. Trading prospects are enhanced, both for suppliers and recipients, as trade is facilitated through a cashless, mutual exchange of needs. Offsets are industrial or commercial compensation practices required as a condition of purchase of defence articles and/or services. They include co-production arrangements, licensed production, sub-contractor production and overseas investment or technology transfer. As offset arrangements tend to favour countries that have attained a degree of industrialisation, few arms deals involving sub-Saharan countries involve offset agreements. South Africa is an exception to this rule.

Offset agreements are outlawed in all other forms of government procurement by Article XVI of the WTO plurilateral Agreement on Government Procurement, but are often the decider in defence deals because of their anticipated economic benefits. However, as Dunne and Haines (2006, p. 43) have shown in the South African case, offset deals often have questionable economic benefits. The prices of the new weapons systems appear to have been inflated by the offset arrangement. Hidden costs include unanticipated capital expenditure on imported equipment, which has had a detrimental effect on the balance of payments; an increase in state expenditure on R&D in order to realise technology transfers; and the downward revision of anticipated job creation. Overall, the economic benefits to the South African economy remain unclear and there may even be considerable opportunity costs in the long run. Finally, in the non-competitive and non-transparent arrangements that surrounded South Africa’s offset arrangements, the potential for corruption was extensive.

Counter-trade is far more common in arms transactions in SSA. This type of transaction takes various forms, including barter and counter-purchase arrangements. Barter refers to the direct exchange of goods-for-goods where no cash is involved. Although barter is as old as trade itself, contemporary barter deals are more common than is often realised. State-to-state transactions between African governments often involve barter. For example, Zimbabwe Defence Industries supplied the DRC armed forces with light weapons in exchange for mineral concessions. Angola was also thought to benefit from mineral concessions extended by President Laurent Kabila in exchange for military assistance. Counter-purchase, on the other hand, is a form of exchange that commits the arms seller to purchase a compensatory amount of commodities. In the context of developing countries this normally involves primary commodities. The arms contractor can either market these counter-purchased goods themselves or employ a specialist commodity broker to do the job for them. On the whole, defence firms try to avoid counter-purchases because they inevitably incur extra transaction costs.

Offsets and counter-trade are notoriously difficult to monitor and audit, because the deals are complex, multi-layered, take a long time to negotiate and are subject to fluctuating currency rates and/or commodity prices. This ambivalence provides ample opportunity to inflate deals with bogus expense claims, ‘bonuses’, ‘incentives’ and commissions.

The Bribe-makers
The main focus of DFID’s concern with corruption in military expenditures and arms procurement is on the demand side of corruption dynamics, namely, on the corrupt
role of political and military elites in SSA. But for bribe-takers to exist there have to be bribe-makers. Transparency International (2007) has noted that the arms market is one of the most corrupt sectors in the world. Despite accounting for less than 1 per cent of total world trade, the arms trade accounts for around 50 per cent of all corrupt transactions, according to a report issued by the US Government (US Department of Commerce 2000, p. 11). A 2006 survey revealed that approximately one-third of all defence companies claimed that they had lost defence contracts because competitors had offered bribes to secure sales (Control Risks 2006).

The payment of large ‘commissions’ by arms companies to individual officials in defence procurement deals can provide an incentive for the recipient to increase the technical specification of the weapons and even to persuade governments of the need to purchase entire systems, often entirely unnecessarily. The helicopter scandal in Uganda is a case in point. In 1998 the Ugandan Government purchased four second-hand Mi-24 helicopters from the Republic of Belarus at an inflated price of US$12.3 million (Ochieng 1998). The helicopters were not airworthy. Reportedly, Museveni’s brother, Major General Salim Saleh, received an US$800,000 ‘incentive’ to seal the deal. In 1998, the South African Government’s last-minute decision to switch from the Italian Aermacchi MB-339 trainer aircraft, the preferred option of the South African Air Force, to the more expensive BAE Systems-built Hawk 100 trainer, is thought to have occurred as a result of substantial sweeteners offered by BAE Systems to the late Joe Modise, then Minister of Defence, and his aide Fana Hlongwane (Roeber 2004, p. 61, Groenink 2007).

The sums involved in bribes are often life-changing for the individuals involved. Payments come in a number of forms, and are made through a variety of channels such as the brown envelope or the Swiss bank account, and take the form of luxury commodities such as cars, villas, private jets and access to private clubs. The scale of ‘commissions’ and bribes is unknown, and varies from sale to sale. A conservative estimate made by TI UK has put it at 10 per cent of a contract’s value (TI UK 2002). However, findings by the UK Special Fraud Office inquiry into the 2006 Tanzania arms scandal found that commissions of 29 per cent were paid, and suggests that bribes may be significantly higher than TI’s estimates (Leigh 2006, McGreal 2007). Estimating the total cost of corruption in the arms trade is fraught with challenges, but extrapolating from World Bank figures on global rates of corruption, Transparency International’s defence team has conservatively estimated that corruption within the global defence sector averages around US$20 billion per annum (TI UK 2002).

The firms and the government officials who facilitate arms sales often refer to bribes as ‘commissions’ or ‘incentives’. European arms manufacturers in stiff competition with each other, and with US defence giants, like to think that their commissions and ‘incentive packages’ create a ‘level playing field’ in a highly competitive defence market. Before the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention was introduced in 1997, these incentives were seen as legitimate practice in defence sales, notably when the payments were made abroad. Since the introduction of the OECD Convention, it is illegal for corporations from OECD countries to offer bribes to foreign officials; however, evidence from recent investigations into arms scandals suggest that the paying of bribes to secure arms sales continues to be widely practised outside the OECD region.

The Bribery Payers Index 2006 (BPI) produced by Transparency International found that Northern companies tend to offer more bribes in Africa than in any other region of the world (TI 2006, p. 8). Of this trend, TI has observed that:
It would seem that many foreign companies do not resort to bribery while operating in the ‘developed’ world, where institutions are strong and there is a significant threat of legal retribution for illegal activities. However, in less developed countries (many of which are characterised by poor governance and ineffective legal systems for dealing with corruption), it appears that many companies continue to engage in corrupt practices. The result is that the countries least equipped to deal with corruption are hardest hit, as their anti-corruption initiatives are undermined. (TI 2006, p. 10)

A number of factors have contributed to the rise in corruption in the arms trade sector during the last decade. On the supply side, the end of the Cold War simultaneously dampened demand for weapons systems and increased competition between arms suppliers. Arms manufacturers responded by aggressively marketing their wares, often resorting to bribes to secure deals (Gupta et al. 2000). On the demand side, opportunities for rent-seeking increased with the growing opacity of military procurement and with a reduction in the number of suppliers due to increasing levels of consolidation and concentration in the global defence industry.

The arms industry is ‘hard-wired for corruption’, mainly because of both the special treatment it receives from governments and the secrecy that sanctions every aspect of its transactions. Arms companies from the rich West bribe the political and military elites of poor countries to purchase weapons they cannot afford, and often do not need. These sales are justified on the basis of the national economic, employment and security interests of rich Western states, but there is a high cost to such deals, which contribute to the burden of national debt in poor countries, divert scarce national resources from social spending, and often contribute to the undermining of the security of nations through the purchase of expensive and inappropriate equipment.

The Role of the International Financial Institutions

Every single corrupt arms deal involves a financial pipeline that enables bribery to take place. It is not just the corrupt African elites, or the arms companies and their agents, that are prepared to pay bribes and mask their shadowy deals. There are other less visible players – including banks, offshore shell companies, accountants and lawyers – who facilitate the funding of arms deals and help to launder ill-gotten gains.

In laundering money, large amounts of cash are usually spread among many different accounts – such as in free-trade zones, financial offshore centres, and tax havens – where they are converted into financial instruments such as money orders, bonds, investments in trusts or charities, or into shell companies. The money is then transferred to other locations, sometimes in the form of payments for bogus ‘goods and services’ issued by holding companies owned by lawyers or accountants on behalf of unnamed beneficiaries. The funds are then wired back to their originators as part of the earnings of a legitimate business. It is a relatively simple process that leaves either no paper trail, or one that is so complicated that it is difficult to trace. Because the objective of money laundering is to return the illegal funds in a legal form to the individual who generated them, launderers prefer to move funds through stable financial systems – hence the central role of banks in the money laundering process.

A few examples reveal how global and widespread the money laundering of illegal arms receipts is. In 2006, Africa Confidential reported that Kenyan banks had been involved in the laundering of the ill-gotten gains of Nigeria’s military and political
elites in the late 1990s (Africa Confidential 2005). Extensive investigations into the ‘Angolagate’ scandal, involving illicit arms transfers to Angola worth US$790 billion orchestrated by key members of the French political elite, have revealed that a number of Portuguese banks were involved in transferring illegal commissions. In total, some 70 transfers took place, totalling US$54 billion. Fifty of these transfers, to a total value of US$21 million, were deposited in Portuguese banks. The largest transfers were to the state-run Caixa Geral de Depositos (CDG) and the Banco Comercial Português (BCP), the country’s two largest banks. The Nacional de Crédito, Nacional Ultramarino, Comercio e Industria, Totta and Açores, Pinto and Sotto Mayor banks, and the Portuguese branches of Spain’s Banco Bilbao and Britain’s Barclays, are also on the list of institutions contained in the indictment (Inter Press Service 27 January 2009).

Until relatively recently, the bribes or incentives involved in arms deals were not considered illegal, and banks readily complied with their clients’ need to launder their ill-gotten gains. Since 9/11, anti-money-laundering legislation and practice have been tightened up. More than 150 countries promised to cooperate with the US in its fight against the financing of terrorism, 81 of which (including the Bahamas, Argentina, Kuwait, Indonesia, Pakistan, Switzerland and the EU) actually froze assets of suspicious individuals, suspect charities and dubious firms, or passed new anti-money-laundering laws and stricter regulations (the Philippines, the UK, Germany). Nevertheless, 19 ‘black holes’, or poorly regulated financial services and offshore banking facilities, still persist in Russia, Indonesia and Israel, to name the most prominent.

Money launderers are resilient. They adapt fast to changing circumstances. Alternative banking systems are being established beyond the bounds of the West’s financial regulation and jurisdiction. Defunct banks in territories with corrupt politicians, lax regulation and porous tax regimes are being purchased. The cash-hungry countries of Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, Ukraine, Belarus and Albania are proving willing participants.

**Hypocrisy and Discrimination**

In December 2006, in response to political pressure from the highest levels in the British Government, the Director of the Serious Fraud Office announced his decision to terminate the investigation into accusations of BAE corruption in the al-Yamamah deal. By failing to conduct full investigations into arms trade scandals, the British Government exposed itself to accusations of hypocrisy and discrimination. It was a major setback in the campaign to control corruption in the transnational arms industry.

In July 2007, Jacob Zuma, himself implicated in corrupt arms dealing in South Africa, accused the British Government of double standards, and posed a pertinent question to the Newsnight investigator Peter Marshall: ‘Why should the rulers (of the West) be allowed to pick and choose on matters that relate to the application of law?’ (Newsnight 28 May 2007). Whatever his own culpability, Jacob Zuma has a point. DFID and other donors are hardly in a position to impose yet more levels of pernicious conditionality on development aid when their own governments are implicated in diverting scarce resources towards expensive and corrupt arms deals and in repressing enquiries into corruption. This state of affairs not only makes a mockery of DFID’s good-governance and anti-corruption programmes, but also undermines its security-sector reform agenda, which is a critical component of its post-conflict work.
If the British Government hoped that UK involvement in arms scandals could be covered up and would quietly disappear, they have had a nasty shock, as the US Department of Justice has decided to prosecute BAE Systems for its prominent role in corruption in the global arms trade. The US appears to be the only country currently willing to impose the ethical and legal principles governing the arms trade and embodied within international law. Cynics may argue that they are motivated by their own national interests in preserving the dominance of US arms companies within the international arms market. While there may be some truth to this accusation, if the US Department of Justice can help to regulate the ruthless and corrupt transnational arms industry, whatever its motivation, this may open up opportunities for challenging corruption in the military sector in SSA.

**Conclusion**

DFID’s cautious attempt to tackle corruption in arms procurement through its TIDE programme has been put on the back burner. Not only did the neoliberal methodologies employed to analyse the problem prove inadequate to the task in the SSA context, but it became increasingly apparent to DFID officials that British companies and, by implication, the British Government which had sanctioned and supported British defence companies’ sales abroad, were heavily implicated in arms procurement scandals. Given DFID’s past record of attempting to control excessive military expenditures, and its more recent attempts to improve transparency and accountability in defence budgeting, it appears to be hopelessly out of touch with the reality of Africa’s military and security environment. It should therefore come as little surprise that its endeavour to design an anti-corruption policy for arms procurement and expenditures in SSA has failed to take off.

Corruption in the arms trade is a phenomenon that can only be controlled when it is identified as a ‘global governance’ problem, one in which the rule of law and, in particular, anti-corruption legislation, has to apply to all parties engaged in corruption. These actors include Western politicians who promote arms sales, civil servants who oversee the licensing of arms exports, export credit guarantee services, arms company salesmen and executives, ‘independent agents’, political and military elites in recipient countries and the offshore banks who launder the ill-gotten gains. Only then can the global pipeline of covert deals, bribery, kickbacks, money laundering and secrecy be overturned, and ethical and legal principles upheld.

As a first step in regaining moral authority, Western governments need to adhere to, and actively enforce, the 1997 OECD Anti-Bribery Convention. This requires the provision of adequate resources to empower the OECD Anti-Corruption Committee to effectively investigate and prosecute those arms companies engaged in corruption in the developing world. A second step should be to impose conditions on export licences to ensure that companies comply with anti-corruption legislation and practice. Scrutiny of individual arms export licences should also be undertaken by government committees, to ensure both greater transparency in the licensing process, and increased company compliance with anti-corruption legislation. To complement these measures, arms companies should be made to adopt internal auditing systems capable of detecting corruption and the payment of bribes. Finally, government support for the domestic arms industry through the supply of export credit guarantees should be conditional upon anti-corruption compliance. Once the West has put its own house in order, it will be in a stronger position to start tackling the complex and
challenging nature of security sector corruption in the developing world. To lead by the example of ‘best practice’ is a first and necessary step in the challenging task of dismantling the transnational web of corruption in arms procurement and the arms trade.

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Fighting HIV and AIDS: Reconfiguring the State?

Sophie Harman

US$10 billion goes to fight HIV and AIDS annually. This money has been accompanied by the introduction of quasi-governmental bodies, a mushrooming of civil society actors and high-level political commitments of states and international agencies. This article argues that the multiplicity of actors involved in the HIV and AIDS response has led to a re-modelling of the state in East Africa. Moreover, this re-modelling does not exist in isolation of wider trends within the global political economy, but is instead led by the World Bank as part of its wider governance reform agenda in which notions of sovereignty and partnership are challenged under the rubric of ownership. The article considers the role of the National AIDS Councils, the president, civil society and the Ministries of Health in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda within the World Bank’s Multi-Country AIDS Program to explore this relationship.

Introduction

According to received wisdom from academic research and the international community, effective responses to the HIV and AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa rest on the role of the state. States have been identified as the main leaders and managers of HIV and AIDS programmes, and have been sought by donors and international organisations to accept and internalise dominant approaches to responding to this crisis. However, what is of concern is that this overarching emphasis is not initiated by the individual governments themselves, but is donor-led and donor-designed, specifically by the World Bank. Understandings of the state and HIV and AIDS focus upon the socio-economic impact of the epidemic, whilst failing to consider the effect of the international financial organisations that have come to form the global response and wider constructions of governance reform within which the response operates. This article argues that through its Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP), the World Bank (from hereon the Bank) has operationalised the broader reform measures it prioritised in the mid-1990s. This has confronted issues of state sovereignty within Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and, due to the global nature of the epidemic and the World Bank’s role within it, set the foundations for wider absorption of the Bank’s particular form of governance reform through decentralised delivery mechanisms. To understand the inter-relationship between the HIV and AIDS epidemic and the state, it is crucial to unravel the role of the World Bank.

The article proceeds in the following manner. First, the article considers current debate surrounding HIV and AIDS interventions and the state. Second, there is an outline of
how directives by international organisations have placed the role of the state at the centre of HIV and AIDS responses. The article then considers how the Bank’s HIV and AIDS interventions fit within the wider governance reform projects of the 1990s, and the relationship between existing research on such reform and the MAP. Fourth, there is an exploration of the impact of the response upon the role of the National AIDS Councils or Commissions (NACs), the Ministries of Health, and civil society organisations (CSOs). The article’s main findings and contributions are then drawn together in conclusion.¹

What We Know about the State and AIDS

Questions of the impact of HIV and AIDS upon the state are not new. Research into the socio-economic measures and outcomes of the epidemic raise concerns over the capacity of states to address HIV and AIDS. Capacity in this instance has mainly referred to the money and political commitments required to ensure widespread healthcare provision. The ability of states to address these issues has been undermined by a number of factors. First, state infrastructure is weak where a high death rate of state workers or civil servants exists (Barnett and Whiteside 2002, de Waal 2003, Chirambo 2007). Death in this instance reduces government consistency and experience, and leads to understaffing. Moreover, death of elected officials undermines democratic practice and the realisation of long-term strategic plans in combating the epidemic (Chirambo 2007).

Second, countries with high HIV seroprevalence rates are often poor ‘fractured societies’ (Poku and Sandkjaer 2007) with weak state infrastructure, and often lacking in the financial resources to provide healthcare for all. As Whiteside argues, state capacity in healthcare provision has been weakened by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and early 1990s, which opened provision to the market and thus reduced state intervention in basic services (Whiteside 2002), exacerbated poverty, and reduced budgetary spending on health, thus undermining the capacity of African governments to deal with the HIV and AIDS epidemic (Peet 2003, p. 141). Healthcare and education structures have been weakened through the transfer of resources from African countries in the form of US$13.5 billion in debt per year (Cheru 2002, pp. 300, 303). Export promotion and debt repayment resulted in cuts in public welfare spending. The impact of debt burden and structural adjustment has seen a shift away from approaches to health that were based upon social justice and equity in provision to approaches that view such provision as a threat to public finances and are therefore not productive for human development and economic growth (Poku 2002, p. 531, Whiteside 2002, pp. 191–192). Conditions placed on countries that received structural adjustment loans have framed the welfare systems of countries that are now tackling high HIV seroprevalence levels, and, as a result, the majority of such countries suffer from understaffed and under-funded health systems (Schoepf et al. 2000, p. 108).

Third, high death rates of people of working age affects countries’ labour productivity and position within global knowledge economies. This particularly impacts upon small business and micro-enterprise as a tool of poverty reduction, since these bear the cost of this high prevalence rate (Poku and Sandkjaer 2007). Productivity is reduced as absenteeism through sickness increases, people die, recruitment and training costs increase, and investors lack incentive to commit funds to countries where HIV and AIDS compromise returns (Barnett and Whiteside 2002, p. 242). Global
corporations thus lack incentive to invest in countries with high prevalence levels, job opportunities within the global economy are reduced, and the cycle of poverty continues. This is compounded by a ‘brain drain’ from developing countries with high rates of HIV and AIDS of highly skilled workers that travel abroad for better wages.

Both despite and because of these factors, academic emphasis upon the role of government and the state in leading the response to HIV and AIDS remains (Poku 2001, Barnett and Whiteside 2002). The role of the government is crucial: only they can put HIV and AIDS at the centre of the national agenda, create favourable conditions for other actors to play their role and protect the poor and vulnerable (Poku 2001, p. 199). Lack of government ownership and response to their individual country’s crisis sets a model for people, who believe that if the government is not taking the epidemic seriously then neither should they; doubts are subsequently reinforced, and stigma and misunderstanding continue (Caldwell and Caldwell 1992 p. 1179). This emphasis has been met by a series of incentives by international organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and World Bank to place states, or more particularly governments, at the centre of the HIV and AIDS response.

The role of government became the nucleus of HIV and AIDS activity during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This was in part reaction to evidence from countries such as Brazil and Uganda that were deemed ‘success stories’ by the international development community in their handling of the epidemic (Interview, Garrison 2006). A key component of their success was the role governments – and crucially presidents – took in speaking out about HIV and AIDS. Up to this point, the central focus of the HIV and AIDS response was concerned with the biomedical side of the epidemic, with the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Global Programme on AIDS (GPA) concentrating upon a health response, ignoring the social side-effects until they themselves became costly health problems (Ankrah 1991, pp. 967, 973). The role of government and the state became a part of the agenda with the creation of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), and efforts led by the UN to coordinate all state and international structures to address the socio-economic causes and consequences of the epidemic. However, it was not until the World Bank recognised this issue and built a project of unprecedented financial magnitude and scope that the role of the state, and the impact of the global response upon it, came to the fore.

The Bank established its US$1 billion Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP) commitment to fighting HIV and AIDS in early 2000. The purpose of the MAP was to make funds available for any country in sub-Saharan Africa with a high HIV seroprevalence rate and to engender a widespread ‘multi-sectoral’ response to the epidemic that involved every aspect of state and society. As such, funds were made available to those states that would accept and commit to the following conditions: the presence of a national strategic plan to fight HIV and AIDS; a national coordinating body; a commitment to directing 40–60 per cent of funds to CSOs and agreement by the government to use multiple implementation agencies, especially national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community groups. Key to the MAP’s intervention was the role of governments and the state, and to reflect this role the Bank implemented National AIDS Councils (NACs) in the highest political office of each of the 35 countries that have received MAP funding. These authorities were to coordinate the national response, select CSOs appropriate for funding and implement the Bank’s project (World Bank 2007). The MAP was the first project of its kind to establish governmental structures and promote the inclusion of CSOs. Since its inception, the MAP’s commitment to state responses and multi-sectoralism has come to underpin and lead the global
response to HIV and AIDS through the Global Fund’s operating structures and UNAIDS the ‘Three Ones’ (Harman 2007, UNAIDS 2004).

When understood against research into HIV and AIDS interventions and governance of the epidemic, the prioritisation of the state appears a straightforward necessity to a problem that requires strong governmental leadership. However, what is not clear is the impact these globally designed state-led initiatives are having upon the government and the state, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, or how this prioritisation of the state fits into the wider governance reform agenda of the World Bank. Research on the Bank’s governance reform of the mid-1990s suggests that interventions under the rubric of ‘the fight against AIDS’ do not exist in isolation of such reform.

Structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and early 1990s sought to reduce the role of the state as a stumbling block to stringent neoliberalism. Since 1990, international financial institutions such as the World Bank have come to see the state as a central vehicle in which to promote market-based reforms. This shift in thinking has been attributed to developments in economic thinking (Bortolotti and Perotti 2007), wider Bank commitments to governance reform (Tuozzo 2004), and the logic that economic reform can only occur through social development (Griffin 2006, p. 574). The Bank’s approach to governance reform, based upon capital and efficiency in public sector management, rule of law, accountability and transparency, has impacted on states in various ways (World Bank 1994, Tuozzo 2004, Harrison 2005). As Williams describes it, the Bank became engaged in ‘detailed and intrusive activities’ in countries in the pursuit of establishing market-based systems (Williams 1999, p. 80). Bortolotti and Perotti suggest that through such reform the state encompassed a form of ‘residual ownership’ wherein it adopted responsibility or ‘ownership’ of national programmes and priorities, but became ‘progressively removed’ from direct involvement in the economy (Bortolotti and Perotti 2007, p. 61–64).

Harrison characterises the Bank’s shift from stringent ‘Washington Consensus’ – typified first generation reform to an era of post-conditionality, second-generation reform, in which it operates through ‘governance states’ within the ‘sovereign frontier.’ In so doing, ‘governance states’ – typified by their attainment of ‘showcase status’, favourable growth rates, stability, ‘new beginning’-styled transition, and the prominent role of finance ministries – have become the central vehicles in which to embed market-based governance reform within sub-Saharan Africa (Harrison 2004b, pp. 41, 82–90). Harrison suggests that the Bank’s form of governance reform refers to the public sector’s ability to enhance economic growth (Harrison 2005, p. 241). The Bank ‘cherry-picks’ between states with ‘good’ and ‘bad’ governance in sub-Saharan Africa, which in turns divides states as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ adjusters (Harrison 2004b, p. 76). Conditionality is presented within the context of state-ownership and ‘development’ as a means of legitimising reforms. Sovereignty is thus being reconfigured through the ‘sovereign frontier’ in which it is constructed by an interplay of actors under the rubric of World Bank-led second generation reform (Harrison 2004b, p. 26). Civil society organisations (CSOs) are central to such interplay; embedding and legitimising this new form of governance and sovereignty and engaging in agendas set by donors (Harrison 2004b, pp. 97–107, 2004a, p. 131, 2005, p. 244). Harrison suggests that the Bank’s ability to fully enact governance reform is limited to the ahistorical and apolitical nature of the Bank’s conception of the state that produces short-term, quick-fix market solutions to historically embedded issues (Harrison 2005, p.255). The findings of Harrison, Tuozzo and Williams are pertinent to any understanding of HIV and AIDS governance, and in particular the prioritisation
of the state at the forefront of the global agenda. As this article will demonstrate, HIV and AIDS is used as a vehicle in which the Bank can enact its specific market-based governance reform throughout Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, and in using its HIV and AIDS interventions as a model for best practice, export its agenda throughout countries with high HIV prevalence.

The NACs and DACs: The New Armies in the War on AIDS

National, District, Regional and Community AIDS Councils coordinate the national response to HIV and AIDS at every level of government in line with each country’s national strategic plan. They were established in 2000 and are a prerequisite for any country in receipt of World Bank MAP funds. In keeping with the Bank’s model of governance reform that prioritises the Executive and Ministry of Finance (Tuozzo 2004), these AIDS councils are principally housed in the office of the president, and funded through the Ministry of Finance. The main role of the NACs is to coordinate the national response to HIV and AIDS by identifying those CSOs that should receive funds; strengthening the District AIDS Councils; working with partners to articulate the strategic plan; mobilising partners and working with line ministries and donors in strengthening capacity and filling the gaps in the national response to HIV and AIDS (Interviews: Bahati 2005, Byenka 2005, Kalinga 2006, Temba 2006, Tembele 2006). The key emphasis of the Bank was to turn ‘bureaucrats into warriors’ in the fight against HIV and AIDS (Brown et al. 2004). The NACs are the main focal point of the HIV and AIDS response, and are the subject of much capacity building by UNAIDS and UNDP and have, in some countries, accommodated the Global Fund’s central operative body – the country-coordinating mechanisms (CCMs) – within their overall structure. In Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda the staff of the NACs take the form of ‘governance habitus’ described by Harrison, wherein they are dominated by similar public sector elites, using training workshops and agendas paid for by donor money (Harrison 2005, p. 256).

The ability of the NACs to enact their own form of HIV and AIDS response has been mired by problems of CSO mistrust, bureaucracy, corruption, capacity, direction and ownership of their national responses. Mistrust exists between the NACs and CSOs. Interviews with CSOs within East Africa suggest that this mistrust is based upon specific CSOs’ views that the NACs are political entities conditioned by wider government spending plans and objectives (Interview, Kalimire 2005) or a political institution that distorts outcomes and achievements to make the government look successful (Interviews: Mwai 2005, Ruranga 2005). Other CSOs interpret the actions of the NACs as directed by donor demands, and consider that for states to realise their objectives in the response to HIV and AIDS they must be more dynamic in the management of such demands (Interview, Mwai 2005). Competing demands reduce the NAC’s disposition towards the actual governance of community empowerment, thus reducing the already limited space for social activity that exists in East African society (Interview, Southern 2006). CSOs feel that mistrust could be better managed by CSOs through improved coordination (Interview, Hervey 2006), presence within the community to gain first-hand experience of the problems CSOs face, greater publicity of their work (Interviews: Ogen 2005, Kalioli 2006, Simbaya 2006), and the promotion of transparent funding methods to get rid of ‘briefcase NGOs’ (Interviews: Mubondo 2006, Mulimila 2006). These factors would minimise mistrust and as a consequence strengthen the response at the national level (Interview, Hervey 2006).
A commonly perceived problem within state-sponsored activity in sub-Saharan Africa is corruption. The perception of corruption presents a powerful obstacle to the effectiveness of the NACs. In 2005, Uganda was tarnished by the Global Fund’s withdrawal of support resulting from the discovery of mismanaged funds by independent auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers. The Global Fund suspended all of its five grants to Uganda until the Ministry of Finance had established a structure that would ensure effective management of the funds. This issue has since been rectified, and the Global Fund was quickly re-established in the country. The Global Fund issue was minor in comparison to the problems experienced by the Kenyan National AIDS Control Council (NACC) and the country’s wider reputation for corruption (Interview, Kinzett 2005). Levels of misappropriation were such that national NGOs alleged that the then head of the NACC was reputedly paying herself KSh2 million out of MAP funds earmarked for the community (Interview, Mwai 2005). This allegation was supported by The Lancet, which revealed that NACC Head Gachara was obtaining US$315,789 in salary (Siringi 2004, p. 193). The corruption scandal led to all senior NACC management having to re-apply for their jobs, the removal of NACC’s funding decision-making capability, the imprisonment of the then Head of the Council, and an external audit conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The bureaucratic structures and processes within the NACs make corruption hard to detect. Bureaucracy can complicate the transparency of NAC activity, and thus does little to dispel CSO concerns over corruption. Upon implementation, the structures and processes of the NACs were cumbersome and bureaucratic (Interview, Kataka 2005), as the management units added an additional layer of bureaucracy to already complex government-donor relations (Interview, Tayyab 2006). The levels of day-to-day bureaucratic inertia range within East Africa’s NACs: the Tanzania Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) seems consistent in its processes, deadlines and ability to keep appointments, and the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) follows a similar pattern in consistency and transparency, yet could be problematic in terms of deadlines and appointments. However, the bureaucratic structures of the Kenyan NACC resemble a complex ad hoc system of protocol that is seemingly without process or procedure, varying by the day. Access to information often depends on who one meets within the NACC.

The institutional capacity of the NACs has been marked by under-funding, lack of staff and a rapid accumulation of responsibility. Initially established to manage the MAP, the NACs now have the responsibility of bilateral basket funds, the Global Fund and coordinating all HIV and AIDS activities in-country (Interview, Malangalila 2006). International organisations such as UNAIDS and CSOs view this as a result of their inability to delegate responsibility to their partners, such as the ministries of health (Interviews: Mubondo 2006, Tembo 2006). Staff members within the NACs are blamed because they are considered to lack the skills and ability needed to support the community and partner CSOs effectively (Interview, Margery 2006). Capacity issues are the responsibility, not the fault, of the NACs. Fault lies in the design and responsibilities placed upon them by international donors, principally the Bank, and CSOs arising out of the empowerment and government-ownership models advocated by such donors. The need for one coordinating body, the rapid demands of funding disbursement, preference towards CSO funding rather than government funding, and the multiplicity of actors involved all place stress upon the NACs’ capacity and confuse their initial mandate.

Confusion about the NACs’ mandate exists over their role as coordinators of the national HIV and AIDS response and implementers of the MAP (Interviews: Austen
Representatives of the NACs, as well as the World Bank and UN agencies, all stress that the NAC's role is coordination and not implementation (Interviews: Bahati 2005, Lekule 2006). However, in articulating the strategic plan, selecting those CSOs to receive MAP funds, monitoring and training the DACs and strengthening public sector responses, the NACs are heavily involved in operational implementation (Interviews: Lekule 2006, Tembele 2006, Zewdie 2006). The NACs present their roles as coordination, but on further enquiry admit that they have become involved – unintentionally – in implementation. This presents a conflict of interests, confusion and overburden on the part of the NACs, rendering them unable to do either coordination or implementation successfully (Interviews: Kibamba 2006, Kinzett 2005). As coordinating bodies, the NACs should not house projects as this contravenes their mandate. This is problematic in the NACs’ wider relations with CSOs: when implementing projects, the NACs are directly competing for funds with the project’s traditional implementation partners – CSOs (Interview, Mugumya 2005). As one CSO characterises the situation, ‘how can you referee when you are a player?’ (Interview, Mulimila 2006).

Ownership

The key factor that underpins the problems surrounding NAC capacity and their mandate is the discrepancy over ownership. Contrary to Bank and NAC affirmations of state ownership of the MAP and the national strategic plans, such ownership is articulated and directed by the Bank and international donors. The objectives and CSO engagement structures within the NACs were first created by the World Bank, and have since been developed by international organisations and donors under the rubric of ‘capacity building’. This is evident in the Bank’s implementation of the MAP in East Africa. First, the Bank used the MAP to establish or re-craft the NACs. The UAC in Uganda technically existed before the MAP, but underwent an institutional reform and is now fully funded by the Bank under MAP funds. The NACC in Kenya is funded by the Bank and only existed in discussion-paper form before the MAP, and TACAIDS in Tanzania was established under the MAP but is supported by government funds (Interviews: Voetberg 2005, Okwero 2005). In the UAC, for example, once work plans were articulated they had to be approved by the Bank; once the CSO proposals were reviewed, the UAC prepared recommendations for approval to the Bank; and once the MAP was accepted, the UAC had to sign an agreement to support CSOs (Interview, Byenka 2005). The central objective of the Bank was to use MAP funds to give states ‘the push that was needed’ to facilitate a high-level political commitment (Interview, Zewdie 2006). Thus not only did the Bank use the MAP as a catalyst for the NACs’ inception, but it also promoted an agenda that structured NAC practice alongside Bank working principles.

Upon implementation of the MAP at country level, states did not have a role in articulating the project’s main objectives. The Kenyan Bank team was adamant that ‘the Bank has no objectives behind the TWOA (total war on AIDS), it is the government, we are supporting the government. That’s the point, and don’t forget it’ (Interview, Lagerstedt 2005). The task team leader for Tanzania provided a more contradictory response to the question of ownership, suggesting it should be the Tanzanian government that designs the project, but in practice it is always the Bank:

The preparation has to be with the country. Actually the project should be prepared, ideally it should be prepared by the government, ideally, you know, we are not preparing the project as a
Bank, I mean this is, but in most cases you find that it is the Bank preparing, doing most of it, it is supposed to be the government preparing a project and the Bank assisting, providing you know, assisting the country to prepare a project, so that there is ownership of that project, right from the word go and throughout the implementation and even after implementation. So that is how it should look like, but for most of the projects of the Bank you will find that because of the capacities of the country, er, a lot is being done by the Bank. [sic]. (Interview, Malangalila 2006)

The requirement to channel 40 to 60 per cent of funds to CSOs was heavily resisted by the governments of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, who have little practice of CSO engagement (Interview, Malangalila 2006). As such, the Bank made states recognise the role that CSOs had in the national responses to HIV and AIDS and the need to adopt a new approach to development work (Interview, Zewdie 2006); hence the imposition of the CSO principle and the NACs under the MAP represented stringent conditions. Keen to dispel any use of conditionality on account of its association with controversial structural adjustment policy, the AIDS Campaign Team for Africa (ACTAfrica) avoided the issue by preferring to characterise such influence as ‘arm twisting’ or working with NACs to ‘remind them ruthlessly’ of their role (Interview, Mohammed 2006).

Sovereignty

The origins, roles and problems of the NACs reveal several key concerns over state sovereignty and the impact of international financial commitments and organisations upon the state. First, the creation of a Bank-funded governmental body at the height of political office, established to implement a Bank mandate, presents an unprecedented and significant confrontation of state boundaries within understandings of global governance. The NACs are characteristic of the second-generation reform measures depicted by Harrison (2005) and Charnock (2006), in which the Bank utilises government agencies to implement its reform packages through subscription to, and ownership of, a shared agenda. The national application of the MAP represents a sophisticated incarnation of such reform through its systematic use of CSOs and a specific form of CSO empowerment model. Second, this creation is undermining state objectives and government legitimacy, which ultimately threatens governments’ positions within their electorates. The ability of state structures such as the NACs to respond to community concerns is bounded by the conditions agreed upon at the outset of donor funding commitments. Under the rubric of state ownership, states have to assume responsibility and implement what is perceived by international organisations to be in the state’s best interest. Third, the ahistorical and apolitical nature of the Bank has established the NACs in isolation of any real understanding of the state in each of the three countries examined or the relationship between state and civil society, as such ‘domestic squabbles’, similar to Charnock’s depiction of governance reform in Mexico, have restricted the NACs ability to implement the Bank’s project. HIV and AIDS have led to a desperate situation that binds governments in a vicious cycle of dependency upon foreign aid and a loss of sovereignty that infers a growing legitimacy upon non-state and international interventions. This situation is enhanced by competition and mistrust between state agencies, and the decline of the health sector.

Ministry of Health: the Old Guard

The implementation and prioritisation of multi-sectoral approaches to HIV and AIDS, with NACs leading state responses, has undermined the position and capacity of traditional state agencies, most notably Ministries of Health. In all three countries
studied, the Ministry of Health provides the technical arm of the response: addressing medical issues of anti-retroviral therapy (ART), opportunistic infections, voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), procurement, logistics, and technical support for hospitals and health centres. Each of the Ministries of Health, except that of Uganda, has a special section for HIV and AIDS: these are the National AIDS/STD Control Programme (NASCOP) of Kenya; the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) in Tanzania; and the Zanzibar AIDS Control Programme (ZACP). However, the global response did not consider these agencies as suitable actors through which to coordinate the response, due to a commitment to non-health-based responses and the problems faced by Health Ministries across the region. These systems are strengthened with WHO technical support, resource mobilisation, training materials and policy guidance (Interview, Gavyole 2006). However, they remain clinically oriented with few sectoral ministries accepting their authority (Interview, Lagerstedt 2005). The Bank justifies the introduction of the NACs through the need for a regulating body that prioritises a multi-sectoral approach to HIV and AIDS alongside the health-sector dimension (Interview, Lagerstedt 2005).

The shift in focus from a biomedical to a multi-sectoral response to HIV and AIDS resulted in a contention between the NACs and the Ministries of Health. This contention was in part based upon an overlap in implementation and an unclear delineation of roles and responsibilities (Interviews: Quiery 2005, Duolf 2006, Hervey 2006, Tembo 2006). A great point of contention was over who had ultimate authority over the national response, principally arising out of who had greater funds (Interview, Nyantahe 2006). In terms of authority, an unnamed representative of USAID in Uganda described the Ministry of Health as very annoyed that they did not house the Uganda MAP. The conflict between these two agencies is widely recognised as problematic, in that they do not work together, generating further overlap and distrust. However, despite suggestion of conflict, representatives of the NACs and the Ministries of Health acknowledge a degree of initial animosity (Interviews: Chale 2006, Lekule 2006, Malangalila 2006), but then consistently state their cooperative relationship (Interview, Tembele 2006) by issuing examples of their joint working practices and inter-linkages between staff and committees.

The division and conflict between the ministries of health and the NACs has been heightened by the arrival of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and a re-medicalisation of the epidemic. PEPFAR is a pledge of US$48 billion towards care, treatment and prevention programmes across the world, with a focus upon rapid disbursement and results, that is, large commitments to the provision of anti-retroviral therapy (ART). The financial capacity alone has led the US to subsequently dominate the HIV and AIDS response. PEPFAR officially recognises, but does not function within, pre-established processes or coordination mechanisms such as the NACs, yet does integrate system strengthening and procurement practices within Health Ministries to facilitate the widespread scaling-up of anti-retroviral treatment. The financial commitment of PEPFAR and its shift away from the NAC approach assists in the schizophrenic position of governments trying to appease multiple international actors, whilst maintaining their own objectives and political mandates. The consequence of this is further division and competition of state agencies to prove their legitimacy not only to central government – as is often the case within line ministries wanting to secure parts of the state budget – but also to the priorities of international donors. The decline of the Ministry of Health as a result of the introduction of the NACs is characteristic of the Bank’s governance
reform, in which it promotes bodies within the executive and stresses new forms of ownership as replacements to existing structures and political cultures. However, bilateral money and the ‘old guard’ political structures of the state do promote competition, but not of the type the Bank wants.

CSOs, the State and the Service Economy

At the core of multi-sectoral responses to HIV and AIDS has been the role of CSOs as key forms of service delivery. CSOs in this regard refer to community groups of varying scale and size, national NGOs, regional networks and international non-governmental organisations. This has led to the upsurge of civil society actors throughout sub-Saharan Africa, and it is the role of the government and state structures such as the National, District and Community AIDS Councils to monitor and facilitate their involvement. Relations between governments and CSOs within sub-Saharan Africa, specifically the case study countries, have been traditionally marked by distrust. However, under the ‘ruthless reminders’ of the Bank and international influence, governments not only have to reach out to CSOs, but accommodate them within wider state structures of health, education and the office of the president. States have thus become the managers of non-state actors, mapping their work, sponsoring their activities, and then monitoring their interests, needs and success as if they were a central part of the state structure.

The omnipresence of CSO groups, particularly community-based organisations within sub-Saharan Africa, sees a shift in the types of economies promoted by the Bank through state structures. What has emerged in response to the large sums of money channelled to HIV and AIDS is an AIDS business, in which economies of production are shifting to service economies, and CSOs are established as a means of profit-making activity. Profit in this sense does not refer to substantial capital gain, but does enable unemployed workers to gain a low salary, globally-inferred prestige of working in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and in some cases a company four-wheel drive vehicle. This vision is reinforced and to a degree sanctioned by the state in the quantity of money it directs to this service economy, and the form of ‘residual ownership’ adopted by the state in which basic services are provided for by the CSO-led private sector.

Conclusion: What Does This Mean for the State?

HIV and AIDS is only one aspect of government activity, and thus to talk of reconfiguration may be rash. However, the epidemic reveals a complex picture of the interventions of international financial institutions and the paradox between state ownership and conditionality under the World Bank’s governance reform agenda. The MAP is a clear example of the implementation of the World Bank’s governance reform agenda within a specific social policy arena that has wider ramifications for the state and CSOs. However, the success of the project is limited by the ahistorical and apolitical underpinnings of it. The Bank’s approach was apolitical and ahistorical in the application of a blueprint model that ensured: (1) the establishment of the NACs whilst ignoring pre-existing structures within the Ministry of Health and potential tensions within the internal bureaucracies of these countries; (2) the requirement of national and district state agencies to engage with CSOs despite long-standing mutual distrust; and (3) crucially ignoring or obfuscating the socio-economic and historical determinants of each of the countries’ HIV and AIDS epidemic. These
factors have ultimately limited the ability of the HIV and AIDS response to fully shift
the dynamic of state activity as divisions within the state, between the state and CSOs,
or ‘domestic squabbles’ (Charnock 2006) reduce its wider absorption.

The multi-sectoral approach to combating HIV and AIDS led by the World Bank,
adopted by the international community and articulated as the global response, is
having the following effects on the state in sub-Saharan Africa. First, the need to
prioritise HIV and AIDS as an emergency and as a development project has given
international organisations licence to transcend sovereign boundaries and establish
agents of international organisations within the state structure. The originality and
scope of the MAP as a rapid response to a development emergency, combined with
the acquiescence of states in need to the multi-sectoral agenda, confers legitimacy
onto the Bank and the types of interventions it prioritises. Second, this ‘legitimate’
transcendence of state boundaries has been extended to the community level, with
CSOs becoming intertwined with the service-sector aspect of state provision. Similar
to states, these actors internalise and promote the logic of the Bank while assuming
ownership of the project at the local level. As such, these actors promote and interna-
lise the initiatives of international organisations and donors, once more under the
justification of the HIV and AIDS emergency. It is the involvement of these national
NGOs and community groups that offers the main contribution to how we can
understand governance and state reform in the context of the World Bank.

The positioning of CSOs at the centre of the MAP reveals a systematic extension of
governance reform on the part of the Bank. The Bank is very candid in this, freely
expressing the need for the involvement of these actors to ensure mechanisms of
good governance, i.e. transparency, accountability and participation in government
processes and decision making. As critical understandings of governance reform
would suggest, these actors perform a central function in embedding Bank-led
reforms within states. CSOs provide an outlet for the Bank to address any ‘bad
reform’ within a state. Where governments fail to fully implement specific reform
strategies, or are mired by internal disagreement, NGOs and community groups are
targeted by the Bank to provide the following vital functions: service delivery, trans-
mission of good reform to the community, and pressure on the state for wider
reform. This pressure on the state is not exerted through popular protest, campaigns
and lobbying, but through competition for funds and legitimacy as good reformers.
Where the state fails to comply with reform measures, funds are channelled to the
community or NGO sector, on the legitimate grounds that people infected or affected
by HIV and AIDS are needing the resources. What is seen is an extension of post-
conditionality that not only internalises governance reform practices and Bank ideol-
ogy within the state and civil society, but the funding of civil society that operates as
competition for who can demonstrate the most ‘good’ reform. CSOs are thus used as
means of circumventing or addressing failures within the state to fully reform. The
’sovereign frontier’ thus becomes challenged at the state and community level of
governance.

The role of NGOs and community groups in transferring ‘good’ reform to decentralised
parts of the state not only presents a new battleground within the ‘sovereign frontier’,
but further embeds market-oriented social policy at the community level. The funding
of these CSOs through the MAP is organised in such a way as to promote the Bank’s
brand of accountability and legitimacy – holding the state as owners of the project to
account – and limiting any emancipatory function of these groups in targeting the
wider mechanisms of the MAP or the Bank itself. Civil society within this category is
organised through the market logic of competition for funds as a means of promoting efficiency and low-cost delivery. The wrong kind of advocacy, questioning the main structures of the global HIV and AIDS response, suggests ‘bad’ reform and thus limits the direction of funds towards these ‘bad’ groups.

HIV and AIDS represents a new frontier for the Bank in which it can extend its governance reform agenda through health care and gain access to the most remote aspects of society through initiatives sanctioned and promoted by the state. The Bank’s role in HIV and AIDS contributes to our understanding of governance reform in unravelling the practical nuances of implementing such reform, the role of CSOs and their position within state reform, and the global reach and disciplinarity of the Bank’s reform agenda. The difficulties of implementing the MAP highlight the practical blockages associated with a reform agenda that promotes a specific form of ahistorical and apolitical governance. Nationally based CSOs play a crucial role within the Bank’s agenda to circumvent or address arising blockages or problems of ‘bad’ reform within the state. Thus in extending governance reform beyond the government-focused approach to state reform to include CSOs, the Bank is not only embedding its liberal reform agenda of competition-based free-market-led interventions at every level of governance, it is confronting the ‘sovereign frontier’ from the bottom up by bringing CSOs into the wider functions of the state. The method in which the Bank has embedded this agenda within state and society enables its continued existence and influence upon HIV and AIDS beyond the MAP. The MAP already presents the model of HIV and AIDS governance to which the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the UN agencies adhere, yet the permeation of MAP structure to every level of community, state and global governance will ensure the maintenance and expansion of this reform agenda well after the end of the project. What is seen then is a sophisticated expression of the Bank’s reform agenda that addresses the state as a stumbling block to market-led reform by Appropriating state structures as a means of promoting private service delivery through civil society. Addressing the failures of the HIV and AIDS response by looking at state agendas in isolation from the international influence depoliticises any understanding of the response to the epidemic, and thus reduces the ability to tackle it and its long-wave expression.

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Endnotes

1. The main findings of the article are based upon research into the activities of the World Bank’s Multi-Country AIDS Programme (MAP) in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda from 2004–2007. This research consisted of 163 semi-structured interviews with government officials, the Bank, multilateral and bilateral agencies and donors and CSOs; 50 issued questionnaires, participant observation of community meetings and partnership forums.

2. In 2004 Sir Edward Clay, then UK High Commissioner to Kenya, made a speech documenting the levels of corruption within the Kenyan government, accusing the government of bribery accounting for 8 per cent of Kenya’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), undermining Kenya’s...
economic growth and donor aid commitments. Such an accusation made international headlines because of the comment ‘they can hardly expect us not to care when their gluttony causes them to vomit all over our shoes’ (BBC News 2004).

3. These findings are based on extensive visits to the NACC: in one instance the NACC was open to participation in the Joint Annual HIV/AIDS Programme Review and was extremely accommodating and helpful in this respect; the corollary of this was attempting to access information on the District Technical Committees and being told that the information, i.e. names and addresses, was classified without a letter of introduction from the British High Commission, British Council or whoever they then chose. In a separate incident when attending the NAC for information on the NGOs nationally funded under the MAP, the researcher was left waiting for six hours after being told the person she needed was in a meeting, and then eventually that that person had gone home.

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The International Criminal Court and African Conflicts: The Case of Uganda

Issaka K. Souaré

For more than two decades, the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has been committing some of the most appalling human rights violations and war crimes against civilian populations in northern Uganda. The Ugandan Government has been unable to defeat the rebel movement and effectively protect the civilian populations from its carnage. This situation led the government to pass the Amnesty Act of 2000 in a bid to entice the group’s leaders to end the fighting. Subsequently, the International Criminal Court (ICC), at the request of the Ugandan Government, issued arrest warrants in 2005 for the five main leaders of the movement, a move regarded by some as the main stumbling block to peace in Uganda, as the rebels are insisting on the annulment of these warrants before they can sign a definitive peace agreement. This article examines the dilemma that this situation seems to have created in the peace process in Uganda. It concludes that the ICC should be firm in combating impunity, but flexible in accepting other alternatives to attributive justice whenever necessitated by the situation, as its own statute acknowledges.

Introduction

There has been an upsurge in armed conflicts around the world since the end of the Cold War. Although this is a worldwide phenomenon, Africa has arguably had the most significant share of these conflicts. Gross human rights violations are often among the main causes of these conflicts, and more of these abuses and even war crimes occur during the armed conflict itself. It is widely believed that punishing the perpetrators of these crimes constitutes one of the essential measures of effective conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict peace building. However, when no single party to the conflict achieves decisive victory and the conflict needs to be brought to an end through negotiations, it is often the case that the warlords and other combatants responsible for these crimes refuse to agree to any ceasefire except on the condition of an amnesty. This seems to have led to a situation where, since the mid-1970s, more than 15 states on four continents have passed amnesty laws exonerating past regimes or warlords from criminal procedures, in order to allow for a peace agreement or supposedly reconcile a post-conflict nation (Burke-White 2001, p. 42, Huysse 2008, pp.1–23).

Since at least the 1990s, however, the tendency of the globalisation of justice and the increasing arch of international human rights law, vigorously defended by a number of global human rights defence organisations, have led to a growing campaign...
for post-conflict ‘justice’. This campaign has sought at least to question state sovereignty in granting these amnesties, and it firmly opposes any peace agreement that does not allow for criminal justice proceedings, often with the slogan ‘no justice, no peace’ (Penman 2007, p. 8). The campaign has further resulted in a redefinition or attempted redefinition of customary international law with regard to amnesty provision in peace agreements (Cassese 2004, p. 1133). This is also true for international criminal law. The establishment in 2002 of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a ‘permanent institution [that has] the power to exercise its jurisdiction over persons for the most serious crimes of international concern’ (Article 1 of the Rome Statute) may be seen as a culminating point of these campaigns.

By October 2008, the ICC had opened investigations into four situations that the Court believed met the criteria set in its Rules of Procedure and Evidence. Interestingly, all of these cases relate to African countries (i.e. the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, both opened in 2004, and the situations in the Central African Republic and the Sudanese region of Darfur, both opened in 2005). In addition, all the 12 warrants of arrest issued by the Court’s Pre-Trial Chambers by this date concerned African elements, including five in Uganda. On 14 July 2008, the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC indicted the Sudanese leader, President Omar al-Bashir, charging him with genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and requested a Pre-Trial Chamber to issue an arrest warrant to this effect. Issued on 4 March 2009 without the charge of genocide, this is the thirteenth (African) case before the Court. (For a discussion of this specific case, see Souaré 2008b, 2009.)

This situation creates a dilemma for both researchers and practitioners in the field of conflict management and peace studies. For example, how to achieve peace and ensure justice for the victims, making sure that neither of these two objectives compromises the other? Should the mediators or the political actors of a country allow amnesty provisions in favour of peace and stability in the country concerned regardless of crimes committed, and on what justification? Is it a guarantee for peace, or should they insist on rendering justice even if this means the continuing death of thousands of innocent people? How will they morally justify this? What alternatives are there to these two options? It is with this thorny issue that this article deals, focusing on the specific situation of Uganda. It is in the effort to find this alternative solution that this article’s added value lies, as this approach is rarely found in the myriad of studies written on this topic.

The article is divided into five sections. The first section makes a general diagnosis of the situation and tries to explain the factors that make it problematic, providing a concise definition of the main concepts used in the article. The second section provides a brief historical background about the armed conflict in northern Uganda and where the dilemma lies in this situation, focusing on the Amnesty Act enacted by the Ugandan Parliament in 2000 in a bid to entice armed opposition elements, including LRA leaders, to come out of the bush and sign a peace agreement with the government. This section would not be complete without also looking at the real or perceived impact of the ICC’s indictment of these same leaders on the peace process in the country. The third and fourth sections deal with the arguments of those favouring one or other of the options. In the concluding and final section, an attempt will be made to move the debate from its dichotomic format (amnesty vs. criminal justice) and suggest some alternative measures with a view to reaching a middle ground that allows for peace settlement and at the same time addresses the grievances of the victims of crimes committed during the conflict.
This ‘third way’ alternative solution is based partly on the acknowledgement that ‘justice’ cannot be reduced to only one form, namely criminal or punitive justice, and that there are other forms of justice to which one could resort to address violations that occurred during the armed conflict and thus combat impunity (Henham 2007, pp. 449–468). The argument is that we need to know which of their many violated rights is more important to LRA victims in Uganda and what use can we make of ‘local’ justice systems in addition to addressing the violated rights that they consider more important.2

**Diagnosis of the Problem**

In contrast to interstate wars, in which the opposing sides will presumably eventually retreat to their own territories, in civil wars the members of the warring factions must live side by side after the killing stops (Licklider 1995, p. 681). Indeed, in their definition of civil war, Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000, pp. 244–269) insist that the parties to a civil war must be ‘concerned with the prospect of living together in the same political unit after the end of the war’.

The term ‘post-conflict justice’ or ‘transitional justice’ is understood here as the interrelated processes of prosecution and accountability, truth telling, reparations and institutional reform that contribute to the long-term restoration of social relations between the former belligerents and their victims, where the war experience becomes a regrettable episode of common history (Meltzer 2004). It is also ‘formal and informal procedures implemented by a group or institution of accepted legitimacy around the time of a transition out of an oppressive or violent social order, for rendering justice to perpetrators and their collaborators, as well as to their victims’ (Kaminski et al. 2006, p. 295). The term ‘justice’ is employed here for criminal or punitive justice.

‘Reconciliation’ is often associated with ‘forgiveness’, which is defined as a negation or abandonment of vengeance (David and Choi 2006, pp. 339–367). It also means the ‘overcoming of vindictive passions, the passions of anger, resentment, and even hatred that are often occasioned when one has been deeply wronged by another’ (Murphy 2003, p. 16). It is considered a means to peace and national reconciliation. The term ‘amnesty’ is also used in the same sense, which is how it will be used in this article. From these definitions, a line may be drawn between the two concepts whereby post-conflict justice in this sense is weighted more heavily in the past, as its main locus is resolving the burden of past violations. As with reconciliation, this is turned towards making normal life possible in the future, which makes it forward-looking or future-oriented (Mani 2005, p. 514).

Peace agreements can be defined as arrangements entered into by warring parties to regulate or resolve the basic incompatibility between them (Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1997, p. 342). Because they are ‘negotiated arrangements’ between the warring parties, peace agreements usually involve undertakings for power-sharing, at least temporarily, between the parties to the conflict, because otherwise some parties will be unwilling to accept (Licklider 1995, p. 684). Thus, in the interest of reaching a settlement, alleged perpetrators of human rights abuses and even of crimes against humanity have been included in the negotiations. They have even been included in the new governments after transforming themselves into political parties, and their crimes are generally amnestied (Derrick 2002, Lambourne 2004, p. 5).
What this means is that achieving satisfactory post-conflict justice and dealing with past injustices and human rights abuses may be easier in situations where the armed conflict is ended by the outright victory of one party over the others. Armed conflicts may be ended in three main different ways: (1) by a peace agreement; (2) by the outright military victory of one party over the other or others; or (3) in other ways such as de facto ceasefires. Of relevance to this article is war termination by way of a ‘peace agreement’, owing to the fact that none of the parties achieved decisive victory over the others.

When people responsible for gross human rights abuses during the conflict are walking free or even boasting about their actions in front of their victims or relatives of their victims, this does not augur well for the peace reached. What may undermine a peace agreement still further is the sight of such people in higher public positions, as if their atrocities have been rewarded by such appointments instead of being punished. Their victims may feel very disappointed and cheated by the new arrangements. The resulting frustration may lead to some trying to take the law into their own hands, thereby rendering an already precarious peace situation more fragile.

What follows from this is that the dilemma resides in the general recognition of a number of facts. First, that impunity for past crimes must not be allowed. Second, that there is a need to overcome or transform the enmities developed during the armed conflict and build bridges among ordinary people. Third, the bitter fact that conflicts ended by way of negotiation must accommodate all parties, as no one is in a position to win outright and others will not negotiate just to see themselves incarcerated. This is what makes the task of achieving successful and satisfactory post-conflict justice without undermining the peace process one of the most daunting tasks in post-or civil war nations, and this is the case in Uganda, as the next section will show.

The Conflict in Uganda

There have been many rebellions in Uganda since the 1980s and indeed before (Branch 2005, Allen 2006, pp. 25–52, Finnström 2006). However, the one that is the subject of this article is that of the reclusive Joseph Kony’s Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in the North of the country. Most authors trace the beginning of the chain of rebellions in Uganda, of which the LRA has proved the most durable, back to 1986 and the coming to power of Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Army (NRA), formed in 1981 as a rebel group against the government of Milton Obote. It should be noted that from the date it regained its independence from Britain in 1962 until the forceful coming to power of Museveni, a southerner, Uganda was ruled by people from the North (Apuuli 2005, p. 37). Both in this period and in the colonial era, northern Ugandans, especially the Acholi people, constituted the main pool of recruitment to the armed forces (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999, pp. 7–9). Almost all the rebellions of post-1986 Uganda emerged from the North, especially amongst the Acholi people, who have also been their main victims (Van Acker 2004, pp. 335–357, Allen 2006, p. 30, Finnström 2006, pp. 200–220, Baines 2007, p. 100).

There are various explanations as to the root causes of these rebellions and that of Kony in particular (Finnström 2006, Allen 2006, pp. 25–52, Branch 2005, 2007). Finnström advances two explanatory variables. The first is that people from northern Uganda initiated the rebellions in an attempt to regain state power after losing to Museveni’s forces from the South, something they felt unable to accept. The other
explanation put forward by the author is perceived economic marginalisation of the North, ‘a history of being only peripherally included in the economic structures and processes of the country’ (Finnström 2006, pp. 202–203) (see also Omara-Otunnu 1995, pp. 223–236). Although this factor has been cited by many other authors, it is a claim that seems paradoxical for the simple reason that it was the northerners that had ruled the country since its regaining of independence, except for the parenthesis of the north-western Idi Amin’s rule between 1971 and 1979.

In any event, what interests us here is that Joseph Kony formed the LRA after the defeat by the NRA of Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement (HSM II), another northern rebellion, in 1987. Kony proclaims himself a messianic prophet, declaring that he aims to overthrow the government in Kampala and rule Uganda according to the Ten Commandments (Allen 1991, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999). Notwithstanding this manipulation of religion and going against the commandment ‘you shall not murder’, the rebel movement has been accused of some of the most egregious crimes committed against innocent civilians, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and torture. By the end of 2004, an estimated 1.6 million people were living in internally displaced persons’ (IDPs’) camps, having fled the group’s savage attacks (Apuuli 2005, p. 41). The group is also notorious for the systematic abduction of children, many of whom are then forcefully conscripted in its ranks and/or used as human shields, porters, labourers, sex slaves, etc. (Human Rights Watch (HRW) 1997, p. 4, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999, p. 25).

Others see this account as one-sided. Adam Branch (2007, p. 181), for example, maintains that ‘the Ugandan government’s counterinsurgency has also been brutal toward Acholi, as the NRA and its successor, the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF), have focused their use of force on destroying suspected rebel support among civilians’. He attributes the formation of IDP camps to the Ugandan Government’s ‘policy of forced displacement’ and he qualifies them as ‘internment camps’, contrary to their qualification by the Ugandan Government as ‘protected villages’ (see also Otunnu 2006). Although he tends to give more credibility to the ‘gravity’ counter-argument of the ICC when this is used to argue that indicting only elements of the LRA is biased (Branch 2007, p. 181, Dowden 2007, Happold 2007), Tim Allen (2006, pp. 97–102, 2007) seems to acknowledge this fact.

Leaving aside this debate and notwithstanding the alleged crimes, owing to a number of factors, including in particular the failure of government forces to defeat the rebellion militarily, the Ugandan Government introduced an amnesty Bill in parliament in 1999, which was passed as an Act in 2000 (Hovil and Lomo 2005, Apuuli 2005, Allen 2006, pp. 74–78, Branch 2007, p. 184). The Bill offered pardons to all Ugandans engaged or engaging in acts of rebellion against the government since 26 January 1986 who voluntarily renounced rebellion. The Amnesty Act is the product of a great deal of activism from human rights and civil society groups as well as strong mobilisation of political, traditional and religious leaders in Acholiland (Hovil and Lomo 2005, Allen 2006, p. 72, Baines 2007, p. 101, Branch 2007, p. 184). The Act was aimed at all Ugandans without discrimination, which if not explicitly aimed at them clearly included the LRA members (Apuuli 2005, p. 44, Hovil and Lomo 2005). Indeed, within a year scores of rebel elements took advantage of the Act, renounced violence and were reintegrated into the society in different parts of the country (Refugee Law Project (RLP) 2005, p. 4, Apuuli 2005, p. 45). By mid-2004, over 5000 adult former LRA fighters reportedly had surrendered and applied for amnesty under the Act (Allen 2006, p. 75).
In December 2003, strangely, the government of Uganda asked the ICC to investigate crimes committed by the LRA in the country since the start of its military operations some 20 years earlier. The Chief Prosecutor of the ICC soon established that there was enough evidence to begin an investigation. Eventually, on 27 September 2005, the Court issued arrest warrants for the five most senior leaders of the LRA, including its Chairman Joseph Kony (ICC 2005, Apuuli 2006).  

By this, ‘there appears to be a contradiction between the Amnesty Act, seen by many as an alternative to punishment, and the investigations and subsequent punishment by the ICC’ (RLP 2005, p. 4). Branch (2007, p. 184) goes further to argue that ‘the warrants eviscerate the Ugandan Amnesty Act’ and thus ‘fly in the face of the popular demand for general amnesty, rendering the Act inapplicable to the very people to whom it most needs to be applied for peace to arrive’.

As a result, although peace talks began between the government and the rebel group in mid-2006 under the auspices of the government of south Sudan, the indictments of the ICC appear to be a complicating matter. For while they have been important in bringing the LRA to the negotiating table (International Crisis Group (ICG) 2006, Allen 2006, pp. 116–117, 2007), they seem to be ‘the main stumbling block to peace’ (Atkinson and Finnström 2006, Baines 2007, p. 102, Branch 2007, p. 183, Happold 2007).

In February 2008, the Ugandan Government and the rebel movement signed the sixth in a series of documents expected to eventually lead to a final peace agreement to end the conflict. They fixed dates in March, April and May 2008 for this signing that never happened. Speaking on Ugandan radio in October 2008, the Acholi Paramount Chief, David Acana II, claimed that Joseph Kony called him the previous month and apologised ‘for not meeting the Acholi cultural leaders, for switching off his phone and for his failure to sign the final peace deal’. Kony is reported to have said this, notwithstanding the fact that the chief facilitator of the talks, south Sudan’s Vice-President Riek Machar, is said to have decided to ‘close the chapter’ on the painstaking Juba peace talks. But even with this apparent change of heart by Kony, the main problem seems still to be the LRA’s demand that the ICC withdraw its arrest warrants (Olupot 2008, Sserwanga 2008). This is not to deny the fact that there are other issues, such as the amount of money that LRA leaders are calling to be paid to them, but these cannot be matched to the role of ICC warrants. The mobilisation of funds, if money were the main problem and the Ugandan Government could not provide it, is far easier than getting the ICC to disengage.

The ICC, for its part, still insists on the validity of its indictments. The closest it has come to softening its position was when it asked the Ugandan Government to furnish it with information on the competence of a proposed war crimes court that Kampala had agreed with the rebels to set up in a section of the High Court of Uganda (Nyakairu 2008). What this points at is that criminal proceedings are still a paramount process in this case from the perspective of the ICC and those that favour its approach, and this is where the dilemma lies for Uganda (Southwick 2005, Atkinson and Finnström 2008).

Post-conflict Justice: No Justice, No Lasting Peace

As noted above, the Amnesty Act of 2000 and the proposed amnesty provision in the yet-to-be-signed peace accord between the government of Uganda and the LRA rebel movement is greeted with opposition from some quarters, both within Uganda
itself and outside. Prominent amongst the opponents are the ICC itself and some international human rights organisations. The ICC seems to have pressed the Ugandan Government not to allow the top leadership of the LRA to benefit from the Act. In a press release confirming the referral of the situation concerning the LRA by the Ugandan Government, the ICC notes that:

*President Museveni has indicated to the Prosecutor his intention to amend this Amnesty [Act] so as to exclude the leadership of the LRA, ensuring that those bearing the greatest responsibility for crimes against humanity committed in northern Uganda are brought to justice.*

(ICC 2004)

The position taken by the proponents of this approach may be described as legalistic or legalist.

For example, in reaction to the Ugandan Government’s announcement of its intention to offer amnesty to the LRA leaders if they signed a final agreement, Amnesty International issued a public statement. In it the organisation expressed its dismay at this news, noting that the government of Uganda did not have any authority to offer ‘protection’ to any person charged by the ICC and that even the latter would have ‘no power to revoke arrest warrants on grounds that it might assist political negotiations to end the armed conflict’ (AI 4 August 2006, emphasis added). Others have insisted on the criminal prosecution of the rebellion’s top leadership which has been responsible and directed the crimes, but seem ready to accept a pardon for the children who were abducted and conscripted in the LRA movement (Apuuli 2005, p. 49, 2006).

There are three main arguments for the proponents of this approach. First, they argue that amnesty laws are incompatible with international law. Second, that contrary to the claim of the proponents of amnesty provisions, who justify their argument on the basis of moral considerations for future victims, amnesty laws are not after all morally justifiable. Third, that amnesty laws do not offer any guarantee that they will lead to durable peace in the country or prevent others from occurring. There will now be a look at these arguments in some detail.

With regard to the first argument, it is advanced here that amnesty provisions constitute an acceptance of impunity and may thus be regarded as condoning the crimes committed by those amnestied. Chigara (2002, p. 2) and Ssenyonjo (2007, p. 376) argue that amnesty laws that expunge criminal liability promote a culture of impunity and continuous violence that all instruments of international law reject categorically.

One legal instrument often cited to substantiate this argument is the Rome Statute of the ICC that stipulates in its preamble that the State Parties to the Statute are ‘determined to put an end to impunity’ for the perpetrators of serious crimes of concern to the international community. Nonetheless, as will be seen below, some proponents of amnesty laws are of the view that the Rome Statute also allows for amnesty provisions when peace is at stake. They point to paragraphs (1)(c) and (2)(c) of Article 53 of the Statute as allowing the Prosecutor of the ICC to suspend or abandon an investigation or prosecution where there are substantial reasons to believe that the investigation or prosecution ‘would not serve the interests of justice’. They also point to Article 16 of the Statute that gives a similar prerogative to the UN Security Council who, in a resolution adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, can request the Court to suspend an
investigation or prosecution for a renewable period of 12 months, based on consider-
ations of international peace and security.

In their response to this apparent questioning of one of the main arguments of their
thesis, many legalists tend to interpret the term ‘interests of justice’ in a way that
does not allow the proponents of amnesty laws to use it as a legal basis for their argu-
ments. For example, Stahn (2005) and HRW (June 2005, p. 2) argued in 2005 that since
the term is not clearly defined in the Statute, the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) of the
ICC ‘should adopt a strict construction of the phrase “interests of justice” in order to
adhere to the context of the Rome Statute, its object and purpose, and to the require-
ments of international law’ (in HRW’s words). For them, these things are clearly
defined in the preamble of the Statute, which is to combat impunity.

Human Rights Watch goes further in its Policy Paper, inviting the OTP to publish new
regulations narrowing the reading of the phrase ‘interests of justice’ to prevent it from
being manipulated for political purposes. This notwithstanding, the organisation
acknowledges that ‘the only means by which the Rome Statute explicitly permits
concerns about peace process to “trump” prosecutorial efforts is through a deferral
by the UN Security Council’, as outlined in Article 16 of the Statute. This means
that the organisation does not reject this Article, albeit it ‘has concerns about how
Article 16 may be applied’, namely the danger of political interference in the judicial
process (HRW 2005, pp. 5, 7–8).

Indeed, in September 2007 the OTP published its Policy Paper on the Interests of
Justice in nine pages. In this document, the Prosecutor of the ICC states, among
other things, that the criteria for the exercise of Article 53 of the Rome Statute ‘will
naturally be guided by the objects and purposes of the Statute – namely the preven-
tion of serious crimes of concern to the international community through ending
impunity’. He also noted that ‘there is a difference between the concepts of the inter-
est of justice and the interests of peace and that the latter falls within the mandate of
institutions [such as the UN Security Council] other than the Office of the Prosecutor’
(p. 1 of the document). These arguments are almost identical to the ones advanced in
HRW’s Policy Paper. But what seems to follow from these arguments is that the debate
about the principle of peace concerns justifying the suspension or halt to ICC’s inves-
tigations or proceedings is rather a ‘technical’ one, as the question is about who has the
authority to ask for the suspension or end of investigation or prosecution, and not
about whether the decision can be made.

As noted above, the second argument of the legalists is that amnesty laws are not
p. 376) argue that national amnesty laws for their part disregard the rights of the
victims, as they treat them as if they did not have pre-determined rights at the
moment of abuse, and if they did, as if those rights had not been breached at all.
For this, they argue that the supposed moral justification that the tenants of
amnesty laws claim to have is invalid, for the victims have a right to justice and
nothing can justify a state or a mediator denying them this right.

Orentlicher (1991, pp. 2548–2549) suggests that ‘by generally requiring prosecutions,
international law helps assure that governments do not forego trials simply because it
seems politically expedient to do so’. Based on the assumption that prosecutorial ‘trials
secure pre-eminent rights and values’, she insists that governments should ‘assume
reasonable risks associated with prosecutions, including a risk of military discontent’.
Cherif Bassiouni (1996, pp. 9–28) echoes the same sentiments, arguing that the obligation to render justice to the victims should never be sacrificed for political considerations.

The third argument of the proponents of this approach relates to their concern about how to dissuade parties to the conflict to commit similar crimes in the future with the belief that the amnesty provision covers them from any prosecution. In other words, they argue that amnesty provisions do not offer any guarantee for durable peace, but merely postpone the eruption of discontent, regurgitating old conflicts into the future, and that only prosecution can provide this guarantee (Akhavan 2001, pp. 7–31). The outbreak of the Liberian civil war in 1999 after a peace agreement and even a successful presidential election in 1997 is often cited as an example to illustrate this argument (Penman 2007, p. 11). In the case of Uganda, Ssenyonjo (2007, p. 381) argues that only by enforcing ICC arrest warrants against the indicted leaders of the LRA would the international community send them and generally other warlords around the world a powerful signal that will dissuade them from committing such grave crimes in the future.

However, it should be noted that most of the arguments in this regard are based on situations where there was a clear victor, which is different to the case of Uganda. In particular, the study by Akhavan is focused on such situations in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In fact, it was the failure of the Ugandan Government to defeat the LRA militarily that led to the situation that is the subject of this article. This has led some to argue that the whole story of referring LRA to the ICC was a political strategy by the Ugandan Government to achieve international criminalisation of the group and garner foreign support for its military operations against the rebels (Branch 2007, pp. 182–183, Happold 2007).

The Case for Amnesty as a Last Resort

Like the opponents of amnesty provisions, those in favour of them are many, and so are their arguments. Most of the proponents of this approach claim that their arguments are based on the specific circumstances surrounding the particular case in question, and not a general and blanket argument for any conflict situation. In total, they have three main arguments or counter-arguments. First, they argue that the pursuit of criminal justice should be up to a limit where it will not hamper the peace process or endanger national reconciliation in the country concerned (David and Choi 2006, Kaminski et al. 2006). In a situation where credible evidence shows that prosecuting a suspected war criminal will most probably hamper the peace talks or result in a renewal prolongation of fighting (if an agreement has already been signed), caution must be taken in how to deal with such a situation (Snyder and Vinjamuri 2003, Mandeloff 2004, Williams 2005, Moy 2006, Mallinder 2007).

In fact, Fletcher and Weinstein (2002, p. 585) maintain that there is a ‘paucity of empirical evidence to substantiate claims about how well criminal trials achieve the goals ascribed to them’. In the specific case of Uganda, Branch (2007, pp. 179–198) calls into question the ability of the ICC to achieve either peace or justice.

How do they then respond to the argument of the legalists that this means the denial of justice to the victims of the people concerned? They respond that insisting on a strict
application of punitive justice by pursuing the prosecution may lead to a renewal of fighting or, in the Ugandan case at hand, stand in the way of resolving the conflict. Thus, they suggest that opting for measures to avoid a recurrence of armed conflict or to stop it makes more sense because it prevents the creation of future victims (Williams 2005, p. 295, Moy 2006, p. 272, Slaughter and Burke-White 2006, p. 347). Thus, the amnesty clauses are seen here as a ‘necessary’ measure to attain peace and halt further crimes.

Happold (2007) brilliantly, if somewhat cynically, captures these sentiments in the last paragraph of his commentary:

*The Court [ICC], it appears, is on the horns of a dilemma. If it is too assertive, the Court risks being rendered ineffective. If it is too deferential, it risks damage to its credibility. Paradoxically, the best result for the Court might be the failure of the peace negotiations.*

The second argument of the advocates of this approach is that the Rome Statute of the ICC provides a legal basis for amnesty provisions or at least political arrangements to end armed conflicts. They argue that despite the attempt of some legalists to interpret them differently, as seen above, Article 53 (1)(c) and 53 (2)(c) and Article 16 recognise this reality. Lovat (2006, p. 1), whose article focuses singularly on the aforementioned HRW’s Policy Paper, argues that while there are advantages in the approach taken by HRW, it would nonetheless be inadvisable for the ‘interests of justice’ to be construed in the manner advocated by the organisation when the facts on the ground, such as in Uganda, may militate against such an interpretation. He goes on to make the point that although there is no clear definition of the phrase ‘interests of justice’ in the June 2003 Draft Regulations of the OTP, endnote no. 79 of that document recognises this. This note states that the legal experts consulted by the Court were of the view that were it to be decided that such a clear definition of the phrase be given, this could comprise, together with two other factors, a situation where ‘the start of an investigation would seriously endanger the successful completion of a reconciliation or peace process’ (see p. 47 of the ICC document).7

It is similarly observed that the Prosecutor of the ICC makes a similar point in his second report to the Security Council pursuant to the latter’s Resolution 1593 (2005) on Sudan.8 In this report, he noted that in view of establishing whether a prosecution in Sudan is not in the interests of justice, based on the provisions of Article 53 (2)(c) of the Rome Statute, he would consider ‘the various national and international efforts to achieve peace and security, as well as the views of witnesses and victims of the crimes’ (see p. 6 of the report).9

Evidently, the probability of this approach leading to conflict settlement is high. It could be comfortably argued that it was the amnesty or protection provision in the Nigeria-led ECOWAS deal with Charles Taylor in August 2003 that helped in the resolution of Liberia’s fratricidal civil war (Souaré 2008a). In addition, amnesty for South Africa’s outgoing apartheid regime eased the country’s transition to democracy in the early 1990s (Penman 2007, p. 9, Hay 1999).

Far from closing the debate, this argument opens the door to at least two salient questions. First, what is it that the proponents of amnesty laws suggest should happen in the case of Uganda to ensure peace without compromising the credibility of the ICC as an institution set up to combat impunity, given that it has already been involved in this particular case through its indictments and warrants of arrest,
as noted above? The other question relates to the preventive role of amnesty provisions for future crimes, as this seems to be a central concern of all those that care about the rights of victims of armed conflicts. What guarantee do amnesty laws offer that warlords may not exploit them to commit similar crimes, assured that the blanket of the amnesty law covers them?

With regard to this question, International Crisis Group argues in its Briefing Paper that:

> if a deal has to be done to bring peace to northern Uganda, the ‘least worst’ option might be asylum for the indicted commanders in a country not party to the Rome Statute, conditioned with their full compliance with the peace agreement. (ICC, 13 September 2006).

This solution seems perfect at first sight. But the recommendation put forward here is problematic. In effect, what the organisation is suggesting is simply to bypass the ICC arrest warrants without directly dealing with the justification or lack of it in these warrants. What solution would they have if all countries of the world were signatories to the Rome Statute? What if the non-signatory country that they recommend should offer asylum to the indicted rebel leaders decided eventually to rectify the Statute and become party to it – what should be the fate of the ‘refugees’ in this case?

With regard to the question of the preventive role or lack of it in amnesty provisions, Snyder and Vinjamuri (2003, p. 20) call into doubt the deterrent effect of criminal trials, and argue that if accompanied with effective political backing and strong institutions to enforce their terms, ‘amnesties, whether formal or de facto, can help to pave the way for peace’. Indeed, some authors, who are not necessarily advocates of amnesty provisions, have raised concerns at the prospect of criminal justice or trials that are coming to be seen as if they were the only acceptable means of addressing violations of human rights that occur during armed conflicts (Villa-Vilencio 2000, p. 205, Robinson 2003, p. 483, Lovat 2006, p. 2).

Is There an Alternative? Towards a ‘Third Way’

The debate presented above centres around two main, and equally genuine, preoccupations: (1) ending armed conflicts in order to prevent further killings, human rights violations and destruction of property; and (2) combating impunity to prevent the creation of a cycle of violence in the country, because either some victims, finding themselves in a position of power, might decide to take the law into their own hands, or some perpetrators, knowing that they will not be punished, might be encouraged to do the same in the future. The question is therefore both legal and political – some would say moral.

With regard to the legal dimension of the question, it is clear that both camps presented above have some legal arguments for their positions. With regard to the legalists, it is worth noting that even aside from the Rome Statute of the ICC, no instrument of international law and no national constitution condones the grave crimes that are the subject of this debate, as Chigara (2002, p. 5) correctly notes (see also Happold 2007). However, the arguments of proponents of amnesty provisions are not void of legal basis in international law. It has been seen above how unconvincing are the attempts of some legalists to reinterpret or redefine the Rome Statute in order to
deny any legal foundation for political arrangements, as opposed to criminal trials, when peace is at stake.

Even if peace processes were excluded from the provisions of Article 53 of the Rome Statute, the fact that no one disputes the presence of Article 16 means an acceptance of the principle of political arrangements, which are nothing more than some sort of amnesty provision in peace agreements. As Lovat (2006, p. 1) correctly argues, it would be preferable for the exercise of the discretion contained in these clauses of the Rome Statute to remain within the ICC than to render the UN Security Council the sole body capable of deciding whether or not to proceed with an investigation and/or prosecution. In fact, this makes the process even more subject to political manoeuvre, given the nature of the Security Council.

It is true that Article 16 of the Rome Statute only allows the Security Council to call for a suspension of 12 months. This provision has led Stahn (2005, p. 699), Gavron (2002, p. 109) and many others to claim that this Article cannot serve as an instrument to ensure permanent respect for an amnesty law. Their argument is that amnesty laws are usually designed to exempt a group or a class of persons ‘permanently’ from criminal responsibility, while Article 16 is only a temporary device, designed to delay proceedings for a limited period of time. But this argument is questionable, for Article 16 provides for a renewal of the 12-month period without specifying a limit of the number of these renewals. This logically means that it can regularly be renewed to a point where resorting to criminal proceedings against suspected criminals will not make any sense, if this were to happen after, say, two or three decades. These people may by then be dead or have converted themselves into well-respected national and/or international personalities.

A case in point (with regard to unlimited renewals) is the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), established in 1974 following the agreed disengagement of the Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights. In October 2008, this force was still stationed in the Middle East with its mandate being renewed every six months. The same is true for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), created by the Security Council in 1978 to confirm Israeli withdrawal from that country.

However, even if the 12-month period were not renewable, what would be the use of suspending criminal proceedings ‘to allow for a peace process to proceed’ if you exclude from that process political arrangements, including the offer of an amnesty? What would be the use of that arrangement if it would not be respected on a permanent basis, as Stahn and Gavron suggest? Would this not be a flagrant violation of a core principle of international law, namely the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* enunciated in Article 26 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties? This Article stipulates that ‘every treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith’.

Following these remarks, it is obvious that amnesty provisions cannot be discarded based purely on legal argument. With regard to customary international law, Macaluso (2001, p. 359) argued that ‘prior to World War I, it was fairly common to insert into a post-war treaty an amnesty provision that would pardon the worst of the offenders’. In fact, it could be argued that this was the case until the campaigns of the globalisation of justice started in the 1990s, and even continued well into the decade. Of course, this is
only true when none of the parties to the conflict achieves decisive victory, as seems to
be the case in Uganda.

Kaminski et al. (2006, p. 297), for example, wonder whether the 1989 roundtable talks
in Poland would have worked if the two main negotiators for the communist regime
had had reason to worry that once they stepped down they would be prosecuted for
human rights abuses committed during the martial law.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the April 1998 Good Friday Agreement signed
between the British and Irish Governments and the parties to the 30-year conflict in
Northern Ireland had strong human rights provisions in it. However, although they
were not formally described as an amnesty, the arrangements regarding the early
release of paramilitary prisoners, which were a key aspect of the agreement, in practice
operated in this way. Prisoners who had been convicted of scheduled offences
(offences under UK anti-terrorism and emergency legislation) were released, subject
to a review process outside the normal realms of sentence review (Aolán 2005). The
only category of prisoners that did not benefit from this measure was those ‘affiliated
to organisations which have not established or are not maintaining a complete and
unequivocal ceasefire’.

There is also another problem with the Rome Statute that even makes insisting on the
ICC process in the specific case of Uganda quite problematic. Given that the conflict in
Northern Uganda reaches back to 1986 and much of the most atrocious violence took
place prior to 2002, ICC’s temporal jurisdiction, otherwise known as ratione temporis,
makes the Court a highly inappropriate vehicle for rendering justice to the majority of
victims of these crimes (Branch 2007, p. 186).

All this notwithstanding, it must be acknowledged that international law, both
customary and humanitarian, is undergoing significant changes with regard to
crimes committed during armed conflicts, as noted in the introduction of this
article. But while these are noble efforts in principle, because they aim to combat impunity,
there could be justification in wondering whether the absolutist approach
supported by some advocates of these changes is realistic, given that the reality of
many armed conflicts may militate against it. If one can rightly reproach the propo-
nents of amnesty provisions for the lack of preventive guarantees in their position, it
will be hard to find the example of an ‘armed conflict ended by negotiations’, which
did not recur ‘solely because of criminal trials’ for those suspected of committing
crimes during that conflict.

It is true that armed conflicts that end through negotiated settlements are more likely
to break out than those ended by the victory of one party over the others. However,
this is simply because in the latter scenario the loser’s organisation is destroyed,
making it very difficult to resume the war, while in the first scenario that is the
subject of this article, segments of the post-conflict structure usually retain the capacity
for resorting to war (Licklider 1995, pp. 681–690).

What follows from this discussion is the necessity to take the debate from its current
form and consider alternatives, based on the recognition that the two preoccupations
identified above are not mutually exclusive. To do this, it is necessary to acknowledge
that ‘justice’ cannot be reduced to only one form, namely criminal or punitive justice. It
must be recognised that there are other forms of justice to which one could resort to
address violations that occurred during the armed conflict and, by that, combat
impunity (Henham 2007, pp. 449–468). In other words, alongside civil and political rights, there are economic, social and cultural rights. After all, justice is a process that seeks to repair violated ‘rights’; yet, it is often all these rights that are violated during armed conflicts.

Once this is recognised, one must establish how to prioritise these rights in addressing those that were violated. Here, without falling into excessive relativism, heed must be paid to ‘perceptions’ of the people concerned about the concept of justice. It must also be established to which of their different violated rights they would themselves give priority in specific circumstances such as in Uganda.

This shows the importance of surveys such as the one conducted by researchers from the Human Rights Center (HRC) of the University of California, Berkeley, and the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) in northern Uganda in March and May 2005. The survey was carried out in the areas most affected by LRA violence, with a view to understanding the position and perceptions of the people most affected regarding the different issues, particularly the amnesty offer. Of the 2585 respondents surveyed, 40 per cent had been abducted by the LRA, 31 per cent had had a child abducted, and 58 per cent had witnessed a child being abducted. Almost half (45 per cent) had witnessed a member of their family being killed. Approximately one-quarter (23 per cent) of the respondents had been physically mutilated, maimed or injured by the LRA at some point during the conflict (Pham et al. 2005, p. 21). According to the report, respondents were asked to identify their immediate concerns and, if they listed more than one, to rank them. ‘Food and peace’ were the top two main concerns mentioned (34 per cent and 31 per cent respectively). Less than 1 per cent mentioned criminal justice as their most immediate concern (p. 25).

Interestingly, the survey found that in Soroti, one of the villages most hit by LRA violence, 80 per cent responded affirmatively when asked whether those who committed human rights violations should receive amnesty. Sixty-nine per cent of respondents in Gulu, 57 per cent in Kitgum and 53 per cent in Lira supported amnesty for past offenders. Most importantly, respondents were also asked, ‘If the only road to peace was amnesty, would you accept that?’ The overall support for amnesty increased slightly to 71 per cent from 65 per cent (Pham et al. 2005, pp. 28–29).

It would seem from this survey that personal security and the restoration of economic rights are more important to the victims of the LRA than political rights or criminal trials for those that wronged them. Allen (2006, pp. 78–88, 102–109) and Southwick (2005) cite many examples that prove the strong support that the Amnesty Act has among people in Acholiland and the fears that they have about the impact of the ICC’s involvement in Uganda, although Allen (2006, pp. 114–117) tries rather unconvincingly to prove that this support is waning. The argument that ICC indictments for LRA leaders played an important role in bringing the LRA to the negotiating table has been acknowledged above. However, to argue that by simply succeeding in bringing the LRA to the negotiating table means that these fears are not founded (Allen 2006, pp. 115–117, 2007) is to assign a totally new mission to the Court – that of inducing the revival of stalled peace processes, rather than investigating alleged crimes, trying the suspects and punishing those found guilty, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Therefore, it could be argued that in order to solve the conflict in northern Uganda, the government in Kampala should be allowed to pass its amnesty law for LRA leaders, and the ICC should revoke its indictment and warrants of arrest against these
leaders. Both the government of Uganda and those members of the international community that are ready to fund the very expensive criminal proceedings of these indicted leaders should help fund projects aimed at addressing the victims’ economic rights that they consider more important.

The peace agreement should also make it clear that any violation of its terms will mean the nullification of the amnesty provisions for those responsible for that breach, in conformity with Article 60 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Finally, use must be made of local justice mechanisms in the country, such as Mato oput and Nnyono tong gweno in view of addressing other violations that might not be covered by solely attending to issues of economic rights. (For a detailed description and historical background of these local justice mechanisms in Uganda, see Baines, 2007, pp. 91–114, Latigo 2008, pp. 85–119.) Efforts should also be made to address the shortcomings of these local justice mechanisms so that they are compatible with the magnitude of crimes committed. Indeed, the Prosecutor of the ICC appeared to acknowledge the need for such an approach in his keynote address to a conference on ‘International Criminal Justice in the 21st Century’ hosted by the American University in Washington in September 2005 (see Moreno-Ocampo 2005).

**Conclusion**

This article looked at the dilemma of how to achieve peace and ensure justice for the victims of armed conflicts, making sure that neither of these two objectives undermines the other. The conflict in northern Uganda and its stalled peace process was used as a case study. It noted that the debate about this issue is dominated by a dichotomic (amnesty vs. criminal justice) approach with two main camps. On the one hand,
there are those that are opposed to any kind of political arrangements that might expunge suspected war criminals from any responsibility. On the other hand, it found there are those that justify such arrangements as a last recourse. It noted that both camps have strong legal and moral arguments and have genuine preoccupations.

For this reason, the article called for a ‘third way’. This alternative solution should be based partly on the acknowledgement that ‘justice’ cannot be reduced to only one form of it, namely criminal or punitive justice, and that there are other forms of justice to which one could resort to address violations that occurred during the armed conflict. With that in mind, it may be possible to combat impunity without necessarily compromising peace or hampering its attainment, for example by knowing which of their many violated rights are more important to LRA victims in Uganda and what use can be made of local justice systems in addition to addressing the violated rights that they consider more important.

The article used the ICC’s own statute and a survey conducted by researchers from the HRC (University of California, Berkeley), and the ICTJ in 2005. Based on this, it argued that in order to solve the conflict in northern Uganda, the ICC should revoke its indictment and warrants of arrest against LRA leaders, since that is the main problem in the peace process. The peace agreement might include some sort of amnesty for these leaders, but make it clear that any violation of its terms would mean the nullification of the amnesty provisions for those responsible for that breach. This will make it different from peace agreements such as the Lomé Accord that included an amnesty provision for warlord Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone, but was repeatedly violated by him and his combatants, eventually leading to a renewal of conflict. Use must then be made of local justice mechanisms to address the criminal charges against the indicted LRA leaders. Finally, both the government of Uganda and those members of the international community that are ready to fund the very expensive criminal proceedings of the indicted leaders should help to fund projects aimed at addressing the victims’ economic rights that they consider most important.

In the final analysis, and as Robinson (2003, p. 484) correctly observes, while the ICC and all those concerned with combating impunity for crimes committed during armed conflicts should remain firm on this, one should keep an open mind to creative and good faith alternatives to criminal prosecution. There is no inherent contradiction between the objectives of the ICC and these good faith alternatives, such as bona fide truth commissions.

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Endnotes

1. For a list or overview of these situations and cases, see http://www.icc-cpi.int/cases.html, accessed 14 March 2008.

2. Following and in approval of the usage of Erin Baines (2007, p. 96, footnote no. 20), ‘local’ is used instead of ‘traditional’ justice here because it helps move beyond the polarised debate of ‘modern’ vs. ‘traditional’, in which Western systems are always ‘modern’ while non-Western ones are generally ‘traditional’.
3. For an overview of the experiences of some of these returnees, see Allen and Schomerus (2005). For their relationship and interaction with the Amnesty Commission set up by the Amnesty Act, see particularly pp. 37–40 of the report commissioned by USAID and UNICEF.

4. In October 2008 there were four remaining warrants of arrest after the death of one of the indicted men in early 2008.

5. It should be noted that this HRW document was produced in response to a request made by the OTP during a consultation with NGOs working in the field of human rights. At the meeting, held on 30 November and 1 December 2004, the OTP solicited comments by the gathering NGOs regarding the meaning of the phrase ‘interests of justice’. See HRW (2005, p. 1).


8. The Security Council had adopted this resolution on 31 March 2005 in conformity with Article 13 (b) of the Rome Statute, when it decided to refer the situation in Darfur to the ICC. In the penultimate paragraph of this resolution, the Council called upon the Prosecutor of the ICC to regularly update it on actions taken by his office pursuant to this resolution.


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Policy-driven Inter-ethnic Conflicts in Southern Ethiopia

Boku Tache & Gufu Oba

Persistent inter-ethnic conflicts in southern Ethiopia have created a crisis in security of customary land tenure in the grazing lands. This article explores the links between government administrative policies and inter-ethnic conflicts on grazing resource borders by discussing the historical relationships between contesting pastoral groups, their perceptions of resource borders and how the groups used government policies of ethnic-based decentralisation and referendum to claim ownership rights to grazing lands. The article contextualises the discussions within the politics of land use. Inter-ethnic conflicts have interfered with customary resource allocations by undermining customary institutions for resource sharing. There is a need for urgent dialogue between the government and different pastoral communities for negotiating access to key resources supported by conflict resolution in the southern rangelands of Ethiopia.

Introduction

Ethnic conflicts have been widely discussed in literature (e.g. Horowitz 1985, Lake and Rothchild 1998, Reuveny 2007). Lake and Rothchild (1998, pp. 4–7) attribute inter-ethnic conflict to insecurity and ‘collective fears of the future’. They separate between primordialist, instrumentalist and constructivist perspectives on ethnicity. The primordialist view regards ethnic identity as given and immutable; the instrumentalist approach sees ethnicity as a tool manipulated by political elites to further their interests, whereas the constructivists view ethnic conflict as a social phenomenon emanating from socio-political and historical relations (see also Horowitz 1985, Braathen et al. 2000). Economists have either tended to gloss over the origins and sources of ethnicity, focusing instead on its effects (e.g. Easterly and Levine 1997), or embraced the instrumentalist perspective, arguing that identity is an insufficient impetus to overcome the collective action problems involved in mobilising for violent conflict (e.g. Collier 2000). In this latter perspective, conflict is instead attributable to ‘greed’ (the prospect of material gains), and ethnicity simply serves as a means of lowering transaction costs in recruitment of rebellious members. Ethnicity may also ‘inadvertently’ become an issue when rent-generating natural-resource inventories are located in remote areas, where state presence is weak and identities differ from those around the centre (e.g. Le Billon 2001, Ross 2003). Horowitz (1998) summarises this ‘soft’ view of ethnicity as grounded in a rationalistic, agency-oriented and highly mutable idea of human identity.
The recent 'environmental security' literature (Homer-Dixon 1991, 1994, 1999, Meier et al. 2007, Reuveny 2007) identifies natural resource scarcity as a root cause of conflict. In this Malthusian perspective, ethnic conflict emerges because resource scarcity forces migration, thus increasing contact and competition between groups of differing identities. This perspective has been criticised on numerous counts (e.g. Deudney 1999, Peluso and Watts 2001, Derman et al. 2007), but three stand out. The first is empirical: for centuries humans have coexisted peacefully in the face of increasing scarcity, across space and identities, yet little effort is made to explain how and why competition for scarce resources sometimes boils over into conflict. Second, and related to the first point: the environmental security literature is inherently static in its perspective, disregarding the many adjustments and adaptations that increasing scarcity engenders, including changes in policies, institutions and land use politics. Third, the view of scarcity as a root cause of conflict is theoretically stunted; there is a need to backtrack further along the causal chain and to delve into the politics and economics that lead to unequal access to resources. Peluso and Watts (2001, p. 5), for example, see violence as ‘a site-specific phenomenon rooted in local histories and social relations yet connected to larger processes of material transformations and power relations’.

The scholarly discussions outlined highlight political, environmental and economic aspects of conflict. Despite the centre–periphery dichotomy frequently employed by both political ecologists and political economists, however, the role of the state in initiating conflicts is frequently overlooked. The state – particularly in the context of its ambition of political decentralisation along ethnic lines, as this study will attempt to demonstrate – creates conditions for ethnic redefinitions of self-identity, where previous groups with similar cultural identities seek to create new resource borders by redefining property rights to land. Among groups that had hostile relationships, lack of prudence (or sometimes a conscious decision) by the state may renew inter-ethnic conflicts by shifting resource ownership rights under the guise of ethnic administration. If such redefinition of identities becomes the basis for establishing administrative units, the changes will subsequently alter resource borders and cause inter-ethnic conflicts even among more closely related pastoral groups.

The causes of insecurity of customary tenure in the pastoral areas can be investigated at regional, national and local and production unit levels. Regionally, the inter-state relation could influence pastoral land use across international frontiers, while national policies focused on regional administrative divisions of land according to ethnic groups create tensions that would put into jeopardy the inter-ethnic relationships over resource borders (see Barth 1969). This may arise from the shrinking rangeland and subsequent intense competition between neighbouring pastoral groups who, after losing key grazing resources, are forced to encroach on their neighbours’ grazing resource borders. At the community level, the states’ promotion of alternative land uses to pastoral production could aggravate the pressures on communal grazing lands and undermine the customary tenure rights through a state-sponsored referendum over land rights. Moreover, loss of access to key resources such as wells would disable the whole pastoral production by rendering impossible the utilisation of the surrounding rangelands. At the production unit levels, changes in land tenure would alter resource access for supporting household livelihoods and increase risks of livestock loss during droughts. The policy environment could therefore create conflicts at inter-state, inter-pastoral group and intra-community levels. In this article the focus is on inter-ethnic conflicts.
The problem is greatly aggravated if access to the grazing land is influenced by regional and national politics that spark off armed conflicts between national states or nationalities and states. In the Horn of Africa, regional politics have contributed to state–people conflicts that in turn aggravated the inter-ethnic conflicts over resource borders. The politically inspired inter-ethnic conflicts have triggered population displacements (Bassi 1997) that have become such a defining feature of resource conflicts (Markakis 2003a). During the previous four decades, the region has witnessed several inter-state and guerrilla wars, rendering the region the major source of human displacements (Wondem 2007, p. 104). Dislocations of pastoral groups both within and across the international frontiers have created conflicts that cascade across resource frontiers at community levels (Fukui and Markakis 1994, Markakis 1998). Whereas space will not allow discussions on the roles wars and conflicts have played in the dynamics of inter-ethnic conflicts (for regional analysis see Markakis 1998) the focus here is on displacement and the insecurity that generates policy problems linked to the repatriation of the displaced populations (DPs) from neighbouring countries (Allen and Turton 1996, Wondem 2007). The displacements have also created internally displaced populations (IDPs) within the region. Humanitarian or political challenges could inform how states respond to the resettlements of the DPs. As Reuveny (2007) suggests, the displacement creates fault lines between the DPs and the host communities by triggering conflicts. The problem is more critical if the conflicts over land between the DPs and the host groups have historical dimensions. The DPs may use repatriation as an opportunity for realising long-standing claims over land. A case study is presented from southern Ethiopia to analyse the evolution and the concerns over inter-ethnic conflicts between DPs and the host population. The study explores possible links between land use policies and inter-ethnic conflicts over resource borders within the context of external processes that had caused a regional insecurity alert associated with DPs and IDPs, and political decentralisation through ethnic federation that altered internal resource borders.

The aim of this article is to show how the creation of the administrative units along ethnic lines escalates resource conflicts (see Vestal 1999, Clapham 2006, Turton 2006, Hamer 2007) by adversely influencing tenure security. The problem of tenure insecurity and inter-ethnic conflicts in the grazing lands throughout eastern Africa is controversial in terms of which groups have rights, and on what basis those rights were established and maintained. For individual pastoral groups, the land may signify cultural and historical rights to a geographic space defined in terms of borders of natural resources (Bohannan 1963). The study will show that the state, by playing the role of mediator, changed the modalities and principles of interactions between different ethnic groups that were established over historical periods. How then should states recognise the legitimacy of customary rights? How old should the customary claims be before they become legitimate? The state in its caretaker capacity may claim to protect the resource tenure regimes for posterity, but change customary tenure through changes in land administration borders (Bruce et al. 1994) without taking into consideration the concerns of the customary users, which is likely to perpetuate conflicts. This partly arises from oversimplification of local realities and the imposition of centrally driven administration that ignores the importance of local customary rights and practical knowledge (Scott 1998). In the pastoral context, the neglect relates to a failure to see the peculiar ecological characteristics of the rangelands and inhabitants’ customary rights to resource use for administrative and political purposes. In the view of the authors, these factors are pertinent to the entire pastoral grazing lands in Ethiopia.
Ethiopia’s Pastoral Lands

Ethiopia has diverse pastoral populations (making up 12 per cent of a population estimated at over 70 million) who share a common inharmonious relationship with the Ethiopian state (Fecadu 1994, Getachew 2001a). Because the survival strategy of the pastoralists entails cross-border mobility, and not having been neutral parties in inter-state relations, the general approach to administering the pastoral regions has been one of force and lack of sensitivity to the customary ownership of land (Hogg 1997, p. 13). Part of the problem has been the fluctuating administrative borders that are superimposed on the traditional grazing home range of different pastoral groups. The communal tenure in the pastoral lands differs significantly from that in the highlands, where farming is practised.

Historically, the country was divided into governorate-generals (teqlay gizat) that comprised multi-ethnic groups within the administrative units (Dilebo 1974). The administration established ethnic resource borders for purposes of tax collection. Emperor Haile Selassie then modified the land law in 1955 to recognise grazing lands as the state domain, while the pastoralists had user rights (Fecadu 1994, p. 71). However, there was a change of scope in land use policies during the brief period of Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1936–1941). First, the old administrative power systems were dismantled and reorganised. The pastoral groups were placed into Galla-Sidamo and Harar, two of the four governorates (Haile 2006). The southern grazing lands were put under the Galla and Sidamo administrative territories (Perham 1948). In the Sidamo region, the traditional grazing borders that separated the Somali and other pastoral groups allowed greater infiltration of the Somalis across the common administrative borders with Somalia. It was during this period when ethnic compositions in the South were altered. When the British restored the imperial government of Haile Selassie after the defeat of Italy during the Second World War, the former administrative borders were re-established and the pastoral groups in the South were included once more under the same territorial administration of Sidamo (Perham 1948).

After the overthrow of the imperial regime of Haile Selassie in 1974 by the military regime known as the Derg, the socialist government of Mengistu Haile Mariam made dramatic changes to land use policy throughout Ethiopia (Kamara 2000). Through the Land Reform Proclamations of 1975, the government nationalised all rural lands (Yeraswork 2000) and created uniform usufruct rights under the overall responsibility of the state (Dessalegn 1994). However, the changes remained ambiguous on the pastoral land rights (Helland 2002). For example, Article 24 of the Land Reform Proclamation stipulated that the nomadic peoples had customary user rights for grazing lands. The proposed rights were endorsed only for the reorganised pastoral associations, and not the traditional system. Indeed, Article 26 of the Proclamation states that ‘pastoralists shall establish their association in a manner that is suitable for development . . . ’ Pastoral communities were fragmented into new pastoral associations in accordance with Rural Land Proclamation No. 31, while abolition of the traditional institutions under Article 32 undermined the traditional administration. The new peasant associations (PAs) run by the young political cadres implemented land laws (Pauswang 1983, Yeraswork 2000). This policy was applied across the whole country, but the extent to which it modified the traditional rights to land and the potential impacts on the rural economy varied from the farming to the pastoral regions of the country. Among the peasants, ownership of the land was replaced by another exploitative system of surplus extraction whereby the farmers were compelled to sell their produce to the Agricultural Marketing Corporation at
An overview of inter-ethnic conflicts in southern Ethiopia

The traditional land use in Borana was closely tied to access to traditional deep *tulla* wells and shallow *adaadii* wells in central Dirre and Moyale Districts (see Figure 1), while in the Liban District the main source of water during the dry season is the Daua River (Oba 1998). The past success of Borana pastoralism (e.g. Cossins and Upton 1988) was based to a large extent on robust customary resource tenure rights and the *gada* institutions for managing the grazing lands (see Legesse 1973, Watson 2003). The *gada* is the supreme political authority and custodian of the Borana laws and regulations (*aadaa seera* Borana) (Legesse 1973). The emphasis on internal peace through pan-Borana solidarity creates rights to resources, while the *gada* safeguards those rights (Oba 1998). During the pan-Borana Assembly of *Gumi Gayo* (held at the Gayo wells) the *gada* council organised in the middle of the eight-year *gada* period, makes ‘proclamations’ on the rules that regulate the use of water and grazing lands and is also responsible for helping the community to adjust customary tenure rights in response to pressures from official policies. Among the grazing land resources, access to water points, grazing and ritual lands represent the essential pastures of Borana pastoralism. In Borana tradition, property rights to wells are established by

![Figure 1. Map of southern Ethiopia showing the location of *tulla* wells](image-url)
membership in the well-owning clans, while the land is the property of the tribe under the jurisdiction of the gada. As access to the wells affects access to the rangelands (Helland 1977), it follows then that a clan that loses control of a dry-season water source would lose access to the pastures. The problem of access was traditionally tackled through water-use networks between different users (Tache 2000). The gada has the responsibility to protect the grazing resource borders based on historical use of the land as defined by ritual sites and key clusters of wells. Other pastoral groups, such as individual Somali clans, built client relationships with Borana clans in order to gain access to the wells and utilise the grazing lands. The ‘guest’ ethnic groups were not expected to develop their own water sources, nor were they entitled to the property rights to the grazing lands, although their user rights were acknowledged through reciprocal arrangements (Oba 1996).

The reasons the Borana were critically concerned over the security of the tulla wells in particular is that the grazing lands and the wells are intricately linked. Loss of the wells, either due to inter-ethnic conflicts or through realignment of government administrative borders, makes the grazing lands unusable. Since wells, unlike the grazing lands, are semi-private, loss of the wells for whatever reason would imply resource loss by the whole community, making the pastoral production vulnerable to recurrent droughts. The Borana internal resource borders were therefore used for managing grazing and water resources rather than restricting pastoral grazing movements. This is differentiated from external resource borders that separated the Borana from the competing ethnic groups such as the Somali clans. The perception of the community was that within the context of the modern state, their external and internal resource borders based on cultural and ritual identities could not be interfered with by the state. However, in the state’s view customary land rights have ceased to exist, while through occupancy (regardless of historical depth) the occupants were granted user rights, albeit non-exclusively (Helland 2002). The policy is not only responsible for changing the definitions of resource borders, but also for promoting inter-ethnic conflicts.

Whereas inter-ethnic conflicts have had a great impact on the customary rights in the rangelands in southern Ethiopia, different pastoral groups appear to perceive the problem differently. The Borana perceive the Somalis as ‘foreigners’, settled on their land by the Italians, while the Somalis claim that the Italian and Ethiopian governments recognised their rights to the Borana grazing lands. The Borana would perceive that although the government may regulate land use from within individual groups’ territory, changing the external borders of the grazing lands is not in line with the moral responsibility expected of the state. Perhaps the reason for this is that the security of the external resource borders determined the community’s survival and their well-being in a ritual manner, which the state was seen to violate.

Analysis of inter-ethnic conflicts will therefore demand proper understanding of the perceptions of the opposing groups over resource borders and how competing pastoral groups used government policies to claim ownership rights to grazing lands. Land use administration during the imperial period attempted to settle conflicts over resource borders by dividing the grazing lands in the eastern part of the region between the Borana and the Somali clans (i.e. Degodia, Garri and Marrehan). The decisions did not take into account key resources such as wells. Thus the claims over land used four criteria: (1) the historical rights to land; (2) tribal conventions organised by the state; (3) administrative divisions of the land by different Ethiopian Governments; and (4) the political divisions of the country along ethnic lines. Those
who support the Borana view cite historical evidence. For example, in 2001 the Borana community residing in Addis Ababa presented a petition to the Oromia Regional State that provided historical evidence of the Borana claims. The contributors pointed out that ‘the Borana Oromo have a long and continuous history of land use of about a thousand years of inhabiting the region’. They cited personal experiences of the displacement of the Borana from the Dolo District bordering the Somali Republic during the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 (Borana elders 2001, p. 2).

In earlier times the Borana shared grazing and water with the Gabra camel pastoralists (Oba 1996). The majority of the Somali clans (such as Degodia and Marrehan) were recent immigrants into the region (Lewis 1960, 1965). The expansion of the Somalis into this region reached a peak during the Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1935–1941), as already mentioned. The Garri, a bilingual community who spoke both Somali and the Borana dialect of Afaan Oromo, were in contact with the Borana through trade, which they used to gradually gain a foothold in the South-East (Dalleo 1975). During the earlier contacts with the Garri in the nineteenth century, Dalleo (1975, pp. 30–31) states that ‘the interior towns such as Lugh and Bardera (inside present-day Somalia) served as staging points for camel caravans travelling between Borana and the coast’. Abir (1970, p. 130) also states that the Borana were active participants in the coastal trade and ‘demanded and received permission to send caravans to trade in their country’. Donaldson Smith (1897, p. 177) has documented the early contacts between the Borana and the Hawiye Somali clans. He reports, ‘These Hawayi Somalis had emigrated from Bardera within the last 16 years (i.e. 1880s), and were now under the protection of Abbafilato’ – the actual name was Afalata Dido, the Qallu of the Borana – when his party met ‘the Borana in the neighbourhoods of the Lae and the Goff tulla wells’ (Donaldson Smith 1897, p. 185). Buxton (1967, p. 91) later describes the wells, including those of Wachille, as ‘among the most remarkable things in southern Ethiopia … believed to have been excavated in the distant past, by the ancestors of these same Boran tribesmen’. The Garri therefore obtained entry into the region and achieved access to key grazing and watering resources through client relations with the Borana clans (i.e. they identified with the Borana clan of Karayyu) (Oba 1996).

Historically, the external resource borders between the Borana and the Somali pastoralists have therefore not been in doubt (Kjaerland 1977, Getachew 2002). Capeny in 1905 (p. 263) writes:

> It would seem that the problem with which the mission (i.e. border commission) had now to deal was to ascertain the limits of the Borana territory. In the negotiations of 1900, Menelik had been willing to agree to a partition of Borana, but it was now discovered that the tribal organisation would hardly admit of division.

Capeny goes on to delimit the Borana traditional borders: ‘The Borana territory consists of Liban, Dirri and Tertale …’ (p. 263). Captain French (1913, p. 433), writing about the Ethiopia–Kenya border survey of 1911, also reported that:

> at the wells of Gaddaduma [Qadadduma] … we found ourselves in Boran country, and during our stay … we saw thousands of their stock-cattle, sheep, and goats brought down to water. … The Boran are … the original inhabitants of this country, [more] than any other tribe. (p. 433)

By 1920s the situation was changing. Captain Fowler (1924) reported that the Ethiopian administrator ‘Gerazmatch Angasa … at Gaddaduma is doing his utmost to
please the large number of the Gurre [Garri] who have recently crossed into Ethiopia from Mandera in Kenya’. He further reports, ‘every facility is given to the Gurre [Garri] to water at Gaddaduma, whilst the Boran . . . have been refused unless a suitable gift of stock was forthcoming’ (p. 5). According to Captain Fowler, ‘the worst fault is . . . for the Borana to have . . . originally allowed them (i.e. the Garri) into their country’ and given them access to all the wells.

The Somali pastoral groups’ rationale for claiming grazing resources of the Borana on the opposite side is perhaps their apparent perception that they established ownership of land through use of force and occupancy, which they equated with use (Fedders and Salvatori 1980, p. 21), while for the Borana, territorial ownership was based on historical rights linked to land for religious pilgrimages and water points that could not be owned on the basis of force and occupancy alone. Thus, those who support Somali claims emphasise the occupancy and creation of official administrative borders. Getachew (n.d.) suggests that the grazing borders of the Borana and those of the opposing Garri in the area of the Moyale District were established during the meetings organised by the administrators of the imperial government in 1932/1933. With the help of the military and representatives of the warring groups, the administrators drew grazing borders with pens across official maps. The new ethnic resource borders were inclusive of key tulla wells in the eastern parts of southern Ethiopia (i.e. the Lae, Goff, Gaddaduma, Wachille and Udat wells (see Figure 1). In interviews with Borana elders, it was not possible to confirm their participation in the said grazing treaty. Indeed, Getachew also concurs that ‘The agreement was not effective because, first, the Borana were represented in the Mega town meeting by non-Borana delegates and [the Borana] were against the decision on the ground that it failed to respect their traditional rights’ (Getachew, n.d., p. 6).

However, what transpired was that the Somalis took advantage of the favourable political disposition with the Italian invasion to press for land claims against the Borana, whom they accused of sympathising with the Ethiopian resistance against the Italians (Bizuneh 1999). The brief period of Italian occupation of Ethiopia holds particular relevance for understanding the historical and contemporary conflict between the Borana and Somali groups for at least two reasons. First, the Somali-speaking groups expanded into Borana land, marking the beginning of the shift in the external resource borders. Second, the period was followed by mass displacements of the Borana. Upon occupying the Borana region, the Italians recruited the Somalis from the Italian Somaliland and locally into the expedition force (banda). The Italian occupation of Ethiopia (1936–41) also marked the influx of modern firearms and armed local groups that upset power balance among the historically competing pastoral groups. Waves of Somali pastoralists followed closely behind the occupation army and settled in the south-eastern and eastern parts of Borana land. Accordingly, the Degodia settled in Dolo, the Marrehan in Liban and Garri encroached further into Moyale (Dabbasa Arero, personal communication). In 1941 after the defeat of Italy by the British, the Italian army left behind armed Somali irregulars who turned into bandits that massacred the Borana, creating massive IDPs. Consequently, the Borana in Dolo were annihilated, and those who survived the massacre in Liban crossed the Daua River and fled to Dirre or crossed into Kenya, having been forced to abandon the grazing lands in Dolo, most parts of Liban and the eastern parts of Moyale.

After the Ethiopian administration was re-established, the 1948 tribal protocols regarding the eastern rangelands in Liban fixed ethnic grazing borders without giving consideration to seasonal migration patterns and historical claims to water
sources. The imperial government of Haile Selassie allowed the Somalis to remain in Borana and graze their stocks on the condition that they paid tax to the government through the customary Borana leadership, who were considered by the state to be the legitimate owners of the grazing lands. The regime later introduced ‘tribal treaties’ by creating new tribal borders. Creation of new tribal borders carved out of the historical Borana grazing lands and reallocations to different groups in essence formalised land ownership for the outsiders, while disregarding the historical claims made by the Borana (Duba Dima, personal communication; Getachew 2001c, 2002). The Borana objected to the decisions and successfully petitioned the protocol during the inter-tribal convention of 1952. The Governor of Sidamo Province in the town of Nagelle Borana signed the declaration on behalf of the government. The signing ceremony was held in the presence of government-appointed local leaders (balabat) and traditional elders from the conflicting groups. The tribal convention stipulated that ‘the territory [is] to be collective property of the Boran tribe. . . . Other tribes have temporarily assigned grazing and water user rights over the eastern and northern portions, which had already been conquered . . .’, according to this latter protocol (AGROTEC 1974, p. 23). An interesting aspect of this particular tribal convention was the terminology used to define rights to land. According to the protocol, the whole of the Borana people and the land they claimed (but did not occupy at the time) was considered as their rist, which is a legal concept used in northern Ethiopia that defined land ownership by birth rights. By implication, the collective rights of the Borana were recognised by the imperial government (AGROTEC 1974). However, the conventions failed to solve the problem over resource borders, perpetuating conflicts between the opposing communities. Later, the Somalis influenced the Ethiopian administration and obtained recognition through ‘tribal land demarcation’ arrangements.

The conflicts, which were local, had over time become a part of the regional conflicts in terms of inter-state conflicts along the borders between Ethiopia and Somalia after the latter became independent in 1960 (Touval 1963). Besides open interstate wars, support for insurgency and counter-insurgency was a common trend, taking advantage of internal political grievances on both sides of the border (Bereket 1983). The nature of macro-relations with the Somali Republic and insecurity along the frontier with Ethiopia created a security threat (Clapham 2002b, p. 22). The conflicts between the two countries over the Ogaden region of Ethiopia in particular spread into the other lowland regions inhabited by the Borana and other pastoral groups. For example, in 1976 the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) was formed to liberate the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, and the Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF), collaborating with WSLF, fought to liberate the Oromo-inhabited regions of Hararghe, Bale and Borana. The liberation movements used the existing political fault lines between conflicting ethnic groups to claim territories by their linguistic and Muslim groups (Markakis 1998). The pastoral groups that sympathised with the movements formed the vanguard for land claims. In the 1970s, the WSLF and SALF and pastoral groups allied with them occupied the Borana grazing lands in the South. The Ethiopian state armed the Borana Oromo to fight against the guerrillas.

The Borana’s ambition of reclaiming their ancestral lands and containing further expansion of the Somali groups into the southern rangelands coincided with Ethiopia’s protection of the country’s sovereignty. For the Somali clans, the objective of pushing out the Borana from the vast grazing lands in the eastern and southeastern parts of the country and gaining political dominance remained unchanged. In fact, through the guerrillas’ successes the Somalis initially achieved their objective
(Getachew 2001b). The WSLF and SALF occupied and divided the Borana into two halves: the ‘liberated’ east, and those that were still under Ethiopian Government administration in the western part of the territory. The Addis Ababa–Moyale highway became the de facto borderline between the divided Borana until the status quo was restored in 1978 through a large-scale military operation locally termed irmijja. As mentioned above, the conflict provided common grounds for cooperation between the government and the Borana. The government fought the guerrillas to maintain the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and the Borana fought the Somalis to regain the grazing lands and to reunite the divided community, using firearms provided by the Ethiopian state. The Borana’s goal of liberating the ancestral grazing lands was partially successful until their gains were reversed with the regionalisation policy after the downfall of the Derg regime.

Post-Derg political dynamics and inter-ethnic conflicts

The new political landscape since the fall of the Derg prompted shifts in political alliances where the former guerrillas now became representatives of regional states. For example, the former SALF changed its name to Oromo Abo Liberation Front (OALF) in order for those groups (such as the Garri) that were fighting the Ethiopian state and the Borana under SALF to seek political representation in the federal arrangement through affiliation to Oromia Regional State. However, the attempt failed and the OALF split into two: ‘one part remains the OALF while another has reverted to call itself SÄLF and is now attempting to transfer a slice of Oromia to the Somali province [Regional State] of Ethiopia’ (Schlee 1994, p. 981).

The post-Derg political dynamics also brought about a shift in the relationship between the Ethiopian state under EPRDF and the Borana, from mutual strategic alliance in the past to mutual suspicion and discordance. Historically, the inter-state conflicts between Ethiopia and Somalia and the suspicious attitude of the former towards the Ethiopian Somali groups, together with the local-level tension between the expansive Somali groups and the Borana, put the latter in a strategic alliance with the state against ‘the common enemy’. In the new ethnic federal system, improved contacts among different Oromo groups in different regions marked a rapid rise of Oromo nationalism and aspiration for development of collective Oromo identity (see Schlee 2003). The new regional administrative borders separated the respective ethnic regions of the Oromia and Somali regional states. The regional borders of the Oromia and Somali states are not marked on the ground, but follow the distribution of respective linguistic groups.

The Oromo People’s Democratic Organisation (OPDO), a coalition in the ruling EPRDF party, administrates Oromia, while the Somali People’s Democratic Party (SPDP) that maintains a special relationship with EPRDF with the status of aggaroch (the partners) administers the Somali Regional State. The two regions are targeted by armed rebel movements fighting for self-determination (Oromo Liberation Front, OLF, for Oromia and Ogaden National Liberation Front, ONLF, for the Somali region of Ogaden) and thus potentially fall under security surveillance by the federal government. Furthermore, the Ogaden has a long history of armed struggle for political independence, and the successive Ethiopian governments have had to deal with the Ogaden question (Farer 1979, Esher 1994). The imperial and socialist regimes ‘tackled’ the problem through military means while the government of FDRE has constitutionally recognised the right of regional self-administration up to and including secession (Article 39 of the FDRE’s Constitution of 1995; see also Fasil 1997), and along with this, apparently made
land concessions, which in the case of the Ogaden might serve as a containment policy. However, the present heightened armed conflicts between the ONLF and the Ethiopian state on the one hand and the involvement of Ethiopia in the current Somalia political and military conflicts on the other are likely to have changed such perceived alliance (at least after the April 2007 bloodshed following the ONLF’s attack on Obole oil exploration field: see Gettleman 2007).

In the case of Oromia, the question of political self-determination that borders on secession raises a more serious dilemma for Ethiopia. As Baxter (1983, p. 146) said some years ago:

*If Ogaden or Eritrea were detached from it [Eritrea got independence from Ethiopia in 1993], Ethiopia would merely be diminished; but if the Oromo were to detach themselves, then . . . the Empire, which Menelik assembled and Haile Selassie held together, would fall apart.*

However, the ambition of the current countrywide political agenda at work is to reverse the tradition of centre-imposed political culture by reconfiguring the state structure into ethnic federation whereby the sub-federal units enjoy self-governance, while still being tightly controlled from the centre (Vestal 1999, Schlee 2003). Nevertheless, as noted, armed political movements fighting for regional self-determination have rendered the lowlands security hot spots. While the conflicts between the state and the political dissidents have had direct impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the local pastoralists and may be under control, the regional conflict has not diminished (Clapham 2006). The goals of state policy at the local levels may appear cryptic, but sceptics would infer that the state involvements are aimed at pre-empting community support for the armed groups by creating inter-community discord and denying them grounds for building joint political alliances against the state.

It is perhaps in this context that the problems of administrative borders between the Oromia and Somali regional states need to be examined. The conflicts between the two regional states have tremendous implications for resource use conflicts because the two regions share long administrative borders and share resident populations (Markakis 1998). Similar to the conflict between the Afar and Issa pastoralists in the north-eastern part of the country (Markakis 2003b, p. 447), the conflict between the Borana and the Somali groups, and the resultant threats to loss of land by the former community, has remained unresolved. For the Borana, their displacement from the traditional home range, now transferred to the Somali regional state (such as parts of Moyale, eastern Arero and Liban Districts), has created political fault lines between the ethnic groups on the one hand and between the Borana and the Federal State on the other.

The background to the recent shift of the territorial borders was as follows. Following the break-up of the government of President Siad Barre in Somalia in 1991, refugees fled across the border. The refugees from Somalia were settled in the eastern parts of the Borana zone in Ethiopia as the DPs (Bassi 1997). The new political identities that degenerated into incidents of open violence in the 1990s involved fighting between Borana and Garri, Borana and Marrehan, Borana and Degodia, Arsi and Gurra, Arsi and Degodia, Guji and Marrehan, Guji and Degodia with serious implications for population displacements (see Bizuneh 1999, Fekadu 2004).

The EPRDF Government had come to power around this period of regional political upheavals. The settlement of DPs considered ‘returnees’ from warring Somalia
resulted in internal displacement of the Borana. Consequently, the Borana lost access to the *tulla* wells in Goff and Lae and grazing lands in Liban and Arero, becoming IDPs within their traditional home range (Figure 1). In addition, the new federal system introduced two additional elements into the already fragile inter-pastoral relations vis-à-vis regional state border definition. First, ethnically articulated territorial claims in the federal units proliferated (Turton 2006) as the Regional States claimed land in other states where their linguistic groups were found. Second, the House of Federation recommended popular votes through referendum over grazing land disputes. In other words, regardless of where they inhabit, each ethnic group claimed little parcels of land to be patched up with the Regional State that they were linguistically associated with. Therefore, the Somalis living in the Oromia State would still claim to be placed under the administration of the Somali Regional State and vice versa. This was the case even when the groups that were physically removed from the ethnic-based Federal State created little ‘isles’ of communities under the jurisdiction of different states, but located in ‘wrong’ places. The changes confused ethnic resource borders and stirred up conflicts at local as well as at regional levels. For Borana, the effects of the political development was the loss of access to traditional home rangelands and the key wells, which caused internal competition over the reduced environmental space, generating dilemma in livelihood responses and creating greater risks to drought and poverty (Oba 1998, Tache 2000). In an interview conducted in Erdar, a Borana elder who was displaced from Goff stated that his attempt to return to his wells at Goff and Lae was made impossible because the Garri believed that they had irretrievably taken over the wells and surrounding rangelands ‘in lieu of the camels they lost during the fighting with the Borana in 1991 and 1992’. Today, bitter feelings of key resources loss persist on both sides, which may amount to a conflict in waiting, rendering the prospect of peace between the pastoral groups doubtful (see Schlee 1994). The problem has been made even worse by the recent referendum on grazing lands.

### The Referendum on Grazing Lands

Deciding customary rights of grazing lands through a referendum is a new phenomenon in Ethiopia. The Borana raised the issue on the occasion of the 38th Gumi Gayo Assembly convened in July 2004 in the form of an oral petition to government representatives, comprising Mr Juneydi Saddo, then President of the Oromia Regional State, and high-ranking civil and military officials. A community representative presented the case, focusing on the forthcoming referendum in which the Borana would be compelled to vote to decide their ‘historical rights to resources’, which in their perception could only be equated with a ‘guest demanding to vote on the ownership of the home that hosted him’, in the words of the Borana spokesman.

Despite the Borana’s objection to the referendum expressed at the Assembly, the government pushed the agenda forward to redraw the regional administrative borders in preparation for the 2005 election. For the government, the referendum was the legal instrument available for resolving border disputes within the federal arrangement under Article 62(6) of the Federal Constitution, which stipulates that the House of Federation ‘shall strive to find solutions to disputes or misunderstandings that may arise between States’ (FDRE 1995, p. 116). The referendum was held in October 2004 in Liban and parts of Arero, while the Moyale case remains unresolved. In the meantime, the Oromia Regional Government withdrew claims to nine PAs where voting did not take place. These included the PAs and town *kebeles* in the
Moyale district of the Borana zone, although the report did not specify the reasons for withdrawal from voting (Table 1). The withdrawal of the claims by the Oromia Regional State on the basis of the lack of Borana’s physical presence failed to consider the displacement of the community after the violent conflicts following the change of government in 1991, and the insecurity and loss of access to the wells, which the Garri had since occupied.

Both communities may be pursuing different land claim strategies. For the Borana, the loss was attributable to lack of political support. For the Somali group, it appears that they have been more proactive in reclaiming territories they allege belonged to them by taking advantage of the improved political relationship with the state. The Borana would claim that the referendum was held as a means of giving legitimacy to the claims of the Somalis in what has always been their customary territory. In the Liban District, they used as evidence the voting at Haro, a section of the kebele 03 in the town of Nagelle Borana where the Somalis enjoyed overwhelming numbers (see Table 1). That community did not exist until the 1990s when it was set up as a relief distribution centre for the Marrehan displaced by the conflict. With regard to the Borana, who were previously internally displaced, they were not allowed to return to their former places to vote, such as Walenso in the Liban District of the Zone.

Walenso, which is prime grazing land in Hadhessa PA (Figure 1), was historically used for wet-season livestock grazing before it was transferred to the Southern Rangelands Development Unit (SORDU). At the time, the community sent three elders to negotiate the transfer of the ranch (covering 25,226 hectares) to SORDU on 6 Nehase 1973 Ethiopian calendar (August 1981). It was the same ranch and surrounding grazing

<table>
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<th>PA/kebele</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kebele 01 of Negelle Borana town</td>
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<td>Renji</td>
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Table 1. Referendum results in the Liban and Arero districts
lands that during the referendum of 2004 were annexed to the Somali Regional State. For the Borana, it was a great humiliation to lose the customary rights to the Walenso rangelands. In approving the detachment of Walenso, the government officials did not consult the Borana about the recent history of the ranch and also failed to consider historical realities.

During the voting, large numbers of Degodia from Filtu were brought in and the Zonal officials and representatives of the National Electoral Board reportedly ignored the Borana complaint about the matter, despite a lengthy petition presented by the Borana leaders. The referendum over grazing lands ignored the cultural practices that bound people to their land for political expediency. The implementation of the new administrative policy provided a new legal reference that one group could use in defence of the new gains, while the other group considered it to be 'a historical loss'. It is for the latter reason that the Borana initially hesitated to take part in the referendum in order not to commit a historical mistake. They saw their participation as legitimising the Somali claims. It therefore appears that the manner in which the state handled the conflict, instead of addressing the root causes of the problem, could in future complicate the relationship between the opposing pastoral groups. Moreover, the referendum in absence of the law that adequately protects the customary rights of the traditional claimants would undermine development of proper land policies in future.

Conclusions

This article has attempted to analyse the long-standing inter-ethnic conflicts between the Borana and Somali clans from different perspectives. The study demonstrates the existence of incompatible systems for establishing rights over land: historical domain versus occupancy and usufruct rights. The articulations of the different claims have reflected shifting alliances between local and state interests over historical periods. Regional geopolitical interests have framed the local conflicts between the pastoral groups. The conflicts between the Borana and Somali clans are largely attributable to the politics of land control, and the country's political programme of ethnic-based federalism has brought dynamism into an old inter-ethnic conflict by giving it a new impetus. These arose mainly from repeated changes in external resource borders between different pastoral groups following adjustments of internal administrative borders. In the majority of the cases, policies have neglected traditional systems of resource administration and aggravating inter-ethnic conflicts. The customary right holders consider their claims to be a legitimate historical right that equates land not only with grazing and water but with the spiritual well-being of the community as well. Loss of ritual lands causes social disharmony.

An alternative policy option should seek ways and means of protecting pastoralists' customary land rights in a manner that promotes peace, whereby mutual accommodation across resource borders can play an essential role in peace building. This might work if the formulation of land use policies for the pastoral areas was started at different levels. First, there should be a reassessment of state land use policies in the pastoral regions. The state should strive to acknowledge the role of legal plurality that acknowledges existence of customary rights within the national constitution. Under the country's constitution, customary laws concerned with resource tenure rights should be protected. The current policy of undermining customary rights and manipulating administrative borders amounts to neglecting
such rights. Second, at the local level, land use policies in the rangelands should focus on proper understanding of the customary rights to land and for negotiating inter-clan conflict resolution.

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**Endnote**

1. The petition was addressed to the House of Federation, Office of the Prime Minister, House of Peoples’ Representatives, Ministry of Federal Affairs, Office of the National Electoral Board, the Council of Oromia, and Office of the Neighbouring Regions’ Affairs in the Council of Oromia. The following documents, all written in Amharic, accompanied the petition and are available from the authors: (1) Minutes dated 6 Nehase 1973 EC (August 1981) regarding the transfer of the portion of the Walenso plain to SORDU for a grazing reserve. Three Borana elders on behalf of the pastoralists of Hadhessa PA signed the transfer. (2) Minutes written on 14 Tikint 1977 EC (October 1985) addressing community complaints regarding the width of the Walenso ranch and request to minimise it so that the pastoralists could get enough pasture en route to Hadhessa traditional wells. (3) Minutes produced on 7 Miazia 1979 EC (April 1987). This meeting at the Walenso ranch addressed pastoralists’ complaints and decided that the ranch size should be reduced to allow pastoralists adequate space. (4) Minutes documenting a meeting that the Walenso ranch committee held on 6 Yekatit 1980 EC (February 1988). The committee discussed various administrative issues regarding the ranch. (5) Letter number 151/220/227 dated 15 Miazia 1979 EC (April 1987) addressed to Liban District Office from the head of Plan Ketena Tsifet Bet (Office of Regional Planning) on conflicts between the pastoralists from Hadhessa and Qoratti PAs and the ranch personnel over water and pasture. (6) Letter number 32/9/121 signed by the Borana Provincial Administrator on 23 Sene 1980 EC (June 1988) instructing the SORDU branch in the town of Nagelle Borana to seek to promptly settle the disputes between Hadhessa and Qoratti PAs and the ranch over resources in the ranch. (7) Site map of the Walenso ranch.

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The Student Movement in Nigeria: Antinomies and Transformation

Sylvester Odion-Akhaine

There was a time when the student movement in Nigeria was the worry of the post-colonial ruling class. Indeed, there was a claim that in the mid-1980s the only radical group in Nigeria worthy of occupying a place on the shelves of the State Department of the United States of America was the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), because that body was consistently anti-imperialist. Imagine those heydays of the student movement; there would have been a nationwide solidarity protest in support of the people of Palestine in the face of the violence recently carried out by the Israelis in Gaza. That it did not take place underlines the parlous state of the student movement in Nigeria. The student movement appears to have lost its ideological direction since the first half of the last decade of the last century. Prior to this dip in consciousness, students had clear visions of society, including how it should be organised, with global bipolarity providing socialism as an alternative vision to capitalist civilisation. The latter aspires to build a society in which the means of production/wealth are in the hands of a few and the logic of production premised on maximisation of profit. By contrast, socialism aspires to build a society in which people are the alpha and omega of production and development. However, the collapse of state socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has in some ways affected the élan of proselytisation of socialism and the welfarist third way which it inspired in some countries. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the material conditions that inform and impel many to socialism have not changed. Capitalism has continued to cause havoc on a global scale, under the euphemism of globalisation. Ever prone to cycles of crisis, there is a prevalent global economic downturn, and discourses are beginning to incline towards financial socialism and statist intervention in the advanced capitalist countries as a solution to the current crisis of capitalism, the ‘credit crunch’. By contrast, in peripheries such as Nigeria, destructive deflationary policies and privatisation of the state parastatals are the hallmark of IFIs’ solution to the crisis of peripheral capitalism, a policy that has not only destroyed the nascent industrial sector, but has rendered the periphery more dependent on the centre. In short, the hypocrisy is complete.

Conceptual Clarification

The contemporary world is one in which anything goes; some call it postmodernism. In this de-centred world, concepts have lost their meanings in the mildew of an imposed master narrative. The world civil society has come to approximate a medley of societal groups: non-government organisations; social movements, old and new; quasi non-governmental organisations and international non-governmental organisations. In this hazy and windy environment, it takes a great deal of effort to follow the conceptual path. Therefore, an attempt is made here to clarify what movement, social movement and student movement mean. We do not intend to waste precious time in grappling with what NGOs are today in developing countries. Suffice to say
that they are merely tools of development agencies inspired by the Bretton Woods institutions to deconstruct traditional social movements and mainstream neoliberal market values in societies under their superintendence (Shivji 1989). 'Movement' could refer to a group of people with a common ideology and could also refer to corresponding actions and activities of such to realise their objectives. Hence most movements are social because of the goals that they promote to influence/change society. Therefore, for us, social movement refers to a group of people who are involved in social struggles for the radical transformation of society, by challenging for state hegemony. Can it be said that this is true of student movements? Paradoxically, the answer is both yes and no. Student movements that are concerned solely with superficial one-off welfare issues cannot be categorised as social movement. Student movements that seek to interrogate the structure of society and its relationship with the organisation of education truly qualify as social movements. Can the Nigerian student movement be so qualified? This will become clearer as an attempt is made to give a brief history of it.

Overview of Nigerian Student Movement

The origin of Nigerian student movement can be traced to the West Africa Students’ Union (WASU) formed in England by people such as Ladipo Solanke and his associates in 1925, all of whom were influenced by the Pan-African Movement led by W.E. Dubois, as well as the communist movement (Agbodeka 1965). They were not only concerned about the welfare of African students in England at the time, but were also involved in the struggles of self-determination of their countries from colonial rule. The subsequent creation of the University College in Ibadan and Yaba College of Technology in 1948 together with the colleges and grammar schools provided what might be called an indigenous platform for intervention in the social-economic and political dynamics of Nigeria.

The students of these institutions did not restrict themselves to in-campus struggles, but with the country still under colonial domination, they were deeply concerned with issues of national emancipation, and in 1956 organised themselves under the platform of the National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS) under the leadership of Emmanuel Obe as its first president. Their patriotism found expression when, after the country’s independence in 1960, the young country was secretly yoked to the erstwhile colonial master, Britain, in a defence pact with the aim of preventing communist infiltration into post-independence Nigeria. The clauses of the pact were quite obnoxious and invested negative sovereignty in the young government. Section five of that pact exempted visiting forces’ (meaning British)

\[... passports and visa regulations and immigration control or inspection on entering or leaving the territory of that contracting party. They shall also be exempted from regulations on the registration and control of aliens, but shall be considered as acquiring any right to permanent residence or domicile in the territory of that contracting party.\]

Beyond these, section 8 also exempted service vehicles that were exclusively in the service of a visiting force from registration, taxation and compulsory third party insurance, among others. But Nigerian students read the script quite correctly, and were ready to mobilise against this move. The University of Ibadan, led by Dapo Falase, Abayomi Ferreira, and the NUNS, led by Osita Okeke, Dan Abasi-Ekong and D.V.C Obi among others, descended on the members of parliament. A combination of students’ actions and the activities of the opposition party, the Action Group (AG), consequently
compelled the Balewa Government to repudiate the pact in January 1962.

Subsequently, Nigerian students were to play an increasingly progressive role in society, with NUNS serving as a veritable platform for them. They combined local welfare issues with the larger political economy. For example, the agitation against the appointment of Mrs Apampa as Matron of Independence Hall at the University of Ibadan led to the death of Kunle Adepoju in 1971. The students of the University of Nigeria on their own protested against the introduction of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme in 1973. However, a pan–Nigerian students’ action known as ‘Ali Must Go’ in the student movement history in Nigeria took place in 1978. At the time of this incident, Nigeria was under military dictatorship, headed by General Olusegun Obasanjo, and his Federal Commissioner for Education was Colonel Ahmadu Ali (after whom the protest was named). The revenue from the oil boom of the early 1970s had begun to diminish in the late 1970s due to an oil glut, and as a result affected the country’s economy adversely. The Obasanjo regime thought that the best way to deal with the financial crisis was through cost recovery and the removal of subsidies for fees and accommodation. The students resisted the move and were met with a corresponding state repression. This marked the beginning of a dark period in the history of the student movement in Nigeria, as a number of students from the University of Lagos and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, were shot dead by security forces. Consequently the authorities proscribed NUNS, and the Justice Usman Mohammed Commission of Inquiry was set up ostensibly to unravel ‘the immediate and remote causes’ of the protest.

By 1980, the NUNS had fully metamorphosed into NANS and adopted a charter in 1982, which captured its anti-imperialist essence; by locating the perennial crisis in the education sector within the neocolonial nature of the Nigerian economy, the 1982 Charter provided a major source of inspiration in the anti-imperialist struggle of the Nigerian student movement.

In 1989, there was another bloody nationwide protest against the ruthless implementation of the IMF – and World Bank-inspired Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which destroyed the national economy in general and the nascent industrial sector in particular, through massive devaluation of the national currency and liberalisation of the economy, as well as privatisation of national assets. The protest shook the foundation of the ultra reactionary regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. The students challenged the regime’s transition to civil rule programme which they saw as a ruse meant to perpetuate military rule. They pursued with vigour the Academic Reform Campaign (ACAREF) adopted in April 1991 at the University of Ilorin, by issuing an ultimatum to the Federal Military Government to declare a state of emergency in education, prompting a nationwide world press conference on the part of the latter to alert the nation to the impending violence by students. The regime was embattled, and by May 1992 the students struck again in nationwide protests, dubbed ‘economic protest’, which the military leadership had described as an equivalent of a military coup d’état.

In the decade of the 1980s, the student movement in its unwavering ideological commitment had forged a historical alliance with the Nigerian labour movement, including the Academic Staff Union of Universities. The student movement, as has been noted, was essentially anti-imperialist in outlook. This was reflected in the positions it took on major global issues. For example, under the administration of George Bush Senior, it condemned the infamous Television José Martí which was being beamed directly to Cuba without the consent of the Cuban authorities. The NANS called on
the Nigerian students nationwide to urge the Nigerian Government to intensify economic links with Cuba, demanding an end to US aggression against Cuba; demanding categorical condemnation of the US from the Nigerian Government; and writing protest letters to UNESCO, UN and the US Government making a case for Cuba. It is important to note that a number of these students went as volunteers to Nicaragua and Angola when these countries were besieged by US-sponsored counter-revolutionary insurgencies, and many shared rooms with South African exiles and organised Youth Solidarity on Southern Africa in Nigeria (YUSSAN) in virtually all the university campuses in the country. Such was the height of the movement’s internationalism.

What was remarkable about the decade of the 1980s was the strong ideological content of the student movement. It was underpinned by the Marxist–Leninist ideological leaning at the core of the movement, which ensured its hegemony among the social forces in the educational sector. That core organisation was called the Patriotic Youth Movement of Nigeria (PYMN), and central to its formation was the late Comrade Ola Oni. As Rahaman Onike rightly observed:

This student body propagated and spread the ideology of Marxism on the Nigerian campuses. In the course of struggle, the students’ activists enjoyed the support of radical intellectuals in the labour movement and in academia.

The movement was ideologically puritanical, to the point that it attracted criticisms from sections of the membership who subsequently called for a review of the NANS Constitution, which was seen as archaic. As observed in a protest leaflet, NANS was ‘so ideologically based that you would think that all Nigerian students are Marxist oriented’.3

By the second half of the 1990s, on the left, political fatigue had set in and the leadership of the Nigerian student movement was hijacked by reactionary and pro-establishment forces. The movement entered a phase of organisational slumber from which it is yet to recover. It is perhaps an appreciation of the depth of this crisis in the student movement that past leadership of the movement and those who expect continuity in the radical tradition of the student movement look forward in general to the transformation of the contradictions that have bedevilled the movement. In what follows, there is a look at these contradictions.

The Antinomies

Progress vs. reaction

Students themselves, by virtue of their fluid class position as ‘declassed’ elements of society, have oscillated between prospects of embourgeoisification and that of aligning with the oppressed segment of society, the veritable damnés de la terre. It is in this ideological context that we can best situate the struggle between progressive and conservative students. The progressives demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of the students and that of the larger society. The school authorities, especially in the tertiary institutions, envisage relationship with the students and their leadership in loco parentis. Therefore, they could ‘go the extra mile’ to ensure that the leadership of the student unions is occupied by moderates or ‘good boys’. Where they are unable to do this, they suspend union activities and impose caretaker committees on the students made up of their quislings. This explains why caretaker committees are part of the crisis in the tertiary institutions in the country.

State interventions

It is a truism that the Nigerian state and its lackeys have always been concerned about the militancy of the student movement. Two views have come from the government circle in the last two
decades. One is that students are often incited by the more radical segment of society, such as the academic staff union of universities (ASUU) and the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), which are perceived as dens of communists and anti-establishment elements. The second view is that it is a ‘minority section’ of the students that seeks to upset academic peace. The Babangida regime’s antidote was to tame radical lecturers so that the ‘doves’ that are left would keep the students busy. In this regard, anti-student elements/groups were encouraged in the campuses and they operated with a great deal of impunity. They went by various names such as Peace Movement, vigilantes, Man O’War, and cults/gangs. These anti-social hordes went after progressive student union leaders, some of whom were maimed. For example, Former NANS President Emmanuel Ezeazu and his colleagues were brutalised. Ezeazu specifically had his sight impaired from an incident in the hands of vigilantes from the University of Nigeria. Throughout the early 1990s, cult killings flourished in the nation’s university campuses. For example, two students were killed at the University of Ibadan in 1992; another at Nnamdi Azikiwe University in the same year; and in the following year one was killed at the University of Jos. At the University of Lagos, Mr Omoyele Sowore, President of the Students’ Union, was injected with a poisonous substance by cult groups in March 1994. As one commentator rightly observed, ‘Prevalence of secret cultism in reality constitutes a threat to active unionism on campus’ (Onike 2009). This period marked the decline in the dynamism of student movement in Nigeria. This period might be qualified as the triumph of reaction. Today, factions of the student movement are enthusiastic in their quest to give awards to decadent state actors that in reality have little value. It can be said that once the issue of social identity and goals are emasculated in the student movement, it is impossible to refer to it as one.

Prospects of Transformation

So far, an attempt has been made to capture the contradictions that have characterised the student movement in Nigeria to date. As Karl Marx, the millennium thinker, once said, philosophers have interpreted the world, and the task is to change it. To rebuild the student movement in Nigeria and restore it to its vibrancy of the 1960s and 1980s, attention can be directed to three major areas: curricula overhaul, ‘vanguardism’ and backward integration.

Curricula overhaul

The NANS in its 1982 charter of demand identified the neocolonial curricula as part of the fundamental crisis in education. However, this has far-reaching implications for rebuilding the student movement in the country. Truly, neocolonial curricula transmit ‘semi-transitive consciousness’ (Freire 2005, pp. 13–14), which according to Paulo Freire limits the sphere of perception, and the one so endowed is ‘impermeable to challenges situated outside the sphere of biological necessity’. Therefore, what is desirable is a curriculum that provides the basis for critical ‘transitive consciousness’ noted for in-depth appreciation of problems and social conditions. Without it, there will be no pull towards social resurgence, which often coalesces in social movement.

Vanguardism

In revolutionary terms, vanguardism is a political strategy whereby a movement is given its form and content by a core of the most advanced, ensuring its ideological coherence. Today, to rebuild the student movement, it is thought that mentoring is inevitable. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent neoliberal ascendancy has depleted the ranks of advanced cadres to constitute a critical core for rebuilding the student movement in Nigeria. In the 1980s, the PYMN dug the trenches where we were engaged in a ‘war of position’ with other social forces.
in the society and had emerged at the end of it being ideologically hegemonic, a reality that sustained the movement. To begin the task of rebuilding the movement, a vanguard of advanced cadres committed to the goal of reconstruction is inevitable.

Backward integration

In the early 1990s, there was an evident depletion of the ranks of student activists in Nigeria. They were an endangered species. Therefore, reproduction of cadres who would sustain the radical tradition of the student movement became a major problem. One dimension of this question which came up for discussion at one of the NANS Senate sessions at the Lagos State University was the idea that activists who had already graduated from the tertiary institutions could go back and begin a postgraduate programme, which would provide a corresponding opportunity for rebuilding new ideological cells. A second viewpoint was the need to employ cadres who had graduated from the universities as full-time cadres to help rebuild the student movement. In summary, it was about taking control of the sources of supply in ways that were analogous to backward integration (a variant of vertical integration in economics), a situation whereby a firm takes over control of its inputs or supplies. We do not think that these thoughts are old-fashioned; on the contrary, they need to be animated and set off if the noble tradition of the student movement in Nigeria is to be salvaged.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to examine the state of the student movement in Nigeria, its contradictions and possibilities of transformation. The student movement in post-independence Nigeria has had a vibrant tradition of being committed to the total independence of Nigeria, a fact which counterposed it to the neocolonial state, leading to challenges and confrontations, resulting in repression from both the ideological and oppressive state apparatuses. State intervention has been through the deployment of authoritarian tactics in the form of official high-handedness of university vice-chancellors, creation of paramilitary groups and the support of cultists. The sum total of these activities affected the core values of the student movement and provided a basis for the ascension of reaction. Nevertheless, to transform these ruptures it is suggested that curricula transformation is desirable; a vanguard organisation is important as well as backward integration. It is believed that the sooner these suggestions are put into action, the better it will be for the student movement in Nigeria. As the bourgeois scholar Huntington once opined, the truly revolutionary society is the one that has the capacity for change (Huntington 1968). The change we envision is progressive change where the wellbeing of man and woman will become the subject of development.

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Endnotes


3. This quote is taken from an undated post-1992/93 NANS convention protest leaflet titled, ‘For the Sake of Fundamental Human Rights and Democracy’.

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Anglo-Nigeria Defence Pact. (1960), Sections 5 and 8 of the Articles.


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**Rooting Transformative Feminist Struggles in Tanzania at Grassroots**

Demere Kitunga & Marjorie Mbilinyi

Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) is a feminist organisation which aims to strengthen the building of a transformative feminist movement in Tanzania, Africa and worldwide. The organisation’s vision is of a transformed Tanzanian society characterised by gender equality, equity, empowered women and social justice. For 15 years TGNP has been at the forefront in the struggle for gender equality objectives and women’s empowerment in Tanzania. With its vision and mission, TGNP has crafted its identity on the transformative feminist conceptual framework and ideology that challenges patriarchy, neoliberalism and other intersecting forms of oppression and unequal power relations.

TGNP has been involved in a long time reflection on its theory and practice of feminism, and its practical contribution to building the transformative feminist movement. One of the first products of this reflection was ‘Notes on Transformative Feminism in Tanzania’ (2006) which forms the main content of this article. ‘Notes’ was the background document for the annual retreat of TGNP members and staff, ‘Making Transformative Feminism Real’ (25 March 2006), and later was popularised in Kiswahili and used to guide training sessions for members, staff and partners.

Of special significance are the members of the Feminist Activist Coalition, Femact, comprising some 40 non-governmental organisations committed to women’s rights/feminism and/or human rights. Another key network are the members of the weekly Gender and Development Seminar Series, GDSS, comprising 80 or
more leaders and members of grassroots groups in Dar es Salaam and neighbouring regions. We believe that these grassroots groups and organisations provide the core of the transformative feminist movement, together with intermediary gender networks and the many other grassroots women/feminist activists and groups that organise themselves today in Tanzania.

The original ‘Notes’ drew on earlier debate and dialogue concerning how to ground locally, which culminated in a major joint reflection process in 2004 involving district level gender networks with whom we work in 13 different locations of Tanzania. We felt growing unease at the degree to which the scarce human and other resources of the organisation were devoted to high level policy engagement (gender responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming), compared to working closely ‘on the ground’ with grassroots women/feminist activists as part of a genuine grassroots-based movement for change, which is the founding philosophy and goal of TGNP in the first place. All of these activities were part of a major campaign, ‘return resources to the people’, which began in the early 2000s and focused on HIV and AIDS, gender and resources. The campaign had adopted a variety of strategies, including ‘in-your-face’ street marches and public rallies with strong grassroots participation, as well as media campaigns, working with networks and organisations of people living with HIV and AIDS who increasingly took the lead for specific events, and engagement with policy and budgets. Yet it was our own voices that were heard most often in public debates, rather than those of grassroots women – we were falling into the trap of speaking ‘on behalf’ rather than facilitating grassroots women to organise and speak on their own behalf.

This forced us to question ourselves, and others, about how we position ourselves vis-à-vis the most significant struggles taking place in our society, and to critically analyse different feminist theories/practices/ideologies in the light of these struggles. Throughout these reflections on our theory and practice of feminism, we were guided by asking ourselves: ‘what are we against?’ and ‘what are we for?’ We also asked, ‘who are we?’ and ‘who are we with?’

There are many different types of feminisms that have emerged in Tanzania, and worldwide, in the context of women’s struggles against oppression and exploitation as women/girls and for emancipation and freedom. Although each of these has its own history and position, they have many things in common. The most important commonality is that all feminisms challenge male domination/supremacy/privilege and discrimination against girls/women in some way, and they seek to improve the situation of girls/women.

At any one moment, one individual or organisation may embody elements of several different feminisms. However, these may be in opposition to each other and lead to confusion. Therefore, it is important to clarify exactly where we stand with respect to feminism, because of the different and, in some cases, opposing trajectories which emanate from the different positions which each one takes on key issues. This is especially important in Africa today, given the growing power of major donor agencies to determine policy directions of both governments and civil society organisations, including women’s and feminist organisations.

At the same time, we proudly assert our position as transformative feminists in the face of those who reject feminism as diversionary, secondary or of no consequence, and others who fear the backlash from men and women who uphold male supremacy and patriarchy.

The next section examines the feminist theories/approaches which are most
prominent in Tanzania and the region today, from the point of view of the position taken by TGNP, which is transformative feminism. This analysis is situated within the context of corporate-led globalisation, the growing power of ‘Western’ governments and neoliberalism ideology in Africa today, and the current global financial and economic crisis that has illustrated the inherent weaknesses and contradictions within the global capitalist system.

Different Feminisms

The position taken in this article is that ‘transformative feminism’ is the cutting edge of all revolutionary conceptions and social movements, because it links struggles against all major forms of oppression, discrimination and exploitation. Transformative feminism struggles against:

- all forms of male domination/supremacy (often referred to as ‘patriarchy’);
- class exploitation on the basis of capitalism, the dominant economic structure today;
- imperial domination and growing supremacy of the G7 countries (often referred to as corporate globalisation);
- oppression on the basis of race/ethnic differences;
- homophobia and all other efforts to deny women’s (and men’s) rights to own their bodies and define their gender identity and sexuality;
- fundamentalisms and traditionalism;
- all forms of discrimination based on demographic, ethnic and physical ‘otherness’.

Transformative feminism has not developed in a vacuum, and has its roots in other forms of feminism. At the same time, clarity of what it is and stands for has partly been derived from recognition of differences in outlook, ideology, as well as position. We examine the most important trends in feminism today, making bold generalisations about each one, while recognising that none are homogeneous in reality.

Transformative feminism is very different from ‘radical feminism’, which identifies men to be the main enemy, and concentrates on struggles against patriarchy. Radical feminists envision a world without men, where women are in control of all aspects of society and life. It tends to essentialise women as all sharing certain attributes which are different from those of men. For radical feminists, women are, by nature, nurturing, artistic, cooperative, non-competitive, non-hierarchical and peaceful.

Radical feminism rightly challenges us to deconstruct ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ and to explore how these gender identities – and others – have been constructed. We need to do more analysis of the impact of the macho identity, for example, on state militarism, competitive sports, the destructive discourse of academia, and domestic violence against women and children. Relevant strategies of action are needed to combat the macho identity in all its manifestations, along with the ‘dependent feminine’ identity which many women/girls employ.

However, a major problem with radical feminism is its assumption that all women are the same, thus ignoring the way in which different classes/groups of women oppress/exploit others. By emphasising ‘natural’ differences between women and men, essentialism adopts the mirror image of patriarchal beliefs in biological differences between women and men, and overlooks the role of society (including patriarchy) in constructing gender differences. It does not ask why and how, for example, (some) women have been socialised to be nurturing, cooperative and peaceful, and ignores the many women who are, in fact, competitive, individualistic, bossy and violent (and, vice versa, what about gentle, nurturing men?).
Another problem is the failure to recognise the way in which other social relations and structures support and strengthen male supremacy – all of these social structures need to be abolished in order to do away with male domination.

‘Liberal feminism’ identifies gender inequality as the main problem, and seeks to promote women’s equality with men in all spheres of life. This is the dominant form of feminism in Tanzania today, and informs most programmes of gender equity and gender mainstreaming in government and among donors, and among many NGOs as well. The main focus is on promoting equality by advancing women to be on a par with men within existing structures, e.g. in education, in employment, in politics etc. Policies and ideologies such as ‘Women in Development’, or WID, are typical of this approach.

The problem with this approach is that it takes the status quo as given, which would mean that other forms of oppression and exploitation would persist, thereby dividing and exploiting some women by other women, and men. For example, liberal feminism demands that women entrepreneurs have access to bank loans on the same terms as men, as one form of women’s economic empowerment. This means in practice that a few women will benefit from credit programmes, along with a few men, while excluding the majority of both women and men. Transformative feminism might call for alternative strategies of financing which benefit all classes/genders equally – only possible with alternative forms of finance institutions, not the present private commercial banking institutions.

Related to liberal feminism is what is often referred to as ‘Western feminism’ by critics who are usually based in Third World, post-colonial and transformative feminism. Western feminists (whether situated in Africa, another region in the South or in the North) is the term used for a certain type of liberal feminism whose gaze is focused on ‘other’ women in the Third World/Africa – or in the village/rural areas – from the vantage point of a woman/observer who assumes herself to be liberated. As with radical feminism, there is a tendency to homogenise all African women as being the same, thus robbing women of their individualism, dynamism and uniqueness. Many Africanist feminists have promoted colonising and totalising generalisations about ‘rural African women’ as being powerless, helpless, propertyless, voiceless – the essential victim.

Because Western feminists assume that African women are passive objects who are acted upon by men or patriarchy, they do not look for examples of contestation, resistance and struggle and they usually fail to recognise resistances when they happen. Instead, the observer adopts a highly patronising/matronising position, assuming that she knows what is best for the African woman, the rural woman, the woman living with HIV/AIDS, the African girl. Western feminism has been adopted by many African women scholars, government officials, parliamentarians and NGO-based actors working in Africa, as well as Africanist feminists based in the North.

‘Black feminism’ identifies white supremacy and racism as being the major cause of the oppression and exploitation of black women, thereby subsuming the struggle against male domination as part of the overall struggle against racism and global apartheid. Many black feminists adopt essentialist views, similar to radical feminists, and argue that black women are, by nature, unique, the same and different from all other women. Black women, for example, are essentially, by their nature, sexy, musical, artistic, courageous, etc. Whether essentialist or not, the approach homogenises all black women as being the same, thus obscuring the way in which some black
women exploit and oppress other black women, and men. It also fails, in many cases, to address the ways in which imperialism and capitalism further the oppression and exploitation of working black women in particular, and all working women in general. (However, the work of Audre Lorde, a self-proclaimed black feminist, is a stunning example, to us, of transformative feminism – Audre Lorde identified herself completely with the struggles of African women against apartheid, colonisation and imperialism.)

Like black feminists, transformative feminists recognise the reality of white supremacy within different branches of the women’s movement worldwide and in Africa. White supremacy permeates many donor programmes emanating from ‘the North’, and is increasingly incorporated within post-colonial structures of power and ownership of property. Liberalisation and privatisation programmes have led to the growing economic power of white South Africans and ‘Europeans’ from the North in eastern and southern Africa, thus reversing the decolonising achievements of early independence. Moreover, northern-based feminists have increasing power to define what ‘African-based’ feminism ought to be about, by virtue of their position in global governance structures.

At the same time, this power is not defined solely or ultimately by race (witness the number of Third World women who now work for governments, international NGOs and academia in the North), but by position in imperial structures of power. Hence, post-colonial feminists based in the North who are of Third World origin have an undue amount of power to determine the direction which global feminisms should take, by virtue of their greater access to and control over resources than feminists based in the South (research, publications, media attention, academic positions, management posts).

The essentialising ideas of both black and radical feminism are rejected in this analysis as mirror images of sexism, white racism and imperial ideology about ‘exotic’ African women – and men. They share basic elements of biological determinism that have been rejected over time by all those movements which have struggled against white supremacy and male supremacy. One of the major ideological weapons of white supremacists and colonial ideologues has been the argument/assumption that whites are by nature/biologically superior to all other ‘races’. Similarly, male supremacists argue that men are biologically superior to women. Efforts to adopt biological/essentialist arguments for the supremacy/uniqueness of black women adopt a similar type of biological determinism, and are therefore rejected.

‘Marxist feminism’ struggles against both male supremacy/domination and class domination/exploitation, and identifies the main cause of women’s oppression/exploitation to be class. Hence, feminist struggles are to be subsumed under class struggles that are led by the workers against capitalists. Women workers have often been in the forefront of this movement, trying to win gains for all workers, while at the same time struggling against sexual abuse at work, discriminatory wages and male oppression in the workers’ movement. Many of our male activist partners embrace some version of marxist feminism – hence the unease, if not outright hostility, about prioritising feminist struggles against male supremacy as a diversion of the masses, or not being ‘serious’.

While recognising the significance of class struggle and identifying capitalism as a major cause of women’s oppression and exploitation, transformative feminists reject the prioritisation of any one ‘structure’ or set of relationships over the other. Instead, they examine the dynamic way in which class and gender
relations interact with each other, and with race and imperial relations. At any one ‘moment’ in time and space, one of these social relations may appear to be the most dominant and have top priority – however, transformative feminist struggles link all forms of oppression/exploitation together in order for real transformation to take place, and real women’s emancipation to be achieved.

‘State feminism’ is a term which has developed to conceptualise a strategy more than a conceptual framework, the strategy of mainstreaming gender in and through the state, and using the state to promote gender equity, women’s advancement and, in some cases, social transformation. In Latin America, for example, progressive leftist parties have won political power in some countries with the support of the feminist movement, and later have invited leaders of the feminist movement to join the new government in power. One result has been the fragmentation of the feminist movement and the domestication of its political programme.

There is a growing recognition worldwide about the way in which ‘gender mainstreaming’ has contributed to the domestication of the feminist agenda in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Once feminist discourse is appropriated by donor agencies including the World Bank and IMF, the original transformative goals are in danger of being subverted and domesticated. It takes constant vigilance to maintain clarity of positionality, especially in a context when many feminist organisations and/or researchers and teachers depend upon external funding and external support for publication.

Another expression of the same tendency is the rise of ‘gender technocrats’, i.e. state officials who are experts in gender, and/or gender consultants who work with donor agencies and the government to carry out gender analysis and training.

A whole industry of gender analysis and gender planning has developed, which has adopted many elements of feminist discourse but without the passion, the commitment and the grounding in the feminist movement. This has informed the development project, whereby the ‘nation’ is continually groomed to accommodate itself to post-colonial capitalism. Elements of gender equality may be incorporated into the development project in order to win support from local women’s groups as well as external tax-payers, but without challenging the dominant structures which oppress and exploit the majority of girls/women and boys/men.

This section of the article has compared and contrasted transformative feminism and other types of feminism in Tanzania and Africa today. The next section analyses transformative feminism in more detail.

**Transformative Feminism**

One of the most controversial elements in transformative feminism (and in radical feminism as well) is the belief that change must come about in both the public and the private spheres of life. Efforts to change dominant structures of decision making over policies and budgets in the public sphere will go on side by side with efforts to abolish male supremacy in decision making within the family (nuclear and extended) and the community. These struggles are linked, in that male supremacy is created, reproduced and struggled for in both the public and the private spheres of life. Hence, the need to struggle on all fronts for change. There are no boundaries for patriarchy – and hence, no boundaries for transformative feminist struggle.

Another dimension of transformative feminism, which is held in common with other forms of feminism, is its
attention to the emotional, psychological and sexual aspects of the self and of relationships, as well as the economic, the political, the cultural. Transformative feminists link struggles for ownership and control of bodies with those for ownership and control of land, for example, or of labour. Struggles over sexuality, gender identity and reproduction are part of these struggles.

Male supremacy is partly based on the way in which both femininity and masculinity have been constructed within the most personal, private areas of our lives. The link between male supremacy and macho identity/behaviour and the perpetuation of physical violence and war as a solution for social conflict illustrates how powerful psychology, self-identity and emotion are.

However, connecting the personal and the public is highly controversial and can be very painful. It means talking about oppression and struggle within our own families and homes, among people we love and care for. Moreover, the finger needs to be pointed in all directions – who is innocent? The mother who oppresses her daughter by trying to define for her how she should behave and who she should love? The older sister who exploits her younger sister’s labour?

Feminists of different types have also challenged the way in which knowledge is generated, packaged and disseminated. Research and knowledge cannot be ‘objective’ in the sense of a researcher not having a position, or her work not reflecting her position in society. The challenge, instead, is to make the position and identity of the researcher clear, visible.

Transformative feminists call for a holistic approach to research, which takes into account all aspects of reality. The subjective, emotional side of our lives is as significant and open to scientific inquiry as the so-called logical and analytical side.

Linking the creative and artistic sides of our brain with the logical and analytical has proven to be crucial in making transformation happen. Both quantitative and qualitative methods become potentially useful in our efforts to ‘know’ the world as fully as possible. These struggles include the popularisation of who does research and how the information generated will be shared, which media will be used and who decides, thus challenging the dominance not only of men, but also academic professionals and corporations.

As with historical materialism, transformative feminism links theory and practice, and is rooted in concrete struggles for change. In other words, the analysis is derived from what is learned in the process of struggle, and vice versa. Transformative feminists do not sit back and critique reality, including policy; they struggle to change it. This means taking risks, ‘getting our hands dirty’, in the process.

Finally, transformative feminists have promoted emancipatory ways of organising ourselves, to challenge male dominant top-down structures in civil society as well as in government. Group-centred leadership – not leader-centred groups – is one example. Collective participatory decision making is another. Engagement within participatory democratic structures is liberating, and becomes a school for the revolution, thus espousing animation as its main approach and philosophy whereby the oppressed take ownership and lead the struggle for their own emancipation, while those in solidarity with them accept to learn and be led.

**Silence, Confusion, Positionality**

In preparing these notes, we have recognised silences within transformative feminism in Tanzania, which may ultimately undermine the struggle for change. These silences are listed below in order...
to encourage further thinking and to provoke debate as we continue shaping our collective identity and sharpening our tools of analysis and struggles:

- Sexual orientation and identity; and
- Sexuality.

Confusion has also been noted – which may be a creative development – over the following issues:

- the role of men in the feminist movement;
- gender versus women;
- the role of the state in the feminist struggle for women’s emancipation and transformation of society;
- the relationship between transformative feminist movement and organised religion;
- the relationship between transformative feminist movement and the state;
- strategies to handle the growing challenge of fundamentalist struggles, including market fundamentalism on the one hand, and religious fundamentalism on the other (far-right Christian, Islamic); and
- traditionalisms.

In terms of positionality, we reconfirm the importance of:

- naming your self;
- taking a position; and
- solidarity with other transformative movements.

**Post-2006 Developments**

As noted at the beginning of this article, TGNP carried out a series of awareness-raising sessions on transformative feminism with staff, members and partners during 2006 and 2007, and more explicit feminist discourse began to be employed in our ongoing activities. One of the major steps forward occurred through the Gender Festival 2007. TGNP and FemAct organise this festival every two years for gender/feminist activists and others to come together and share experiences of their analyses and struggles, and plan collective action for the future. The theme for Gender Festival 2007 was ‘Gender, Democracy and Development: African Feminist Struggles in the Context of Globalisation’. The keynote speaker, Muthoni Wanyeki, a young feminist from Kenya, shaped the framework for dialogue and debate through her presentation, ‘Believing in Ourselves’. One workshop focused on feminist organising and leadership styles, and feminist discourse was encouraged throughout the four days of plenary and workshops, involving more than 3000 participants from all over Tanzania and from many African countries as well.

Our resolve to strengthen feminist activism by grounding locally also defined the key priorities for the organisation’s next five-year strategic plan 2008–2012. The year 2008 was devoted to two major studies which together have contributed to the process of restructuring and repositioning TGNP. A pilot study of transformative feminist movement building was carried out, using participatory action research methodology, in three districts of Dar es Salaam, the major city of Tanzania, and in one rural district, Mbeya, in the South-West, in order to find out ‘what is happening on the ground?’ It explored the questions ‘what type of grassroots women/feminist organising is taking place?’ About what issues? Using what strategies? How do others perceive TGNP’s role in transformative feminist movement building, if at all?’ This intersected with the second Carrying Capacity Study, which explored to what extent the organisation was prepared and able to take a leading role in transformative feminist movement building, beginning with its own institutional culture and structure and ways of relating to grassroots and other women/feminist activists and their organisations.

Participation by staff and members in the two studies allowed us to incorporate the findings and the lessons learned into
ongoing restructuring and repositioning processes, without waiting for more formal reporting processes (which near completion). As a result, major shifts in the organisational structure and strategies of TGNP are already taking place this year, which we believe will strengthen its capacity to position self within the diversity of feminist activists’ struggles and make a significant contribution to the building of an ever more powerful transformative feminist movement in Tanzania and Africa in the future.

**Demere Kitunga** is co-owner of E&D Vision Publishing Ltd and Executive Director of Soma, a readership and development facility that runs Soma Book Café, and a founder member of Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP).

**Marjorie Mbilinyi** is a founder member of TGNP, and currently leads Analysis and Research at TGNP.

**Endnotes**

1. An earlier version of this article was published in *Ulingo wa Jinsia* (July–September 2006) and in a special issue of CODESRIA Bulletin 2006.

2. Key presentations on feminism at the Gender Festival 2007 are reproduced in *Transformative Feminism: Believing in Ourselves* (TGNP, 2008).

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**The Ghanaian Election of 2008**

**Bob Kelly**

The 2008 elections in Ghana took place in a very uncertain economic and political environment. On the positive side, the prospects for oil production off the coast of the Western Region offered hope for a new era of prosperity, but this contrasted with the everyday experiences of urban populations in particular, faced with the impact on prices and jobs of the global financial crisis. In the rural areas some of the economic projects of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Government were improving the infrastructure in such areas as transport and irrigation, while long-standing local and ethnic conflicts were again rising in intensity. Interest in the elections was consequently at a very high level, with *The Ghanaian Times* stating that ‘election fever grips the nation’ (6 December 2008). NPP supporters felt generally confident of a victory, while the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) expressed fears of ballot-rigging and suggested that dire consequences could follow if it felt cheated of the election. Broadcast debates consistently pressured the participants to commit themselves to peaceful behaviour before, during and after the elections, reflecting real concerns that peace and stability were under threat.

Following the terms of the 1992 Constitution, the presidential and parliamentary elections were conducted on Sunday 7 December, but the electoral process and the declaration of a presidential victor had to wait for a further three and a half weeks, owing to the closeness of the contest. In the parliamentary elections two results had to be declared late because of stolen ballot boxes, and there were several petitions to the High Court over alleged electoral irregularities in particular constituencies, but basically, of the 230 constituencies, the former
opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) won 114 seats, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) 109, the People’s National Convention (PNC) two seats, and the Convention People’s Party (CPP) one. The other four seats were won by Independents, all of whom had been NPP supporters who objected to the particular choice of candidate.

The closeness of the result reflects the intense competition that characterised the election, but it, together with the eventual victory of the erstwhile opposition party, indicates the general ‘freeness’ and ‘fairness’ of the process. There were allegations of threats and intimidation in the Ashanti and Volta Region heartlands of the two main parties, and rumours abounded of fake identification cards and attempts to register minors and other ineligibles. One report was of groups of Togolese citizens being taken to the Volta Region attempting to register to vote, in the belief that they were arranging to attend the haj pilgrimage to Mecca (interview, David Adeenze-Kangah). In terms of financial support, the high levels of activity of the NPP and NDC indicate there was no major disparity between them, but of the minor parties only the CPP was able to launch anything resembling a national campaign, and this was organisationally very limited in most areas of the country. Relative access to finance remains a concern for democracy in Ghana as in so many other states.

Thirty-two sitting members of parliament lost their seats. These included several important figures from the outgoing regime:

- the Minister of Women and Children’s Affairs, Hajia Alima Mahama, in Nalerigu, Northern Region;
- the Minister of Works, Housing and Water Resources, Alhaji Malik Yakubu, in Yendi, Northern Region;
- the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Saddique Boniface, in Salaga, Northern Region;
- the Minister of State at the Presidency, Charles Bintim in Saboba, Northern Region;
- the Deputy Upper East Regional Minister, Agnes Chigabatia, in Builsa North;
- the Minister for Public Sector Reforms, Samuel Owusu-Agyei, in Effutu, Central Region;
- the Deputy Minister for Education, Angelina Amissah in Shama, Western Region;
- the Deputy Minister of Health, Gladys Ashietey, in Ledzokuku, Greater Accra (Daily Graphic, 13 December 2008);

The terms of the Constitution are that a successful presidential candidate must achieve 50 per cent+1 of the votes cast in order to be declared victorious on the first ballot. In this case the declared results are shown in Table 1 (figures rounded to two decimal points).

Four other candidates shared the remainder (The Ghanaian Times, 11 December 2008).

The PNC campaign had been lacklustre with few electoral posters being visible outside the home area of Edward Mahama in Walewale in the Northern Region and in the Upper Regions, and there was a distinct lack of financial and administrative support for its parliamen-

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidential candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Result (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>49.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Atta-Mills</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>47.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paa Kwesi Nduom</td>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Mahama</td>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>0.87</td>
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tary candidates (interview, Moses Baah). On the other hand, the eventual poor result for the CPP belied a great deal of effort on behalf of its presidential candidate in particular to re-establish itself as a potent force in Ghanaian politics, with posters displayed throughout the country and confident television performances, but reflected the actual organisational and financial deficiencies at local level. In the event it seems that divisions within his own party, together with Nduom’s participation in the NPP Government after 2000, took their toll, with the NDC being viewed as the obvious vehicle of change for those critical of the regime.

This result triggered a run-off three weeks later, on Sunday 28 December. The new results are shown in Table 2.

However, this too proved inconclusive, as voting had been unable to take place in the Tain constituency in Brong Ahafo Region because of a shortage of ballot papers, and the 53,000 registered electorate there outweighed the declared Atta-Mills majority (Voanews). As the Tain constituency had been won by the NDC candidate in the parliamentary election and by Professor Mills in the initial presidential election, the final NDC victory was probably a foregone conclusion, but the NPP did not admit defeat, and the re-run took place in Tain on 2 January. In the event the NPP activity on the day of the election was minimal, and Professor John Atta-Mills was finally declared the victor of the presidential election.

Despite apprehension from many quarters that the election could lead to violence, particularly if the results were disputed, it was peacefully conducted. While there were some radio and newspaper reports of scuffles and rowdiness in various parts of the country, both the immediate build-up to the election and the polling days themselves generally went off without the loss of life and destruction of property that had been present, if very limited and sporadic, in recent previous elections (see for example The Ghanaian Times, 9 December 2008). In 2004, for example, a number of violent attacks on polling officials were reported and several people died in Tamale both before and immediately after the election (Kelly 2005). Ghanaian police had been on the alert for potential violence in a number of hot-spots where the earlier build-up to the elections had led to a resurfacing of local tensions. Earlier in the year, for example, there had been killings in Bawku in the Upper East Region and Gushiegu in the Northern Region. Following the election some of the latent tensions did erupt, with the stabbing of an NPP supporter at Agbogbloshie market in Accra during NDC victory celebrations (Ghana Review International, 8 January 2009) and the burning of a number of houses belonging to NPP activists in Tamale (The Statesman, 12 January 2009).

The success of the NDC can be taken to provide important evidence that Ghana has established itself as a functioning democracy. Its victory marked ‘the second turnover’ of power (the first being the victory of the NPP over the NDC in the 2000 elections) identified by Huntington as indicating the commitment of two major groups of political leaders as being sufficiently committed to democracy to surrender office and power; that both the elite and the public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidential run-off candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Result (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Atta-Mills</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>50.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>49.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
recognise that when things go wrong in a democratic system, the need is to change the rulers and not the regime (Huntington 1993, p. 267).

So what factors lay behind the opposition’s success? During the build-up to the election the NPP was quite confident that the international aid it had obtained, the developmental projects it had undertaken and a general optimism created by the discovery of oil in large quantities off the coast of the Western Region would guarantee a third term of office. The party could point to the great advances in freedom of the media, with a wide range of newspapers and radio stations offering alternative views and opening up political discussions, in contrast to the heavily government-controlled pattern under previous regimes. NPP supporters and non-partisan officials alike pointed to the many developmental improvements in the various regions of the country. In the Northern Region I was urged to note the improvements to street lighting, roads and the new sports stadium in Central Tamale, the building of a new bridge in Yagba constituency which would prevent many villages from being cut off from their nearest town (Walewale) during the rainy season, a new hospital at Gushiegu in Dagbon, and the creation of new districts with their own developmental budgets in Karaga and Central Gonja (interviews: Alhaji Yahya and Adam Cockra). In the Upper West a new district had been created in Lambussie, and the road links between Wa and Kumasi/Accra had now been greatly improved, with only a short stretch of the main road near Bamboi needing to be tarred. In the Upper East, new dams had increased agricultural production, new healthcare facilities had reduced infant mortality, a new district had been created for Chiana-Paga, and the liberalisation of trade with Burkina Faso had greatly benefited Bolgatanga and the border town of Paga (interviews: A.A. Luguterah, Issaka Sagito and Kofi Adda). In election posters across Ghana there were photographs of life ‘before and after’ the acquisition of NPP rule, stressing the improvements and developments that had taken place.

The figures in Table 3 show that in terms of parliamentary constituencies the NPP actually strengthened its position in Brong Ahafo, Upper East and Upper West, but in addition to the four seats it lost to NPP rebels standing as Indepen-

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<th>Constituencies</th>
<th>Presidential (%)</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Volta</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

dents it had a net loss of three seats in Northern Region, seven in Greater Accra and eight in Central Region. This would indicate a regional difference in the factors at play. In Greater Accra the increasingly difficult economic situation led to disenchantment with the government’s economic performance, and this coincided with the completion of the expensive new presidential palace and increasing allegations of corruption against some prominent figures in the regime. As one commentator put it, a new presidential palace costing over US$30 million coincided with ‘the fact that the majority of our people exist in stinky poverty’ (Doris Yaa Dartey in The Spectator, 16 November 2008). In the Central Region, strong campaigning by the NDC to regain support for Professor Mills in his own region, largely lost to the NPP in 2004, enabled the party to make much of the plight of fishermen whose livelihood was becoming increasingly threatened by the activities of Chinese and Japanese fishing fleets. It was in these two regions that the NPP essentially lost the parliamentary elections. In the presidential elections the NDC’s largest increases in vote were in the Central and Western regions, while the NPP actually increased its percentage of the vote in the Northern and two Upper Regions.

In the interior of the country a mixture of ‘traditional’ and modern factors was at play. The developmental improvements mentioned above certainly played a role in sustaining and even enhancing NPP support. As the Daily Graphic (13 December 2008) put it, the ‘people of Lambussie in the Upper West Region showed their appreciation to the ruling NPP for giving them a district’, and strong candidates in Lawra (UW), Bawku Central and Binduri (UE) also helped the party overturn NDC majorities. In the Northern Region the ongoing Dagomba chieftaincy dispute almost led to a clean sweep for the NDC in that area (in Nanton the anti-NPP vote was split by the presence of a strong CPP candidate), while the selection of John Mahama, son of Kwame Nkrumah’s former minister E.A. Mahama, as vice-presidential candidate helped to win two Gonja seats previously held by the NPP. The choice of Muhamadu Bawumia as NPP vice-presidential candidate for the NPP (also the son of a former Nkrumah minister) failed to save the single Mamprusi seat held by the party in Nalerigu and did not lead to the expected victory in Bawumia’s home constituency of Walewale and adjacent Yagba/Kubori. Indeed, the limited impact of his candidature is shown by the fact that the NDC actually gained a 1 per cent higher vote in the presidential over parliamentary election in Yagba (54 per cent vs. 53 per cent) while in Walewale the NPP presidential ticket only reached 39 per cent – 7 per cent less than the NDC (myjoyonline.com).

One key factor in many areas was the role of primary elections, and this affected both the NPP, which held them, and the NDC, which did not. NDC thinking was that this was such a crucial election that any sitting MP should automatically be chosen this time around. This meant that some candidates who were not seen to be particularly active in their constituency’s interests or whose continued tenure was resented by local notables were confirmed in their candidacy, but were then subject to a local backlash – this can largely explain the failure of NDC candidates to hold their seats in Lambussie (UW), Builsa South and Binduri (UE). It is interesting to note that while these NDC MPs lost their seats, in the latter two constituencies the presidential vote went to the NDC and in Lambussie that result was very close, with the NDC gaining a majority for Mills in the presidential run-off election. In the case of the NPP, disaffected losers in the primary elections played an important part in the loss to Independents of two Ashanti seats (Bekwai and Bosom-Freho), one Northern (Wulensi) and one Eastern Region (Nkawkaw) seats, with all four voting for the NPP presidential
ticket. In Yendi in the Northern Region the vote was split by an erstwhile NPP supporter standing for the Democratic Freedom Party, whose capture of 3 per cent of the vote enabled the NDC to take what should have been a relatively safe NPP seat.

So can any general trends be deduced from the campaigns and their results? I would suggest that several significant points emerge:

**The choice of candidate:** This has become more important as the number of potential opinion leaders in rural areas has expanded from the local chiefs to the range of educated and successful individuals. Given that in the rural areas any ideological difference between the parties is largely invisible, it is important that the candidate is well connected within the constituency, is known and is seen to be locally active. The lack of activity of a number of sitting MPs has been noted above as a source of their failure, but this was also used to explain the defeat of the sitting NDC MP in Bawku Central, Mahama Ayariga, who was criticised for spending too much time with the presidential and vice-presidential candidates on their tours of the country, and insufficient time looking after his own constituency (interview, Adda). Any MP who is seen to develop his own village while neglecting others in his constituency may also feel the wrath of the electorate, and this was used partly to explain the defeat of the incumbent NPP MP for Bimbilla, Moses Baah, who allegedly in election year put up electricity poles near his home in Tumu while leaving them lying unconnected on the ground in Wallembee.

**Ethnic rivalries:** All parties in Ghana are keen to play down this aspect of political rivalry, with leaders and candidates exhorting the electorate to vote on the basis of policies rather than ethnicity. However, for many voters the identification of the NPP with the Asante and related Akan-speaking groups and the NDC with the Ewe remains strong, and is displayed by the continued success of the NPP in Ashanti, central Brong Ahafo and the western and central parts of the Eastern Region. The approximately 25 per cent won by Professor Mills in Ashanti in both the initial and run-off elections is not significantly different from the 24 per cent won in 2004, indicating little reduction of the impact of this identification and possibly of the ethnic rivalry. Likewise, the NDC carried all the Volta Region seats, with the exception of the Akan-dominated area of Nkwanta North, and achieved over an 86 per cent vote for its presidential candidate in the run-off election. In Wa Central the candidature of Clement Elade, a Dagaaba for the NPP, was probably more a reason for his defeat by the NDC’s Wala candidate than was the issue of personality, despite the claim of the *Daily Graphic* (12 December 2008) that he had ‘poor human relation’ (sic) when compared to the ‘the more affable Rashid Pelpuo’. In Bawku Central the Kusasi vs. Mamprusi dispute was played out again, with the election of a Mamprusi/Mossi candidate showing a return to the 2000 pattern of an NPP victory, although this was one of the results subject to a High Court challenge. In the Nanumba/Konkomba constituencies of Bimbilla and Wulensi the rivalry between these two ethnic groups greatly contributed to the defeat of the incumbent NDC candidate in Bimbilla by the NPP and the incumbent NPP candidate in Wulensi by an Independent. In Bimbilla the numerically dominant Konkomba elected a Konkomba candidate, while in Wulensi a Nanumba standing as an Independent defeated the NDC and NPP candidates who were both Konkomba. The results of the 2008 elections show that ethnic rivalries remain as considerable problems for Ghana, but at present the key Akan–Ewe divide only manifests itself in electoral rather than violent rivalry, and regime changes enable this to be contained with each ethnic group having an opportunity to
benefit from periods of being in government.

Local developments: When asked, most voters are clamouring for local development, and this is of potential significance. The creation of a new district based on Funsi before the 2004 election certainly contributed to the NPP victory in Wa East, and in 2008 this was repeated in Lambussie. However, local developments are not always clearly attributable to one party. If a constituency is held by a member of the opposition party then the relative roles of the MP and the District Chief Executive (DCE) appointed by the President can come into play, with both claiming credit. In addition, local developments do seem more visible to the government supporters than to those of the opposition. NDC supporters across the country were very willing to complain about the lack of any real development in their areas, while NPP members could point to specific projects that had come to fruition.

Traditional disputes: In some areas these coincide with the ethnic rivalries mentioned above, but in others they are distinct. In the Dagbon area of the Northern Region the intra-Dagomba dispute between the Abdulai and Andani families remains very important. All Dagombas feel allegiance to one of the families even though they themselves are not of royal (Na Bihe) blood, and the failure of the NPP Government to charge anyone with the murder of the paramount chief (Ya Na) and some 30 of his followers in March 2002 has strengthened the link between the NDC and the Andani ‘family’. The NPP’s one safe Dagomba seat of Yendi was lost through a splitting of the vote, but the party gained Nanton in compensation through the splitting of the Andani vote there. In many parts of the Upper East and Upper West Regions the disputes are not really ethnic but are village rivalries. In the Upper West rivalry between Lawra and Nandom (both are largely Dagaaba towns) remains significant, while in Chiana-Paga in the Upper East, Kassena Chiana is resentful of the dominance of Kassena Paga both economically and in terms of representation, while Nankanni Sirigui feels totally excluded but does not get support from Nankanni Mirigui – hence candidates from each of the first three villages fought out the 2008 election (interviews, Luguterah and Rudolf Amenga- Eteto).

Party allegiance: This has long been a factor, with some families being allied with the Nkrumah or Danquah ‘traditions’ since the early days of politics in the 1950s (for details see Nugent 1995 and Oquaye 2004). On a more limited term basis, party loyalty remained strong across the election period in 2008. There was very little change in the voting between the presidential and parliamentary elections, and even less between the presidential and run-off elections. The limited differences in parliamentary and presidential results in the 2008 elections involved the four successful Independent candidates and the three representing the minor parties. In each case the presidential vote was won by either Nana Akufo-Addo for the NPP or Professor Atta-Mills for the NDC. The changes are shown in Table 4.

From Table 4 it can be seen that even including the four parliamentary seats won by Independents (who were all NPP dissidents) only four constituencies changed their vote between the presidential election and the run-off (Lambussie, Bibiani/Anhwiaso, Mpohor-Wassa and Prestea-Huni Valley). It can also be seen that the NPP did distinctly better in the parliamentary than the presidential elections where there was a divergence between the two. This to some extent reflects the effect of the NDC failing to hold primary elections in seats that they held where it was the parliamentary candidate rather than the presidential candidate or party that lacked local support.

Active support: In the past one of the key elements of this was the backing of local
chiefs. While this has greatly reduced (see Kelly and Bening 2007) and chiefs' participation in elections is actually banned by the 1992 Constitution, this still remains of some significance in rural areas. As Tufuor states, in many areas candidates ‘have a political responsibility to woo the chief and his elders’ (Tufuor 2008, pp. 28–29). In Lambussie, the chief’s car was seen campaigning for the successful NPP candidate, while the Chief of Kayoro in Chiana-Paga constituency pledged the support of his people to the NPP (Daily Graphic, 19 November 2008). However, of much greater importance is the support of the youth, with candidates mobilising large groups of young supporters to mobilise support for them (interviews: Baah and Adda).

The resources of the local party are also important, with effective campaigning leading to NDC victories over sitting Independents, PNC and CPP members in Bolgatanga (Upper East), Bunkpurugu (Northern), Ellemelbe (Western), Sissala East (Upper West) and Zebilla (Upper East). Divisions within the NPP and consequent lack of active support from senior party members contributed greatly to the loss of Nalerigu and Yendi in the Northern Region (interviews: Adda and Alhaji Ibrahima).

The high electoral turnout of almost 70 per cent, although it was 85 per cent in 2004 (Ghana Electoral Commission), and the victory for the opposition, are very positive signs for Ghanaian democracy. However, the closeness of the results offers a more ambiguous message. On the positive side it should encourage cooperative working across parties, and the PNC quickly responded to NDC overtures by allowing Azong Alhassan, the newly-elected MP for Builsa South, to become Minister of State at the Presidency (Daily Guide, 3 February 2009). On the negative side, it is possible that the

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Parliamentary</th>
<th>Presidential</th>
<th>Run-off</th>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>Ablekuma South</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ayawaso Central</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NPP</td>
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<td>Bekwai</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NPP</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>IND</td>
<td>NPP</td>
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Source: Adapted from myjoyonline.com
outcome of a handful of court disputes and by-elections could create a situation where the President lacks parliamentary support. Before the election some leading members of the NDC were showing frustration at lack of power and were very fearful of election-rigging, and so a small change in the balance of power could lead to more tension and instability. Since the election there have been a number of reported incidents of NDC supporters harassing members and supporters of the former government and this could polarise divisions in the country. The demands for justice conflict with the needs for reconciliation. The election results themselves do not offer solutions to the various ethnic and local disputes that threaten Ghana’s peace and stability, but the ‘foot soldiers’ of the NDC in Dagbon, for example, now expect their government to deal with the murderers of the late Ya Na. Similarly, the NDC victory does nothing to alter the dependency of Ghana on international finance, and the hopes of the poor and disadvantaged are unlikely to be met.

The peaceful handover of power does however show that there is a general commitment to democracy and a desire to preserve the image of Ghana as a democratic and stable state in a continent that often lacks these features, and the continued high turnout shows the population retains a belief in the efficacy of the electoral system. The desire of the relatively neglected regions of the country to make progress through a government largely representative of them needs to be balanced with policies that will keep the relatively affluent areas ‘on board’ to avoid the polarisation that characterises so many African states. This is particularly important in Ghana, as areas of relative affluence to a significant extent coincide with the areas inhabited by Akan-speaking groups. This will require astute statesmanship from Professor Mills and his government to avoid the twin dangers of resentment from his opponents and disillusionment among his supporters.

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A.A.Y.M.B. Ibrahima, Regional Educational Officer, Tamale.
A.A. Luguterah, lawyer and former politician and diplomat, Tamale.
I. Sagito, Regional Manager for Development Planning, Bolgatanga.
A.A. Yahya, political activist, Tamale.
The Student Movement in Nigeria: Antinomies and Transformation

Sylvester Odion-Akhaine

There was a time when the student movement in Nigeria was the worry of the post-colonial ruling class. Indeed, there was a claim that in the mid-1980s the only radical group in Nigeria worthy of occupying a place on the shelves of the State Department of the United States of America was the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), because that body was consistently anti-imperialist. Imagine those heydays of the student movement; there would have been a nationwide solidarity protest in support of the people of Palestine in the face of the violence recently carried out by the Israelis in Gaza. That it did not take place underlines the parlous state of the student movement in Nigeria. The student movement appears to have lost its ideological direction since the first half of the last decade of the last century. Prior to this dip in consciousness, students had clear visions of society, including how it should be organised, with global bipolarity providing socialism as an alternative vision to capitalist civilisation. The latter aspires to build a society in which the means of production/wealth are in the hands of a few and the logic of production premised on maximisation of profit. By contrast, socialism aspires to build a society in which people are the alpha and omega of production and development. However, the collapse of state socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has in some ways affected the élan of proselytisation of socialism and the welfarist third way which it inspired in some countries. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the material conditions that inform and impel many to socialism have not changed. Capitalism has continued to cause havoc on a global scale, under the euphemism of globalisation. Ever prone to cycles of crisis, there is a prevalent global economic downturn, and discourses are beginning to incline towards financial socialism and statist intervention in the advanced capitalist countries as a solution to the current crisis of capitalism, the ‘credit crunch’. By contrast, in peripheries such as Nigeria, destructive deflationary policies and privatisation of the state parastatals are the hallmark of IFIs’ solution to the crisis of peripheral capitalism, a policy that has not only destroyed the nascent industrial sector, but has rendered the periphery more dependent on the centre. In short, the hypocrisy is complete.

Conceptual Clarification

The contemporary world is one in which anything goes; some call it post-modernism. In this de-centred world, concepts have lost their meanings in the mildew of an imposed master narrative. The world civil society has come to approximate a medley of societal groups: non-government organisations; social movements, old and new; quasi non-governmental organisations and international non-governmental organisations. In this hazy and windy environment, it takes a great deal of effort to follow the conceptual path. Therefore, an attempt is made here to clarify what movement, social movement and student movement mean. We do not intend to waste precious time in grappling with what NGOs are today in developing countries. Suffice to say...
that they are merely tools of development agencies inspired by the Bretton Woods institutions to deconstruct traditional social movements and mainstream neoliberal market values in societies under their superintendence (Shivji 1989). ‘Movement’ could refer to a group of people with a common ideology and could also refer to corresponding actions and activities of such to realise their objectives. Hence most movements are social because of the goals that they promote to influence/change society. Therefore, for us, social movement refers to a group of people who are involved in social struggles for the radical transformation of society, by challenging for state hegemony. Can it be said that this is true of student movements? Paradoxically, the answer is both yes and no. Student movements that are concerned solely with superficial one-off welfare issues cannot be categorised as social movement. Student movements that seek to interrogate the structure of society and its relationship with the organisation of education truly qualify as social movements. Can the Nigerian student movement be so qualified? This will become clearer as an attempt is made to give a brief history of it.

Overview of Nigerian Student Movement

The origin of Nigerian student movement can be traced to the West Africa Students’ Union (WASU) formed in England by people such as Ladipo Solanke and his associates in 1925, all of whom were influenced by the Pan-African Movement led by W.E. Dubois, as well as the communist movement (Agbodeka 1965). They were not only concerned about the welfare of African students in England at the time, but were also involved in the struggles of self-determination of their countries from colonial rule. The subsequent creation of the University College in Ibadan and Yaba College of Technology in 1948 together with the colleges and grammar schools provided what might be called an indigenous platform for intervention in the social-economic and political dynamics of Nigeria.

The students of these institutions did not restrict themselves to in-campus struggles, but with the country still under colonial domination, they were deeply concerned with issues of national emancipation, and in 1956 organised themselves under the platform of the National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS) under the leadership of Emmanuel Obe as its first president. Their patriotism found expression when, after the country’s independence in 1960, the young country was secretly yoked to the erstwhile colonial master, Britain, in a defence pact with the aim of preventing communist infiltration into post-independence Nigeria. The clauses of the pact were quite obnoxious and invested negative sovereignty in the young government. Section five of that pact exempted visiting forces’ (meaning British) passports and visa regulations and immigration control or inspection on entering or leaving the territory of that contracting party. They shall also be exempted from regulations on the registration and control of aliens, but shall be considered as acquiring any right to permanent residence or domicile in the territory of that contracting party.2

Beyond these, section 8 also exempted service vehicles that were exclusively in the service of a visiting force from registration, taxation and compulsory third party insurance, among others. But Nigerian students read the script quite correctly, and were ready to mobilise against this move. The University of Ibadan, led by Dapo Falase, Abayomi Ferreira, and the NUNS, led by Osita Okeke, Dan Abasi-Ekong and D.V.C Obi among others, descended on the members of parliament. A combination of students’ actions and the activities of the opposition party, the Action Group (AG), consequently...
compelled the Balewa Government to repudiate the pact in January 1962.

Subsequently, Nigerian students were to play an increasingly progressive role in society, with NUNS serving as a veritable platform for them. They combined local welfare issues with the larger political economy. For example, the agitation against the appointment of Mrs Apampa as Matron of Independence Hall at the University of Ibadan led to the death of Kunle Adepoju in 1971. The students of the University of Nigeria on their own protested against the introduction of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme in 1973. However, a pan-Nigerian students’ action known as ‘Ali Must Go’ in the student movement history in Nigeria took place in 1978. At the time of this incident, Nigeria was under military dictatorship, headed by General Olusegun Obasanjo, and his Federal Commissioner for Education was Colonel Ahmadu Ali (after whom the protest was named). The revenue from the oil boom of the early 1970s had begun to diminish in the late 1970s due to an oil glut, and as a result affected the country’s economy adversely. The Obasanjo regime thought that the best way to deal with the financial crisis was through cost recovery and the removal of subsidies for fees and accommodation. The students resisted the move and were met with a corresponding state repression. This marked the beginning of a dark period in the history of the student movement in Nigeria, as a number of students from the University of Lagos and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, were shot dead by security forces. Consequently the authorities proscribed NUNS, and the Justice Usman Mohammed Commission of Inquiry was set up ostensibly to unravel ‘the immediate and remote causes’ of the protest.

By 1980, the NUNS had fully metamorphosed into NANS and adopted a charter in 1982, which captured its anti-imperialist essence; by locating the perennial crisis in the education sector within the neocolonial nature of the Nigerian economy, the 1982 Charter provided a major source of inspiration in the anti-imperialist struggle of the Nigerian student movement.

In 1989, there was another bloody nationwide protest against the ruthless implementation of the IMF – and World Bank-inspired Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which destroyed the national economy in general and the nascent industrial sector in particular, through massive devaluation of the national currency and liberalisation of the economy, as well as privatisation of national assets. The protest shook the foundation of the ultra reactionary regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. The students challenged the regime’s transition to civil rule programme which they saw as a ruse meant to perpetuate military rule. They pursued with vigour the Academic Reform Campaign (ACAREF) adopted in April 1991 at the University of Ilorin, by issuing an ultimatum to the Federal Military Government to declare a state of emergency in education, prompting a nationwide world press conference on the part of the latter to alert the nation to the impending violence by students. The regime was embattled, and by May 1992 the students struck again in nationwide protests, dubbed ‘economic protest’, which the military leadership had described as an equivalent of a military coup d’état.

In the decade of the 1980s, the student movement in its unwavering ideological commitment had forged a historical alliance with the Nigerian labour movement, including the Academic Staff Union of Universities. The student movement, as has been noted, was essentially anti-imperialist in outlook. This was reflected in the positions it took on major global issues. For example, under the administration of George Bush Senior, it condemned the infamous Television José Martí which was being beamed directly to Cuba without the consent of the Cuban authorities. The NANS called on
the Nigerian students nationwide to urge the Nigerian Government to intensify economic links with Cuba, demanding an end to US aggression against Cuba; demanding categorical condemnation of the US from the Nigerian Government; and writing protest letters to UNESCO, UN and the US Government making a case for Cuba. It is important to note that a number of these students went as volunteers to Nicaragua and Angola when these countries were besieged by US-sponsored counter-revolutionary insurgencies, and many shared rooms with South African exiles and organised Youth Solidarity on Southern Africa in Nigeria (YUSSAN) in virtually all the university campuses in the country. Such was the height of the movement’s internationalism.

What was remarkable about the decade of the 1980s was the strong ideological content of the student movement. It was underpinned by the Marxist–Leninist ideological leaning at the core of the movement, which ensured its hegemony among the social forces in the educational sector. That core organisation was called the Patriotic Youth Movement of Nigeria (PYMN), and central to its formation was the late Comrade Ola Oni. As Rahaman Onike rightly observed:

This student body propagated and spread the ideology of Marxism on the Nigerian campuses. In the course of struggle, the students’ activists enjoyed the support of radical intellectuals in the labour movement and in academia.

The movement was ideologically puritanical, to the point that it attracted criticisms from sections of the membership who subsequently called for a review of the NANS Constitution, which was seen as archaic. As observed in a protest leaflet, NANS was ‘so ideologically based that you would think that all Nigerian students are Marxist oriented’.3

By the second half of the 1990s, on the left, political fatigue had set in and the leadership of the Nigerian student movement was hijacked by reactionary and pro-establishment forces. The movement entered a phase of organisational slumber from which it is yet to recover. It is perhaps an appreciation of the depth of this crisis in the student movement that past leadership of the movement and those who expect continuity in the radical tradition of the student movement look forward in general to the transformation of the contradictions that have bedevilled the movement. In what follows, there is a look at these contradictions.

The Antinomies

Progress vs. reaction

Students themselves, by virtue of their fluid class position as ‘declassed’ elements of society, have oscillated between prospects of embourgeoisification and that of aligning with the oppressed segment of society, the veritable damnés de la terre. It is in this ideological context that we can best situate the struggle between progressive and conservative students. The progressives demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of the students and that of the larger society. The school authorities, especially in the tertiary institutions, envisage relationship with the students and their leadership in loco parentis. Therefore, they could ‘go the extra mile’ to ensure that the leadership of the student unions is occupied by moderates or ‘good boys’. Where they are unable to do this, they suspend union activities and impose caretaker committees on the students made up of their quislings. This explains why caretaker committees are part of the crisis in the tertiary institutions in the country.

State interventions

It is a truism that the Nigerian state and its lackeys have always been concerned about the militancy of the student movement. Two views have come from the government circle in the last two
decades. One is that students are often incited by the more radical segment of society, such as the academic staff union of universities (ASUU) and the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), which are perceived as dens of communists and anti-establishment elements. The second view is that it is a ‘minority section’ of the students that seeks to upset academic peace. The Babangida regime’s antidote was to tame radical lecturers so that the ‘doves’ that are left would keep the students busy. In this regard, anti-student elements/groups were encouraged in the campuses and they operated with a great deal of impunity. They went by various names such as Peace Movement, vigilantes, Man O’War, and cults/gangs. These anti-social hordes went after progressive student union leaders, some of whom were maimed. For example, Former NANS President Emmanuel Ezeazu and his colleagues were brutalised. Ezeazu specifically had his sight impaired from an incident in the hands of vigilantes from the University of Nigeria. Throughout the early 1990s, cult killings flourished in the nation’s university campuses. For example, two students were killed at the University of Ibadan in 1992; another at Nnamdi Azikiwe University in the same year; and in the following year one was killed at the University of Jos. At the University of Lagos, Mr Omoyele Sowore, President of the Students’ Union, was injected with a poisonous substance by cult groups in March 1994. As one commentator rightly observed, ‘Prevalence of secret cultism in reality constitutes a threat to active unionism on campus’ (Onike 2009). This period marked the decline in the dynamism of student movement in Nigeria. This period might be qualified as the triumph of reaction. Today, factions of the student movement are enthusiastic in their quest to give awards to decadent state actors that in reality have little value. It can be said that once the issue of social identity and goals are emasculated in the student movement, it is impossible to refer to it as one.

Prospects of Transformation

So far, an attempt has been made to capture the contradictions that have characterised the student movement in Nigeria to date. As Karl Marx, the millennium thinker, once said, philosophers have interpreted the world, and the task is to change it. To rebuild the student movement in Nigeria and restore it to its vibrancy of the 1960s and 1980s, attention can be directed to three major areas: curricula overhaul, ‘vanguardism’ and backward integration.

Curricula overhaul

The NANS in its 1982 charter of demand identified the neocolonial curricula as part of the fundamental crisis in education. However, this has far-reaching implications for rebuilding the student movement in the country. Truly, neocolonial curricula transmit ‘semi-transitive consciousness’ (Freire 2005, pp. 13–14), which according to Paulo Freire limits the sphere of perception, and the one so endowed is ‘impermeable to challenges situated outside the sphere of biological necessity’. Therefore, what is desirable is a curriculum that provides the basis for critical ‘transitive consciousness’ noted for in-depth appreciation of problems and social conditions. Without it, there will be no pull towards social resurgence, which often coalesces in social movement.

Vanguardism

In revolutionary terms, vanguardism is a political strategy whereby a movement is given its form and content by a core of the most advanced, ensuring its ideological coherence. Today, to rebuild the student movement, it is thought that mentoring is inevitable. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent neoliberal ascendancy has depleted the ranks of advanced cadres to constitute a critical core for rebuilding the student movement in Nigeria. In the 1980s, the PYMN dug the trenches where we were engaged in a ‘war of position’ with other social forces.
in the society and had emerged at the end of it being ideologically hegemonic, a reality that sustained the movement. To begin the task of rebuilding the movement, a vanguard of advanced cadres committed to the goal of reconstruction is inevitable.

Backward integration

In the early 1990s, there was an evident depletion of the ranks of student activists in Nigeria. They were an endangered species. Therefore, reproduction of cadres who would sustain the radical tradition of the student movement became a major problem. One dimension of this question which came up for discussion at one of the NANS Senate sessions at the Lagos State University was the idea that activists who had already graduated from the tertiary institutions could go back and begin a postgraduate programme, which would provide a corresponding opportunity for rebuilding new ideological cells. A second viewpoint was the need to employ cadres who had graduated from the universities as full-time cadres to help rebuild the student movement. In summary, it was about taking control of the sources of supply in ways that were analogous to backward integration (a variant of vertical integration in economics), a situation whereby a firm takes over control of its inputs or supplies. We do not think that these thoughts are old-fashioned; on the contrary, they need to be animated and set off if the noble tradition of the student movement in Nigeria is to be salvaged.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to examine the state of the student movement in Nigeria, its contradictions and possibilities of transformation. The student movement in post-independence Nigeria has had a vibrant tradition of being committed to the total independence of Nigeria, a fact which counterposed it to the neocolonial state, leading to challenges and confrontations, resulting in repression from both the ideological and oppressive state apparatuses. State intervention has been through the deployment of authoritarian tactics in the form of official high-handedness of university vice-chancellors, creation of paramilitary groups and the support of cultists. The sum total of these activities affected the core values of the student movement and provided a basis for the ascension of reaction. Nevertheless, to transform these ruptures it is suggested that curricula transformation is desirable; a vanguard organisation is important as well as backward integration. It is believed that the sooner these suggestions are put into action, the better it will be for the student movement in Nigeria. As the bourgeois scholar Huntington once opined, the truly revolutionary society is the one that has the capacity for change (Huntington 1968). The change we envision is progressive change where the wellbeing of man and woman will become the subject of development.

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Endnotes

3. This quote is taken from an undated post-1992/93 NANS convention protest leaflet titled, ‘For the Sake of Fundamental Human Rights and Democracy’.

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**Rooting Transformative Feminist Struggles in Tanzania at Grassroots**

Demere Kitunga & Marjorie Mbilinyi

Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) is a feminist organisation which aims to strengthen the building of a transformative feminist movement in Tanzania, Africa and worldwide. The organisation’s vision is of a transformed Tanzanian society characterised by gender equality, equity, empowered women and social justice. For 15 years TGNP has been at the forefront in the struggle for gender equality objectives and women’s empowerment in Tanzania. With its vision and mission, TGNP has crafted its identity on the transformative feminist conceptual framework and ideology that challenges patriarchy, neoliberalism and other intersecting forms of oppression and unequal power relations.

TGNP has been involved in a long time reflection on its theory and practice of feminism, and its practical contribution to building the transformative feminist movement. One of the first products of this reflection was ‘Notes on Transformative Feminism in Tanzania’ (2006) which forms the main content of this article. ‘Notes’ was the background document for the annual retreat of TGNP members and staff, ‘Making Transformative Feminism Real’ (25 March 2006), and later was popularised in Kiswahili and used to guide training sessions for members, staff and partners.

Of special significance are the members of the Feminist Activist Coalition, Femact, comprising some 40 non-governmental organisations committed to women’s rights/feminism and/or human rights. Another key network are the members of the weekly Gender and Development Seminar Series, GDSS, comprising 80 or

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more leaders and members of grassroots groups in Dar es Salaam and neighbouring regions. We believe that these grassroots groups and organisations provide the core of the transformative feminist movement, together with intermediary gender networks and the many other grassroots women/feminist activists and groups that organise themselves today in Tanzania.

The original ‘Notes’ drew on earlier debate and dialogue concerning how to ground locally, which culminated in a major joint reflection process in 2004 involving district level gender networks with whom we work in 13 different locations of Tanzania. We felt growing unease at the degree to which the scarce human and other resources of the organisation were devoted to high level policy engagement (gender responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming), compared to working closely ‘on the ground’ with grassroots women/feminist activists as part of a genuine grassroots-based movement for change, which is the founding philosophy and goal of TGNP in the first place. All of these activities were part of a major campaign, ‘return resources to the people’, which began in the early 2000s and focused on HIV and AIDS, gender and resources. The campaign had adopted a variety of strategies, including ‘in-your-face’ street marches and public rallies with strong grassroots participation, as well as media campaigns, working with networks and organisations of people living with HIV and AIDS who increasingly took the lead for specific events, and engagement with policy and budgets. Yet it was our own voices that were heard most often in public debates, rather than those of grassroots women – we were falling into the trap of speaking ‘on behalf’ rather than facilitating grassroots women to organise and speak on their own behalf.

This forced us to question ourselves, and others, about how we position ourselves vis-à-vis the most significant struggles taking place in our society, and to critically analyse different feminist theories/practices/ideologies in the light of these struggles. Throughout these reflections on our theory and practice of feminism, we were guided by asking ourselves: ‘what are we against?’ and ‘what are we for?’ We also asked, ‘who are we?’ and ‘who are we with?’

There are many different types of feminisms that have emerged in Tanzania, and worldwide, in the context of women’s struggles against oppression and exploitation as women/girls and for emancipation and freedom. Although each of these has its own history and position, they have many things in common. The most important commonality is that all feminisms challenge male domination/supremacy/privilege and discrimination against girls/women in some way, and they seek to improve the situation of girls/women.

At any one moment, one individual or organisation may embody elements of several different feminisms. However, these may be in opposition to each other and lead to confusion. Therefore, it is important to clarify exactly where we stand with respect to feminism, because of the different and, in some cases, opposing trajectories which emanate from the different positions which each one takes on key issues. This is especially important in Africa today, given the growing power of major donor agencies to determine policy directions of both governments and civil society organisations, including women’s and feminist organisations.

At the same time, we proudly assert our position as transformative feminists in the face of those who reject feminism as diversionary, secondary or of no consequence, and others who fear the backlash from men and women who uphold male supremacy and patriarchy.

The next section examines the feminist theories/approaches which are most
prominent in Tanzania and the region today, from the point of view of the position taken by TGNP, which is transformative feminism. This analysis is situated within the context of corporate-led globalisation, the growing power of ‘Western’ governments and neoliberalism ideology in Africa today, and the current global financial and economic crisis that has illustrated the inherent weaknesses and contradictions within the global capitalist system.

Different Feminisms

The position taken in this article is that ‘transformative feminism’ is the cutting edge of all revolutionary conceptions and social movements, because it links struggles against all major forms of oppression, discrimination and exploitation. Transformative feminism struggles against:

- all forms of male domination/supremacy (often referred to as ‘patriarchy’);
- class exploitation on the basis of capitalism, the dominant economic structure today;
- imperial domination and growing supremacy of the G7 countries (often referred to as corporate globalisation);
- oppression on the basis of race/ethnic differences;
- homophobia and all other efforts to deny women’s (and men’s) rights to own their bodies and define their gender identity and sexuality;
- fundamentalisms and traditionalism;
- all forms of discrimination based on demographic, ethnic and physical ‘otherness’.

Transformative feminism has not developed in a vacuum, and has its roots in other forms of feminism. At the same time, clarity of what it is and stands for has partly been derived from recognition of differences in outlook, ideology, as well as position. We examine the most important trends in feminism today, making bold generalisations about each one, while recognising that none are homogeneous in reality.

Transformative feminism is very different from ‘radical feminism’, which identifies men to be the main enemy, and concentrates on struggles against patriarchy. Radical feminists envision a world without men, where women are in control of all aspects of society and life. It tends to essentialise women as all sharing certain attributes which are different from those of men. For radical feminists, women are, by nature, nurturing, artistic, cooperative, non-competitive, non-hierarchical and peaceful.

Radical feminism rightly challenges us to deconstruct ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ and to explore how these gender identities – and others – have been constructed. We need to do more analysis of the impact of the macho identity, for example, on state militarism, competitive sports, the destructive discourse of academia, and domestic violence against women and children. Relevant strategies of action are needed to combat the macho identity in all its manifestations, along with the ‘dependent feminine’ identity which many women/girls employ.

However, a major problem with radical feminism is its assumption that all women are the same, thus ignoring the way in which different classes/groups of women oppress/exploit others. By emphasising ‘natural’ differences between women and men, essentialism adopts the mirror image of patriarchal beliefs in biological differences between women and men, and overlooks the role of society (including patriarchy) in constructing gender differences. It does not ask why and how, for example, (some) women have been socialised to be nurturing, cooperative and peaceful, and ignores the many women who are, in fact, competitive, individualistic, bossy and violent (and, vice versa, what about gentle, nurturing men?).
Another problem is the failure to recognise the way in which other social relations and structures support and strengthen male supremacy – all of these social structures need to be abolished in order to do away with male domination.

‘Liberal feminism’ identifies gender inequality as the main problem, and seeks to promote women’s equality with men in all spheres of life. This is the dominant form of feminism in Tanzania today, and informs most programmes of gender equity and gender mainstreaming in government and among donors, and among many NGOs as well. The main focus is on promoting equality by advancing women to be on a par with men within existing structures, e.g. in education, in employment, in politics etc. Policies and ideologies such as ‘Women in Development’, or WID, are typical of this approach.

The problem with this approach is that it takes the status quo as given, which would mean that other forms of oppression and exploitation would persist, thereby dividing and exploiting some women by other women, and men. For example, liberal feminism demands that women entrepreneurs have access to bank loans on the same terms as men, as one form of women’s economic empowerment. This means in practice that a few women will benefit from credit programmes, along with a few men, while excluding the majority of both women and men. Transformative feminism might call for alternative strategies of financing which benefit all classes/genders equally – only possible with alternative forms of finance institutions, not the present private commercial banking institutions.

Related to liberal feminism is what is often referred to as ‘Western feminism’ by critics who are usually based in Third World, post-colonial and transformative feminism. Western feminists (whether situated in Africa, another region in the South or in the North) is the term used for a certain type of liberal feminism whose gaze is focused on ‘other’ women in the Third World/Africa – or in the village/rural areas – from the vantage point of a woman/observer who assumes herself to be liberated. As with radical feminism, there is a tendency to homogenise all African women as being the same, thus robbing women of their individualism, dynamism and uniqueness. Many Africanist feminists have promoted colonising and totalising generalisations about ‘rural African women’ as being powerless, helpless, propertyless, voiceless – the essential victim.

Because Western feminists assume that African women are passive objects who are acted upon by men or patriarchy, they do not look for examples of contestation, resistance and struggle and they usually fail to recognise resistances when they happen. Instead, the observer adopts a highly patronising/matronising position, assuming that she knows what is best for the African woman, the rural woman, the woman living with HIV/AIDS, the African girl. Western feminism has been adopted by many African women scholars, government officials, parliamentarians and NGO-based actors working in Africa, as well as Africanist feminists based in the North.

‘Black feminism’ identifies white supremacy and racism as being the major cause of the oppression and exploitation of black women, thereby subsuming the struggle against male domination as part of the overall struggle against racism and global apartheid. Many black feminists adopt essentialist views, similar to radical feminists, and argue that black women are, by nature, unique, the same and different from all other women. Black women, for example, are essentially, by their nature, sexy, musical, artistic, courageous, etc. Whether essentialist or not, the approach homogenises all black women as being the same, thus obscuring the way in which some black
women exploit and oppress other black women, and men. It also fails, in many cases, to address the ways in which imperialism and capitalism further the oppression and exploitation of working black women in particular, and all working women in general. (However, the work of Audre Lorde, a self-proclaimed black feminist, is a stunning example, to us, of transformative feminism – Audre Lorde identified herself completely with the struggles of African women against apartheid, colonisation and imperialism.)

Like black feminists, transformative feminists recognise the reality of white supremacy within different branches of the women’s movement worldwide and in Africa. White supremacy permeates many donor programmes emanating from ‘the North’, and is increasingly incorporated within post-colonial structures of power and ownership of property. Liberalisation and privatisation programmes have led to the growing economic power of white South Africans and ‘Europeans’ from the North in eastern and southern Africa, thus reversing the decolonising achievements of early independence. Moreover, northern-based feminists have increasing power to define what ‘African-based’ feminism ought to be about, by virtue of their position in global governance structures.

At the same time, this power is not defined solely or ultimately by race (witness the number of Third World women who now work for governments, international NGOs and academia in the North), but by position in imperial structures of power. Hence, post-colonial feminists based in the North who are of Third World origin have an undue amount of power to determine the direction which global feminisms should take, by virtue of their greater access to and control over resources than feminists based in the South (research, publications, media attention, academic positions, management posts).

The essentialising ideas of both black and radical feminism are rejected in this analysis as mirror images of sexism, white racism and imperial ideology about ‘exotic’ African women – and men. They share basic elements of biological determinism that have been rejected over time by all those movements which have struggled against white supremacy and male supremacy. One of the major ideological weapons of white supremacists and colonial ideologues has been the argument/assumption that whites are by nature/biologically superior to all other ‘races’. Similarly, male supremacists argue that men are biologically superior to women. Efforts to adopt biological/essentialist arguments for the supremacy/uniqueness of black women adopt a similar type of biological determinism, and are therefore rejected.

‘Marxist feminism’ struggles against both male supremacy/domination and class domination/exploitation, and identifies the main cause of women’s oppression/exploitation to be class. Hence, feminist struggles are to be subsumed under class struggles that are led by the workers against capitalists. Women workers have often been in the forefront of this movement, trying to win gains for all workers, while at the same time struggling against sexual abuse at work, discriminatory wages and male oppression in the workers’ movement. Many of our male activist partners embrace some version of marxist feminism – hence the unease, if not outright hostility, about prioritising feminist struggles against male supremacy as a diversion of the masses, or not being ‘serious’.

While recognising the significance of class struggle and identifying capitalism as a major cause of women’s oppression and exploitation, transformative feminists reject the prioritisation of any one ‘structure’ or set of relationships over the other. Instead, they examine the dynamic way in which class and gender
relations interact with each other, and with race and imperial relations. At any one moment in time and space, one of these social relations may appear to be the most dominant and have top priority – however, transformative feminist struggles link all forms of oppression/exploitation together in order for real transformation to take place, and real women’s emancipation to be achieved.

‘State feminism’ is a term which has developed to conceptualise a strategy more than a conceptual framework, the strategy of mainstreaming gender in and through the state, and using the state to promote gender equity, women’s advancement and, in some cases, social transformation. In Latin America, for example, progressive leftist parties have won political power in some countries with the support of the feminist movement, and later have invited leaders of the feminist movement to join the new government in power. One result has been the fragmentation of the feminist movement and the domestication of its political programme.

There is a growing recognition worldwide about the way in which ‘gender mainstreaming’ has contributed to the domestication of the feminist agenda in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Once feminist discourse is appropriated by donor agencies including the World Bank and IMF, the original transformative goals are in danger of being subverted and domesticated. It takes constant vigilance to maintain clarity of positionality, especially in a context when many feminist organisations and/or researchers and teachers depend upon external funding and external support for publication.

Another expression of the same tendency is the rise of ‘gender technocrats’, i.e. state officials who are experts in gender, and/or gender consultants who work with donor agencies and the government to carry out gender analysis and training.

A whole industry of gender analysis and gender planning has developed, which has adopted many elements of feminist discourse but without the passion, the commitment and the grounding in the feminist movement. This has informed the development project, whereby the ‘nation’ is continually groomed to accommodate itself to post-colonial capitalism. Elements of gender equality may be incorporated into the development project in order to win support from local women’s groups as well as external tax-payers, but without challenging the dominant structures which oppress and exploit the majority of girls/women and boys/men.

This section of the article has compared and contrasted transformative feminism and other types of feminism in Tanzania and Africa today. The next section analyses transformative feminism in more detail.

**Transformative Feminism**

One of the most controversial elements in transformative feminism (and in radical feminism as well) is the belief that change must come about in both the public and the private spheres of life. Efforts to change dominant structures of decision making over policies and budgets in the public sphere will go on side by side with efforts to abolish male supremacy in decision making within the family (nuclear and extended) and the community. These struggles are linked, in that male supremacy is created, reproduced and struggled for in both the public and the private spheres of life. Hence, the need to struggle on all fronts for change. There are no boundaries for patriarchy – and hence, no boundaries for transformative feminist struggle.

Another dimension of transformative feminism, which is held in common with other forms of feminism, is its
attention to the emotional, psychological and sexual aspects of the self and of relationships, as well as the economic, the political, the cultural. Transformative feminists link struggles for ownership and control of bodies with those for ownership and control of land, for example, or of labour. Struggles over sexuality, gender identity and reproduction are part of these struggles.

Male supremacy is partly based on the way in which both femininity and masculinity have been constructed within the most personal, private areas of our lives. The link between male supremacy and macho identity/behaviour and the perpetuation of physical violence and war as a solution for social conflict illustrates how powerful psychology, self-identity and emotion are.

However, connecting the personal and the public is highly controversial and can be very painful. It means talking about oppression and struggle within our own families and homes, among people we love and care for. Moreover, the finger needs to be pointed in all directions – who is innocent? The mother who oppresses her daughter by trying to define for her how she should behave and who she should love? The older sister who exploits her younger sister’s labour?

Feminists of different types have also challenged the way in which knowledge is generated, packaged and disseminated. Research and knowledge cannot be ‘objective’ in the sense of a researcher not having a position, or her work not reflecting her position in society. The challenge, instead, is to make the position and identity of the researcher clear, visible.

Transformative feminists call for a holistic approach to research, which takes into account all aspects of reality. The subjective, emotional side of our lives is as significant and open to scientific inquiry as the so-called logical and analytical side.

Linking the creative and artistic sides of our brain with the logical and analytical has proven to be crucial in making transformation happen. Both quantitative and qualitative methods become potentially useful in our efforts to ‘know’ the world as fully as possible. These struggles include the popularisation of who does research and how the information generated will be shared, which media will be used and who decides, thus challenging the dominance not only of men, but also academic professionals and corporations.

As with historical materialism, transformative feminism links theory and practice, and is rooted in concrete struggles for change. In other words, the analysis is derived from what is learned in the process of struggle, and vice versa. Transformative feminists do not sit back and critique reality, including policy; they struggle to change it. This means taking risks, ‘getting our hands dirty’, in the process.

Finally, transformative feminists have promoted emancipatory ways of organising ourselves, to challenge male dominant top-down structures in civil society as well as in government. Group-centred leadership – not leader-centred groups – is one example. Collective participatory decision making is another. Engagement within participatory democratic structures is liberating, and becomes a school for the revolution, thus espousing animation as its main approach and philosophy whereby the oppressed take ownership and lead the struggle for their own emancipation, while those in solidarity with them accept to learn and be led.

**Silence, Confusion, Positionality**

In preparing these notes, we have recognised silences within transformative feminism in Tanzania, which may ultimately undermine the struggle for change. These silences are listed below in order
to encourage further thinking and to provoke debate as we continue shaping our collective identity and sharpening our tools of analysis and struggles:

– Sexual orientation and identity; and
– Sexuality.

Confusion has also been noted – which may be a creative development – over the following issues:

– the role of men in the feminist movement;
– gender versus women;
– the role of the state in the feminist struggle for women’s emancipation and transformation of society;
– the relationship between transformative feminist movement and organised religion;
– the relationship between transformative feminist movement and the state;
– strategies to handle the growing challenge of fundamentalist struggles, including market fundamentalism on the one hand, and religious fundamentalism on the other (far-right Christian, Islamic); and
– traditionalisms.

In terms of positionality, we reconfirm the importance of:

– naming your self;
– taking a position; and
– solidarity with other transformative movements.

**Post-2006 Developments**

As noted at the beginning of this article, TGNP carried out a series of awareness-raising sessions on transformative feminism with staff, members and partners during 2006 and 2007, and more explicit feminist discourse began to be employed in our ongoing activities. One of the major steps forward occurred through the Gender Festival 2007. TGNP and FemAct organise this festival every two years for gender/feminist activists and others to come together and share experiences of their analyses and struggles, and plan collective action for the future. The theme for Gender Festival 2007 was ‘Gender, Democracy and Development: African Feminist Struggles in the Context of Globalisation’. The keynote speaker, Muthoni Wanyeki, a young feminist from Kenya, shaped the framework for dialogue and debate through her presentation, ‘Believing in Ourselves’. One workshop focused on feminist organising and leadership styles, and feminist discourse was encouraged throughout the four days of plenary and workshops, involving more than 3000 participants from all over Tanzania and from many African countries as well.2

Our resolve to strengthen feminist activism by grounding locally also defined the key priorities for the organisation’s next five-year strategic plan 2008–2012. The year 2008 was devoted to two major studies which together have contributed to the process of restructuring and repositioning TGNP. A pilot study of transformative feminist movement building was carried out, using participatory action research methodology, in three districts of Dar es Salaam, the major city of Tanzania, and in one rural district, Mbeya, in the South-West, in order to find out ‘what is happening on the ground?’ It explored the questions ‘what type of grassroots women/feminist organising is taking place? About what issues? Using what strategies? How do others perceive TGNP’s role in transformative feminist movement building, if at all?’ This intersected with the second Carrying Capacity Study, which explored to what extent the organisation was prepared and able to take a leading role in transformative feminist movement building, beginning with its own institutional culture and structure and ways of relating to grassroots and other women/feminist activists and their organisations.

Participation by staff and members in the two studies allowed us to incorporate the findings and the lessons learned into
ongoing restructuring and repositioning processes, without waiting for more formal reporting processes (which near completion). As a result, major shifts in the organisational structure and strategies of TGNP are already taking place this year, which we believe will strengthen its capacity to position self within the diversity of feminist activists’ struggles and make a significant contribution to the building of an ever more powerful transformative feminist movement in Tanzania and Africa in the future.

Demere Kitunga is co-owner of E&D Vision Publishing Ltd and Executive Director of Soma, a readership and development facility that runs Soma Book Café, and a founder member of Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP).

Marjorie Mbilinyi is a founder member of TGNP, and currently leads Analysis and Research at TGNP.

Endnotes
1. An earlier version of this article was published in Ulingo wa Jinsia (July–September 2006) and in a special issue of CODESRIA Bulletin 2006.

2. Key presentations on feminism at the Gender Festival 2007 are reproduced in Transformative Feminism: Believing in Ourselves (TGNP, 2008).

The Ghanaian Election of 2008

Bob Kelly

The 2008 elections in Ghana took place in a very uncertain economic and political environment. On the positive side, the prospects for oil production off the coast of the Western Region offered hope for a new era of prosperity, but this contrasted with the everyday experiences of urban populations in particular, faced with the impact on prices and jobs of the global financial crisis. In the rural areas some of the economic projects of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Government were improving the infrastructure in such areas as transport and irrigation, while long-standing local and ethnic conflicts were again rising in intensity. Interest in the elections was consequently at a very high level, with The Ghanaian Times stating that ‘election fever grips the nation’ (6 December 2008). NPP supporters felt generally confident of a victory, while the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) expressed fears of ballot-rigging and suggested that dire consequences could follow if it felt cheated of the election. Broadcast debates consistently pressured the participants to commit themselves to peaceful behaviour before, during and after the elections, reflecting real concerns that peace and stability were under threat.

Following the terms of the 1992 Constitution, the presidential and parliamentary elections were conducted on Sunday 7 December, but the electoral process and the declaration of a presidential victor had to wait for a further three and a half weeks, owing to the closeness of the contest. In the parliamentary elections two results had to be declared late because of stolen ballot boxes, and there were several petitions to the High Court over alleged electoral irregularities in particular constituencies, but basically, of the 230 constituencies, the former

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opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) won 114 seats, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) 109, the People’s National Convention (PNC) two seats, and the Convention People’s Party (CPP) one. The other four seats were won by Independents, all of whom had been NPP supporters who objected to the particular choice of candidate.

The closeness of the result reflects the intense competition that characterised the election, but it, together with the eventual victory of the erstwhile opposition party, indicates the general ‘freeness’ and ‘fairness’ of the process. There were allegations of threats and intimidation in the Ashanti and Volta Region heartlands of the two main parties, and rumours abounded of fake identification cards and attempts to register minors and other ineligibles. One report was of groups of Togolese citizens being taken to the Volta Region attempting to register to vote, in the belief that they were arranging to attend the haj pilgrimage to Mecca (interview, David Adeenze-Kangah). In terms of financial support, the high levels of activity of the NPP and NDC indicate there was no major disparity between them, but of the minor parties only the CPP was able to launch anything resembling a national campaign, and this was organisationally very limited in most areas of the country. Relative access to finance remains a concern for democracy in Ghana as in so many other states.

Thirty-two sitting members of parliament lost their seats. These included several important figures from the outgoing regime:

- the Minister of Women and Children’s Affairs, Hajia Alima Mahama, in Nalerigu, Northern Region;
- the Minister of Works, Housing and Water Resources, Alhaji Malik Yakubu, in Yendi, Northern Region;
- the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Saddique Boniface, in Salaga, Northern Region;
- the Minister of State at the Presidency, Charles Bintim in Saboba, Northern Region;
- the Deputy Upper East Regional Minister, Agnes Chigabatia, in Builsa North;
- the Minister for Public Sector Reforms, Samuel Owusu-Agyei, in Effutu, Central Region;
- the Deputy Minister for Education, Angelina Amissah in Shama, Western Region;
- the Deputy Minister of Health, Gladys Ashietey, in Ledzokuku, Greater Accra (Daily Graphic, 13 December 2008);

The terms of the Constitution are that a successful presidential candidate must achieve 50 per cent+1 of the votes cast in order to be declared victorious on the first ballot. In this case the declared results are shown in Table 1 (figures rounded to two decimal points).

Four other candidates shared the remainder (The Ghanaian Times, 11 December 2008).

The PNC campaign had been lacklustre with few electoral posters being visible outside the home area of Edward Mahama in Walewale in the Northern Region and in the Upper Regions, and there was a distinct lack of financial and administrative support for its parliamen-

<table>
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<th>Table 1. Results of the first ballot</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Presidential candidate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Atta-Mills</td>
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<td>Paa Kwesi Nduom</td>
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<td>Edward Mahama</td>
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</table>
tary candidates (interview, Moses Baah). On the other hand, the eventual poor result for the CPP belied a great deal of effort on behalf of its presidential candidate in particular to re-establish itself as a potent force in Ghanaian politics, with posters displayed throughout the country and confident television performances, but reflected the actual organisational and financial deficiencies at local level. In the event it seems that divisions within his own party, together with Nduom’s participation in the NPP Government after 2000, took their toll, with the NDC being viewed as the obvious vehicle of change for those critical of the regime.

This result triggered a run-off three weeks later, on Sunday 28 December. The new results are shown in Table 2.

However, this too proved inconclusive, as voting had been unable to take place in the Tain constituency in Brong Ahafo Region because of a shortage of ballot papers, and the 53,000 registered electorate there outweighed the declared Atta-Mills majority (Voanews). As the Tain constituency had been won by the NDC candidate in the parliamentary election and by Professor Mills in the initial presidential election, the final NDC victory was probably a foregone conclusion, but the NPP did not admit defeat, and the re-run took place in Tain on 2 January. In the event the NPP activity on the day of the election was minimal, and Professor John Atta-Mills was finally declared the victor of the presidential election.

Despite apprehension from many quarters that the election could lead to violence, particularly if the results were disputed, it was peacefully conducted. While there were some radio and newspaper reports of scuffles and rowdiness in various parts of the country, both the immediate build-up to the election and the polling days themselves generally went off without the loss of life and destruction of property that had been present, if very limited and sporadic, in recent previous elections (see for example The Ghanaian Times, 9 December 2008). In 2004, for example, a number of violent attacks on polling officials were reported and several people died in Tamale both before and immediately after the election (Kelly 2005). Ghanaian police had been on the alert for potential violence in a number of hot-spots where the earlier build-up to the elections had led to a resurfacing of local tensions. Earlier in the year, for example, there had been killings in Bawku in the Upper East Region and Gushiegu in the Northern Region. Following the election some of the latent tensions did erupt, with the stabbing of an NPP supporter at Agbogbloshie market in Accra during NDC victory celebrations (Ghana Review International, 8 January 2009) and the burning of a number of houses belonging to NPP activists in Tamale (The Statesman, 12 January 2009).

The success of the NDC can be taken to provide important evidence that Ghana has established itself as a functioning democracy. Its victory marked ‘the second turnover’ of power (the first being the victory of the NPP over the NDC in the 2000 elections) identified by Huntington as indicating the commitment of two major groups of political leaders as being sufficiently committed to democracy to surrender office and power; that both the elite and the public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidential run-off candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Result (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Atta-Mills</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>50.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>49.77</td>
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Table 2. The final presidential result
recognise that when things go wrong in a democratic system, the need is to change the rulers and not the regime (Huntington 1993, p. 267).

So what factors lay behind the opposition’s success? During the build-up to the election the NPP was quite confident that the international aid it had obtained, the developmental projects it had undertaken and a general optimism created by the discovery of oil in large quantities off the coast of the Western Region would guarantee a third term of office. The party could point to the great advances in freedom of the media, with a wide range of newspapers and radio stations offering alternative views and opening up political discussions, in contrast to the heavily government-controlled pattern under previous regimes. NPP supporters and non-partisan officials alike pointed to the many developmental improvements in the various regions of the country. In the Northern Region I was urged to note the improvements to street lighting, roads and the new sports stadium in Central Tamale, the building of a new bridge in Yagba constituency which would prevent many villages from being cut off from their nearest town (Walewale) during the rainy season, a new hospital at Gushiegu in Dagbon, and the creation of new districts with their own developmental budgets in Karaga and Central Gonja (interviews: Alhaji Yahya and Adam Cockra). In the Upper West a new district had been created in Lambussie, and the road links between Wa and Kumasi/Accra had now been greatly improved, with only a short stretch of the main road near Bamboi needing to be tarred. In the Upper East, new dams had increased agricultural production, new healthcare facilities had reduced infant mortality, a new district had been created for Chiana-Paga, and the liberalisation of trade with Burkina Faso had greatly benefited Bolgatanga and the border town of Paga (interviews: A.A. Luguterah, Issaka Sagito and Kofi Adda). In election posters across Ghana there were photographs of life ‘before and after’ the acquisition of NPP rule, stressing the improvements and developments that had taken place.

The figures in Table 3 show that in terms of parliamentary constituencies the NPP actually strengthened its position in Brong Ahafo, Upper East and Upper West, but in addition to the four seats it lost to NPP rebels standing as Indepen-

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<th>Table 3. Parliamentary and presidential election results 2004 and 2008</th>
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<td><strong>Constituencies</strong></td>
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<td>National result</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regions</strong></td>
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<td>Ashanti</td>
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<td>Eastern</td>
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<td>Central</td>
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<td>Western</td>
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<td>Volta</td>
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<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
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<td>Northern</td>
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<td>Upper East</td>
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<td>Upper West</td>
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dents it had a net loss of three seats in Northern Region, seven in Greater Accra and eight in Central Region. This would indicate a regional difference in the factors at play. In Greater Accra the increasingly difficult economic situation led to disenchantment with the government’s economic performance, and this coincided with the completion of the expensive new presidential palace and increasing allegations of corruption against some prominent figures in the regime. As one commentator put it, a new presidential palace costing over US$30 million coincided with ‘the fact that the majority of our people exist in stinky poverty’ (Doris Yaa Dartey in The Spectator, 16 November 2008). In the Central Region, strong campaigning by the NDC to regain support for Professor Mills in his own region, largely lost to the NPP in 2004, enabled the party to make much of the plight of fishermen whose livelihood was becoming increasingly threatened by the activities of Chinese and Japanese fishing fleets. It was in these two regions that the NPP essentially lost the parliamentary elections. In the presidential elections the NDC’s largest increases in vote were in the Central and Western regions, while the NPP actually increased its percentage of the vote in the Northern and two Upper Regions.

In the interior of the country a mixture of ‘traditional’ and modern factors was at play. The developmental improvements mentioned above certainly played a role in sustaining and even enhancing NPP support. As the Daily Graphic (13 December 2008) put it, the ‘people of Lambussie in the Upper West Region showed their appreciation to the ruling NPP for giving them a district’, and strong candidates in Lawra (UW), Bawku Central and Binduri (UE) also helped the party overturn NDC majorities. In the Northern Region the ongoing Dagomba chieftaincy dispute almost led to a clean sweep for the NDC in that area (in Nanton the anti-NPP vote was split by the presence of a strong CPP candidate), while the selection of John Mahama, son of Kwame Nkrumah’s former minister E.A. Mahama, as vice-presidential candidate helped to win two Gonja seats previously held by the NPP. The choice of Muhamadu Bawumia as NPP vice-presidential candidate for the NPP (also the son of a former Nkrumah minister) failed to save the single Mamprusi seat held by the party in Nalerigu and did not lead to the expected victory in Bawumia’s home constituency of Walewale and adjacent Yakga/Kubori. Indeed, the limited impact of his candidature is shown by the fact that the NDC actually gained a 1 per cent higher vote in the presidential over parliamentary election in Yakga (54 per cent vs. 53 per cent) while in Walewale the NPP presidential ticket only reached 39 per cent – 7 per cent less than the NDC (myjoyonline.com).

One key factor in many areas was the role of primary elections, and this affected both the NPP, which held them, and the NDC, which did not. NDC thinking was that this was such a crucial election that any sitting MP should automatically be chosen this time around. This meant that some candidates who were not seen to be particularly active in their constituency’s interests or whose continued tenure was resented by local notables were confirmed in their candidacy, but were then subject to a local backlash – this can largely explain the failure of NDC candidates to hold their seats in Lambussie (UW), Builsa South and Binduri (UE). It is interesting to note that while these NDC MPs lost their seats, in the latter two constituencies the presidential vote went to the NDC and in Lambussie that result was very close, with the NDC gaining a majority for Mills in the presidential run-off election. In the case of the NPP, disaffected losers in the primary elections played an important part in the loss to Independents of two Ashanti seats (Bekwai and Bosome-Freho), one Northern (Wulensi) and one Eastern Region (Nkawkaw) seats, with all four voting for the NPP presidential
ticket. In Yendi in the Northern Region the vote was split by an erstwhile NPP supporter standing for the Democratic Freedom Party, whose capture of 3 per cent of the vote enabled the NDC to take what should have been a relatively safe NPP seat.

So can any general trends be deduced from the campaigns and their results? I would suggest that several significant points emerge:

**The choice of candidate:** This has become more important as the number of potential opinion leaders in rural areas has expanded from the local chiefs to the range of educated and successful individuals. Given that in the rural areas any ideological difference between the parties is largely invisible, it is important that the candidate is well connected within the constituency, is known and is seen to be locally active. The lack of activity of a number of sitting MPs has been noted above as a source of their failure, but this was also used to explain the defeat of the sitting NDC MP in Bawku Central, Mahama Ayariga, who was criticised for spending too much time with the presidential and vice-presidential candidates on their tours of the country, and insufficient time looking after his own constituency (interview, Adda). Any MP who is seen to develop his own village while neglecting others in his constituency may also feel the wrath of the electorate, and this was used partly to explain the defeat of the incumbent NPP MP for Sissala East, Moses Baah, who allegedly in election year put up electricity poles near his home in Tumu while leaving them lying unconnected on the ground in Wallembelle.

**Ethnic rivalries:** All parties in Ghana are keen to play down this aspect of political rivalry, with leaders and candidates exhorting the electorate to vote on the basis of policies rather than ethnicity. However, for many voters the identification of the NPP with the Asante and related Akan-speaking groups and the NDC with the Ewe remains strong, and is displayed by the continued success of the NPP in Ashanti, central Brong Ahafo and the western and central parts of the Eastern Region. The approximately 25 per cent won by Professor Mills in Ashanti in both the initial and run-off elections is not significantly different from the 24 per cent won in 2004, indicating little reduction of the impact of this identification and possibly of the ethnic rivalry. Likewise, the NDC carried all the Volta Region seats, with the exception of the Akan-dominated area of Nkwanta North, and achieved over an 86 per cent vote for its presidential candidate in the run-off election. In Wa Central the candidature of Clement Elade, a Dagaaba for the NPP, was probably more a reason for his defeat by the NDC’s Wala candidate than was the issue of personality, despite the claim of the *Daily Graphic* (12 December 2008) that he had ‘poor human relation’ (sic) when compared to the ‘the more affable Rashid Pelpuo’. In Bawku Central the Kusasi vs. Mamprusi dispute was played out again, with the election of a Mamprusi/Mossi candidate showing a return to the 2000 pattern of an NPP victory, although this was one of the results subject to a High Court challenge. In the Nanumba/Konkomba constituencies of Bimbilla and Wulensi the rivalry between these two ethnic groups greatly contributed to the defeat of the incumbent NDC candidate in Bimbilla by the NPP and the incumbent NPP candidate in Wulensi by an Independent. In Bimbilla the numerically dominant Konkomba elected a Konkomba candidate, while in Wulensi a Nanumba standing as an Independent defeated the NDC and NPP candidates who were both Konkomba. The results of the 2008 elections show that ethnic rivalries remain as considerable problems for Ghana, but at present the key Akan–Ewe divide only manifests itself in electoral rather than violent rivalry, and regime changes enable this to be contained with each ethnic group having an opportunity to
benefit from periods of being in government.

Local developments: When asked, most voters are clamouring for local development, and this is of potential significance. The creation of a new district based on Funsi before the 2004 election certainly contributed to the NPP victory in Wa East, and in 2008 this was repeated in Lambussie. However, local developments are not always clearly attributable to one party. If a constituency is held by a member of the opposition party then the relative roles of the MP and the District Chief Executive (DCE) appointed by the President can come into play, with both claiming credit. In addition, local developments do seem more visible to the government supporters than to those of the opposition. NDC supporters across the country were very willing to complain about the lack of any real development in their areas, while NPP members could point to specific projects that had come to fruition.

Traditional disputes: In some areas these coincide with the ethnic rivalries mentioned above, but in others they are distinct. In the Dagbon area of the Northern Region the intra-Dagomba dispute between the Abudulai and Andani families remains very important. All Dagombas feel allegiance to one of the families even though they themselves are not of royal (Na Bihe) blood, and the failure of the NPP Government to charge anyone with the murder of the paramount chief (Ya Na) and some 30 of his followers in March 2002 has strengthened the link between the NDC and the Andani ‘family’. The NPP’s one safe Dagomba seat of Yendi was lost through a splitting of the vote, but the party gained Nanton in compensation through the splitting of the Andani vote there. In many parts of the Upper East and Upper West Regions the disputes are not really ethnic but are village rivalries. In the Upper West rivalry between Lawra and Nandom (both are largely Dagaaba towns) remains significant, while in Chiana-Paga in the Upper East, Kassena Chiana is resentful of the dominance of Kassena Paga both economically and in terms of representation, while Nankanni Sirigui feels totally excluded but does not get support from Nankanni Mirigui – hence candidates from each of the first three villages fought out the 2008 election (interviews, Luguterah and Rudolf Amenga-Etego).

Party allegiance: This has long been a factor, with some families being allied with the Nkrumah or Danquah ‘traditions’ since the early days of politics in the 1950s (for details see Nugent 1995 and Oquaye 2004). On a more limited term basis, party loyalty remained strong across the election period in 2008. There was very little change in the voting between the presidential and parliamentary elections, and even less between the presidential and run-off elections. The limited differences in parliamentary and presidential results in the 2008 elections involved the four successful Independent candidates and the three representing the minor parties. In each case the presidential vote was won by either Nana Akufo-Addo for the NPP or Professor Atta-Mills for the NDC. The changes are shown in Table 4.

From Table 4 it can be seen that even including the four parliamentary seats won by Independents (who were all NPP dissidents) only four constituencies changed their vote between the presidential election and the run-off (Lambussie, Bibiani/Anhwiaso, Mpohor-Wassa and Prestea-Huni Valley). It can also be seen that the NPP did distinctly better in the parliamentary than the presidential elections where there was a divergence between the two. This to some extent reflects the effect of the NDC failing to hold primary elections in seats that they held where it was the parliamentary candidate rather than the presidential candidate or party that lacked local support.

Active support: In the past one of the key elements of this was the backing of local
chiefs. While this has greatly reduced (see Kelly and Bening 2007) and chiefs’ participation in elections is actually banned by the 1992 Constitution, this still remains of some significance in rural areas. As Tufuor states, in many areas candidates ‘have a political responsibility to woo the chief and his elders’ (Tufuor 2008, pp. 28–29). In Lambussie, the chief’s car was seen campaigning for the successful NPP candidate, while the Chief of Kayoro in Chiana-Paga constituency pledged the support of his people to the NPP (Daily Graphic, 19 November 2008). However, of much greater importance is the support of the youth, with candidates mobilising large groups of young supporters to mobilise support for them (interviews: Baah and Adda). The resources of the local party are also important, with effective campaigning leading to NDC victories over sitting Independents, PNC and CPP members in Bolgatanga (Upper East), Bunkpurugu (Northern), Ellemelle (Western), Sissala East (Upper West) and Zebilla (Upper East). Divisions within the NPP and consequent lack of active support from senior party members contributed greatly to the loss of Nalerigu and Yendi in the Northern Region (interviews: Adda and Alhaji Ibrahima).

The high electoral turnout of almost 70 per cent, although it was 85 per cent in 2004 (Ghana Electoral Commission), and the victory for the opposition, are very positive signs for Ghanaian democracy. However, the closeness of the results offers a more ambiguous message. On the positive side it should encourage cooperative working across parties, and the PNC quickly responded to NDC overtures by allowing Azong Alhassan, the newly-elected MP for Builsa South, to become Minister of State at the Presidency (Daily Guide, 3 February 2009). On the negative side, it is possible that the

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Parliamentary</th>
<th>Presidential</th>
<th>Run-off</th>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>Ablekuma South</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
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<td>Ayawaso Central</td>
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Source: Adapted from myjoyonline.com
outcome of a handful of court disputes and by-elections could create a situation where the President lacks parliamentary support. Before the election some leading members of the NDC were showing frustration at lack of power and were very fearful of election-rigging, and so a small change in the balance of power could lead to more tension and instability. Since the election there have been a number of reported incidents of NDC supporters harassing members and supporters of the former government and this could polarise divisions in the country. The demands for justice conflict with the needs for reconciliation. The election results themselves do not offer solutions to the various ethnic and local disputes that threaten Ghana’s peace and stability, but the ‘foot soldiers’ of the NDC in Dagbon, for example, now expect their government to deal with the murderers of the late Ya Na. Similarly, the NDC victory does nothing to alter the dependency of Ghana on international finance, and the hopes of the poor and disadvantaged are unlikely to be met.

The peaceful handover of power does however show that there is a general commitment to democracy and a desire to preserve the image of Ghana as a democratic and stable state in a continent that often lacks these features, and the continued high turnout shows the population retains a belief in the efficacy of the electoral system. The desire of the relatively neglected regions of the country to make progress through a government largely representative of them needs to be balanced with policies that will keep the relatively affluent areas ‘on board’ to avoid the polarisation that characterises so many African states. This is particularly important in Ghana, as areas of relative affluence to a significant extent coincide with the areas inhabited by Akan-speaking groups. This will require astute statesmanship from Professor Mills and his government to avoid the twin dangers of resentment from his opponents and disillusionment among his supporters.

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Debates

Southern African Liberation Movements as Governments and the Limits to Liberation¹

Henning Melber

When liberation movements take power, their governments are often marked by military mindsets, categorising people as winners and losers, and operating along the lines of command and obedience. Such trends are evident in southern Africa (Melber 2003, 2006). Democratic discourse in search of the common good would look quite different. When analysing the shortcomings of those who obtained political control over societies after a protracted armed struggle against minority settler regimes, however, one also needs to (self-) critically reflect upon those among us who rendered support.

A knee-jerk reaction of ‘tiers-mondisme’ is to show solidarity for the struggle for freedom among the ‘wretched of the earth’. Sometimes, struggles are glorified, as was the case back in the 1960s. Frantz Fanon’s book, originally published as Les damnés de la terre at the beginning of the 1960s, was a paradigm (Fanon 2001). His manifesto became a call to battle for the Algerian resistance movement against France, the colonial power.

Jean-Paul Sartre wrote the introduction. He was quite selective in his argumentation, tending in parts to glorify violence as an act of emancipation. Indeed, he seemed to see violence as a purifying force that would turn the colonised into full citizens. However, Fanon himself spoke out against excessive post-colonial authoritarianism. In penetrating analyses and withering criticism, he described what he had seen, mainly in West Africa, up to his early death in 1961, particularly in the chapter on ‘The pitfalls of national consciousness’.

Fanon criticised the authoritarian attitudes of the African elite, which usurped young states in the course of decolonisation, and their abuses of power when securing privileges for themselves and turning entire states into instruments of control. However, his early warnings went largely unheeded. It was not until the 1990s, when the shortcomings of revolutionary movements could no longer be ignored, that Fanon’s analyses came back to the fore.²

Wounds Old and New

It should be borne in mind that armed resistance was part of the solution in the southern African settler colonies of Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. In the latter three cases it led to negotiations for transitional arrangements under majority rule. The compromises required from all sides contributed to the controlled change. At the same time, this negotiated transition paved the way for a changed control. The newly emerging system took a decidedly patriotic form of writing history and turned the independence struggle soon thereafter into a myth.

It is worth repeating that the unscrupulously violent character of Zimbabwe’s ZANU regime had already revealed itself in the early to mid-1980s, when a
special unit, through atrocities bordering on genocide, killed an estimated 20,000 people mainly in Matabeleland, where the opposition ZAPU had most of its support. Notably, the only organisation of influence that protested was the local Catholic Church. The rest of the world, including those who had originally shown solidarity, had little to say.

The violence did not stop until the ZAPU agreed to sign a pact with the ruling party. The ZANU basically took them over. None of this hurt the Mugabe Government’s bilateral and multilateral standing. When a new opposition party turned out to be a serious competitor, the Chimurenga (‘liberation war’ or ‘revolutionary struggle’ in Shona) became a permanent institution. Violence became the customary response to political protest. As political power shifted away from Mugabe after he lost a referendum in 2000, his regime only became more violent.

The human rights violations of SWAPO have also been downplayed. In the 1980s, the organisation imprisoned thousands of its own members in prisons in southern Angola, accusing them of spying on behalf of South Africa. These people lost their liberty in spite of never having been proven guilty; indeed, they were not even brought to trial. Many of them did not survive the torture. Those released are scorned even today (Saul and Leys 2003). With the newly established political opposition party, the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), which had its formative stages inside SWAPO, politically motivated violence has entered the public sphere and seems to be increasing ahead of the parliamentary and presidential elections at the end of 2009. The new opposition was denied the right to campaign freely when SWAPO, in an initial response to the new challenge, declared certain areas in the public sphere as its sole property, where nobody else was entitled to campaign. However, the RDP is not a truly meaningful political alternative; coming mainly from ‘the belly of the beast’, its main protagonists have been in the leadership of SWAPO for decades, and promise rather more of the same than something else. It is nonetheless revealing that SWAPO feels the urge to respond in such a way.

It could have been different in South Africa. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission installed by the ANC Government talked also about human rights violations committed by ANC members and inside the ANC. However, the final report containing these findings was never published in its original form. So far, ANC omissions have not been discussed openly. With the internal divisions between the camps of Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma and the new breakaway party COPE, the authoritarian tendencies have increased. It remains to be seen how permissive the political culture of the dominant party is since it has lost its two-thirds majority in the April 2009 elections.

Victims as Perpetrators

There is nothing new about military movements that are supposedly justified in ethical and moral terms losing their legitimacy quickly. Since the French Revolution, liberators have often turned into oppressors, victims into perpetrators. It is not unusual for a new regime to quickly resemble an old one. That has happened again and again throughout the world.

The Indian psychologist and sociologist Ashis Nandy (1984) discusses how liberators tend to reproduce the past rather than offer true alternatives. In this light, the ‘anti-imperialist’ Robert Mugabe turns out to be merely the final executor of the policies of the racist colonists Cecil Rhodes and Ian Smith. Armed combat merely created new repressive institutions of the state for the dominant
group within anti-colonial resistance. Former PLO activist Yezid Sayigh (1977) argued that this was also happening in the Palestinian liberation movement.

Such power structures often revolve around individual commanders who act to the benefit of their crony supporters. Resistance movements normally adopt rough survival strategies and techniques while fighting an oppressive regime. Unfortunately, that culture takes root and is permanently nurtured. To summarise, it becomes questionable whether there is a true difference between the political systems they manage to throw out and what they establish in their place.

In May 1990, Albie Sachs spoke of this trend in respect of South Africa. In a lecture at the University of the Western Cape, this South African lawyer, who was crippled by a parcel bomb in Mozambique during his 24-year exile (and appointed to the Constitutional Court of South Africa in 1994 by Nelson Mandela), expressed his doubts about ANC activists being ready for freedom. He worried about the habits they had cultivated. As Sachs said, the culture and discipline of resistance may have served as a survival strategy in the underground, but these skills were certainly not those of free citizens.

Maybe this is why Nelson Mandela became a global icon in his lifetime: the many years he spent in prison kept him away from the daily intrigues and power plays prevalent in an organised liberation movement. Mandela preserved a spirit of human compassion and tolerance that a life of struggle and exile might not have afforded him.

This may sound cynical, but might be close to reality. Jacob Zuma, a product of the struggle, cultivates a ‘Zulu warrior culture’. He emerged as a populist alternative to the more intellectual, somewhat aloof Thabo Mbeki, finally in May 2009 to become South Africa’s president. Zuma has an international reputation for various allegations of corruption, charges of sexual abuse and martial rhetoric. (His favourite song is ‘Bring me my machine gun’ – interestingly, it was activated more deliberately in public arenas after Zuma’s rape trial, and bears a clearly sexist connotation, representing the male chauvinistic dominance in the society.)

Disappointed by the limits of the liberation they have experienced, many people are looking for substitute saviours. In their desire for salvation and an end to their misery, they turn either to religion or political prophets, who in demagogic fashion use militant and revolutionary rhetoric to cover up their reactionary, counter-revolutionary politics of greed and loot. Fortunately, the number is growing of those to whom fundamental values of democracy, liberty, human rights, and not least efforts towards more socio-economic equality by means of redistributive policies, matter more than submissive loyalty to an organisation and its abuse by parasitic new elites.3

Raymond Suttner is an example. He used to operate underground in South Africa as a member of the ANC, and spent years in solitary confinement as a political prisoner. As a member of parliament and later as ambassador, he represented the ANC Government before returning to the academic world from which he had come. He pointed out that ANC ideology and rhetoric do not distinguish between the liberation movement and the people. He thus argues that the liberation movement is a prototype of a state within the state – one that sees itself as the only legitimate source of power (Suttner 2006). But he also carefully seeks to explain how underground structures created a notion of ‘family’, which cloaked individual, independent-minded thinking guided by maybe dissenting moral values, under a collective which used democratic centralism as a guiding
principle to ensure maximum discipline and loyalty as a prerequisite for the survival and ultimate victory (Suttner 2008).

‘End of History’

As we now know, post-colonial realities look much like those in the colonial era with regard to day-to-day life. The reason is that socialisation factors and attitudes from the armed struggle have largely shaped the new political leaders’ understanding of politics – and their idea of how to wield power.

In governmental office, liberation movements tend to mark an ‘end of history’. Any political alternative that does not emerge from within them will not be acceptable. This attitude explains the strong sense of camaraderie between the Mugabe regime and the governments of Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa over many years. Typically, any political alternative occurring in these countries as a result of disillusionment with post-colonial life will be discredited as part of an imperialist conspiracy designed to sabotage national independence.

These governments never seem to even consider the possibility that their own shortcomings may be the reason why opposition forces are becoming stronger. Instead, they only think along the militaristic dichotomy of friend/foe, leaving no legitimate alternative to their own hegemony. Among each other they have entered regional alliances, which imply the backing of each other in times of challenging political alternatives. The prolonged support to Zimbabwe’s regime under pressure is just the most obvious case in point.

At the same time, the sad truth is that the opposition forces that do stand up against such governments tend to only add to the problem, rather than to provide a solution. All too often, they only want to share the spoils of the state apparatus and its bureaucracy among their cronies once they are strong enough to constitute a true power option. Again, the relevant categories of thought are only winners and losers. However, democracy is about something completely different: compromise, and even search for consensus, in pursuit of the public good. To achieve that, one does not need military mindsets, but rather a broad political debate.

Namibia and South Africa at the Crossroads?

The degree of aggressive polarisation emerging under former liberation movements challenged by new political opposition parties (even more so when this opposition comes from within the belly of the beast, i.e. from dissenting comrades turning into ‘traitors’ by establishing new parties) is a feature characterising Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa in similar ways. The outburst this provokes was illustrated maybe most spectacularly in Namibia in a political rally held by the SWAPO Party Youth League on 18 October 2008 in Katutura. The Youth League’s president repeated the demand that all higher ranking positions in the state apparatus and the state-owned enterprises ought to be filled only with reliable SWAPO members and stated: ‘We have a political religion called SWAPO and the political heaven is SWAPO, and the political hell is where all the other political parties are’. As a special guest, the leader of a delegation from the South African ANC Youth League demanded with reference to opposition parties: ‘Destroy these political cockroaches, they are in your kitchen’. Everyone with a basic knowledge of recent history and in particular the genocide in Rwanda can only shudder in disgust at such horrific hate language. People who had expected that those who have to guard the public interest, preach reconciliation and watch jealously over peace and stability in the
country would dismiss such scandalous statements in no uncertain terms were bitterly disappointed.

The escalating political differences were by no means confined to a rhetorical warfare: they culminated during campaigns on the ground for local or regional elections in massive physical violence between the followers of the two contesting parties. Police had to intervene on several occasions to restore law and order by use of force. Politically motivated violence became the new order of the day.

SWAPO founding member Andimba Toivo ya Toivo showed the wisdom of a true leader. Toivo ya Toivo, with an impeccable track record of political integrity, had played a crucial role in initiating the anti-colonial military resistance and sacrificed almost 20 years of his life as a political prisoner on Robben Island, later serving as a minister in three cabinets from Independence until his retirement in 2005. In an unprecedented initiative, Toivo ya Toivo published an open appeal for tolerance and respect:

_We are living in new times that require new ways of conducting political struggle. The formation of new parties and the exchange of differing opinions in the political arena is a normal occurrence in the life of a democracy. The flourishing of new ideas can only contribute to the vitality and development of our nation. The present should be a battle of ideas and not of swords, and the battle should be conducted with respect for our fellow human beings._ (Toivo ya Toivo 2008)

Unfortunately, Toivo ya Toivo remained a rare voice of reason within the party’s establishment. Instead of seeking a common understanding with the competing internal political forces, the alliance between the erstwhile liberation movements in southern Africa seems to be the unifying identity. It allows those in power to consider the new era – as mentioned earlier – as ‘the end of history’, i.e. a sufficient claim to serve unlimited time as rulers in office on behalf of the victorious liberation movement. Jacob Zuma, then president of the South African ANC, visited Namibia on 8 December to meet with President Hifikepunye Pohamba and the former President Sam Nujoma. A joint communiqué released after the visit stated:

_It was noted that there is a recurring reactionary debate around the need to reduce the dominance of former liberation movements on the African continent. In this regard the emergence of counter-revolutionary forces to reverse the social, political and economical gains that have been made under the leadership of our liberation movements was discussed._

In his ‘Letter from the President’, published by the weekly electronic circular ‘ANC Today’, Jacob Zuma after his return summarised and repeated part of the deliberations as follows:

_Ruling parties often go through certain challenges after the first decade, when the interests of different strands within the broad liberation movement begin to diverge. People begin to explore other avenues, especially when they feel they are losing control and influence within the movement. The interests of people outside the movement, locally or internationally would also come into play. ... Political analysts and all who claim to know Africans better than they know themselves tell us that it is good for Africa and democracy if the majority of former liberation movements was reduced. How do we as former liberation movements ensure that we do not steer away from our mandate of serving the poor and all our people, in the current climate of counter-revolution?_ (Zuma 2008)

The answer to Zuma’s question could actually be an easy one – namely by simply showing that the former liberation
movements continue to provide the best policy choices for the majority of the people. In contrast to this ‘exit option’, which is rather a window of opportunity, views such as those expressed by Zuma and his comrades seem to suggest that there is no inclination in any circumstances to vacate the centres of political power once occupied, even if an electorate – as in the case of Zimbabwe – would vote for a political alternative. A democratic process with such a result would be considered as tantamount to an illegitimate regime change initiated by externally influenced and (mis-)guided elements willing to sabotage the project for social, economic and political emancipation, over which the erstwhile liberation movements claim to hold a monopoly.

Seen from this perspective, any attacks on the liberation movement in power are acts of blasphemy and are dismissed as imperialist conspiracy. The articulation of political opposition is seen as a reason to marginalise, exclude and coerce those with dissenting views and considered a legitimate response by those in power. Instead, they could opt for a better policy, convincing the people that they deserve to remain in political control by means of obtaining the majority of votes in free and fair elections, as a result of sound policy in the interests of the people and an electoral campaign without restraint or repression.

A Namibian Deputy Minister shared his ‘Reflections on Political Violence’ in the state-owned daily newspaper towards the end of 2008. He claimed a right to self-defence in response to unwanted attacks by political enemies and their allies (who are suspected in anybody not sharing the self-righteous propaganda of the party hardliners), and stated in conclusion:

*The SWAPO Party shall prevail against the onslaught and all tactics designed by the perpetrators of various methods of violent political abuses being meted against our party and its leadership. We, the people of Namibia, shall win this war, the SWAPO Party shall win this war, and Namibia shall forever remain peaceful.* (Kazenambo 2008)

What the Deputy Minister overlooks is that you cannot win a war and at the same time remain forever peaceful. The choice is rather between wanting to win a war and wanting peace.

**The Party as the Family and its Leader the Father Figure: Sam Nujoma at 80**

On 12 May 2009 Sam Nujoma turned 80. As the outstanding Namibian leader for half of a century, he personifies like no one else in the country’s contemporary history the patriarch heading the family. This analogy not only corresponds with the title ‘Founding Father of the Republic of Namibia’, as conferred upon him by Parliament after his retirement as head of state. It also links to the distinct notion of family ascribed to the liberation movement.

Raymond Suttner deals with this in depth in his study, ‘The ANC Underground in South Africa to 1976’. The liberation organisation represented a distinct notion of family (Suttner 2008, p. 142). There was a general suppression of ‘the personal’ in favour of ‘the collective’. Individual judgment (and thereby autonomy) was substituted by a collective decision from the leadership (Suttner 2008, p. 146). Such ‘warrior culture, the militarist tradition’, according to Suttner (p. 119), ‘entailed not only heroic acts but also many cases of abuse and power’ – not least over women.

Suttner based his study on interviews with activists both in exile and on the home front. He concludes: ‘Any involvement in a revolution has an impact on conceptions of the personal. Given the overriding
demands for sacrifice and loyalty to something greater than oneself, it leads invariably to a negation of intimacy’ (Suttner 2008, p. 138). From there, it is only a small step towards the later process of ‘Zumafication’, which Suttner also treats in subsequent writings (2009). Put differently, the intimacy of the family was replaced by the leader maximo as the alter ego.

Not surprisingly, Sam Nujoma, as the political father figure of Namibian independence (mothers are conspicuously absent), personifies such a role model in a particularly pronounced fashion. He prefers posing as the military (rather than a diplomatic) figurehead and displays the virtues of an uncompromising man, with the emphasis firmly on man rather than human. Testimony to this is the memorial sculpture cast in stone and metal at the Heroes’ Acre, built on the outskirts of Windhoek 10 years into Independence and similar to the one in Harare by the same North Korean company. The cultivation of the military liberation gospel is revealing. The massively oversized statue of the ‘Unknown Soldier’ as well as the physiognomy of the leader in the relief leaves no doubt as to the intended connotation. Subtleties were never a virtue of Namibian political culture.

Just as enlightening as this monumental symbolism is the content of Nujoma’s autobiography Where Others Wavered, which served as screenplay for the hitherto most expensive film by far, financed by Namibian taxpayers’ money (not just for local producers but for Hollywood professionals). Significantly, a quote from the struggle days was chosen as the programmatic title of Nujoma’s life history, which ends with Independence, although published almost a decade into the sovereign republic (Nujoma 2001). The leitmotiv says it all: ‘When the history of a free and independent Namibia is written one day, SWAPO will go down as having stood firm where others have wavered: that it sacrificed for the sacred cause of liberation where others have compromised’.

An in-depth, exclusive interview with Nujoma in the magazine New Africa confirms this particular liberation perspective. When asked why, as his biography claims, he had sent all three of his sons into battle, he answered, ‘The struggle was supposed to be fought by all Namibians’. When the interviewer enquired what would have happened if they had all been killed, Nujoma responded, ‘Well, but the liberation of our country was supposed to be done by all Namibians irrespective of birth’.

The combat mindset leaves neither room for doubts nor for true mourning. The interviewer refers to the Cassinga massacre, in which the South African army bombarded a refugee camp in southern Angola in the late 1970s, as ‘a very emotional event’. In response, Nujoma offers a vivid description of the gruesome attack:

\[\text{On 4 May 1978, the Boers sent a wave of Buccaneer aircraft over Cassinga. The first bombs they dropped were filled with poisoned gas, biological weapons that destroyed the oxygen in the air and made our people collapse. The Boers then sent a second wave of Mirage jetfighters to strafe the camp and set it ablaze. They then sent yet a third wave of helicopters that dropped paratroopers into the camp. They proceeded to shoot and bayonet our people who had not already died from the bombing. As you correctly stated, they killed more than 1000 and injured many more. They even took some of our people away.}\]

Again, there is no indication of empathy. But the interviewer continues: ‘When something like this happened during the struggle, how did you feel? Did you cry? Have you ever cried?’ Nujoma’s full response was:

\[\text{Well, we were then in New York negotiating with the apartheid regime and the Western Contact Group made up of Canada and Germany (as non-members of the Security Council) and France,}\]
Britain and the US (as members). So we just walked out of the discussion and returned to Africa. We reorganised ourselves and intensified the armed struggle.

It was as if the struggle was a technical matter, mere surgery, which involved no human beings and was executed by inanimate dummies. The rhetoric of liberation can be rather invasive. It has its framework set in the paradigm of victory and/or defeat, and leaves no room for empathy, not to mention grief and tears. This was possibly – and sadly so – even necessary to stand any chance of survival and ultimately become successful in ‘the struggle against the Boers’. Such testimony might also offer some insight into the process of how victims, as liberators, might turn into perpetrators when in control and wielding power. They gave away their humanity and in return expect unconditional loyalty by others to a type of struggle which remains an ever-lasting act of patriotism and service.

Such a mindset leaves no space for retirement. One can leave office, but still remain a leader with responsibilities. It may well be that such first generation anti-colonialists are necessary, even though they at the same time reflect the limits to liberation and the price at which national sovereignty comes to many among the people.

Formal self-determination in a sovereign state does not equate individual liberty and freedom (not to mention social equality in economic terms). But this has shifted the struggle for true emancipation. We owe it to people such as Sam Nujoma in this world that we have reached this next, much less violent, phase of fighting for rights. They sacrificed their humanity for others – but expected others to sacrifice theirs too. Will history absolve them?

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Endnotes

1. This is the slightly revised version of a keynote address presented on 18 May 2009 to the Postgraduate Conference ‘Writing Change: Transitions in African History’ at the University of Sheffield.

2. Fanon’s analysis is of course, like this article, not confined to the African continent when it deals with mindsets abusing access to power and privilege. The excessive income of managers and bankers in Wall Street and elsewhere, but also the recent scandal among political office bearers in public service in the UK, demonstrate rather spectacularly that the symptom of greed is a global attitude among elites and is certainly not limited to Africa.

3. It would be an interesting study to explore further why among those ‘dissidents’ openly and publicly dissociating themselves to date from the new kleptocracies, are over-proportional numbers of so-called ‘petty bourgeois white, left intellectuals’ formerly associated with ‘the struggle’ – although their categorisation might suggest an initial and preliminary explanation in terms of their class origins and corresponding socialisation, which might provide at least in part an answer.

4. However, this painful diagnosis by no means implies any nostalgia for the anything but ‘good’ old days; it rather implies disillusionment over the non-delivery of those now in political power.

5. This statement deliberately ignores the class nature of the socio-political agenda and its actors and implementing agencies as much as the global limiting factors for the implementation of alternatives to the dominant reproduction of social inequalities (Saul 2008). This does of course not mean that these limitations would not exist (see for Namibian class interests in elite politics inter alia some of the contributions to Melber 2007). But it would go beyond the focus of this presentation to explore the external limitations and class character of internal politics. The global constraints should, after all, also not serve as an excuse for the policy failures discussed, which Saul (2008, pp. 147–179) had qualified in a similar perspective to mine as ‘The Strange Death of Liberated Southern Africa’.


10. ‘Namibia Special Report’, New African, no. 423 (November 2003). Since this was a supplement of an advertorial type (and hence its publication paid by the Namibian taxpayers), it can be assumed that it had a semi-official status and was certainly published with the approval of the Namibian president, reflecting his views.

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As developmental realities, policy and research all stumble unproductively along well worn and long contested tramlines, any intellectual venture that tries to do things differently is to be welcomed. This collection of essays, brought together by Onyekachi Wambu with the title Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa, certainly offers a fresh approach. It consists of a variety of contributions looking at issues of leadership, and not just political leadership, from a variety of perspectives: the historical, from the top down, from the bottom up, from the present to the future, from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. The book’s declared aim is to promote an open dialogue, located in the personal experience of the authors, ‘under the talking tree’, which aims to move us on from the fixed positions and embedded conflicts of the past. As such it should not be blamed for avoiding, for the most part, the type of explicit political comment that can strangle dialogue at birth. Nor should it be blamed, from an academic perspective, for not offering a comprehensive conceptualisation and definition of leadership. Given the current interest in ‘leadership’ that would be interesting but, again, might close the door on the dialogue the book aims to promote.

However, the book stands as a deliberate collection of essays around a theme and, as such, some concerns can be expressed about notions of leadership that are or are not addressed within its pages. One concerns the conceptualisation of ‘leadership’ as a function in and of itself. As Ali Mazrui usefully explains, there are many possible types and characteristics of leadership, which individual leaders may mix and match in the way they think may serve them best. However, both he and the book neglect to explore the representative function of leadership. In all but the most extreme circumstances, leaders are in fact representing some existing social and political forces, however unrepresentative these may be of a general population. It is surely through an exploration of the multiple facets of this representation that the relationship of the governing and the governed and the accountability of leaders – both stated concerns of the book – can be enhanced.

A second concern relates to who the leaders are to be. Several contributions talk, without additional reflection, of ‘emerging leaders’ and the book, published by a think-tank of the British Council, is related to a wider British Council project aimed at ‘networking and supporting the next generation of African leaders’. Who are these people? Are they simply bright young things with lots of energy and ideas? In which case, fine, but surely they should be supported in whatever direction they most want to serve the further development of their societies? Or are they people who define themselves as simply wanting to become leaders? If the latter, there are surely significant political issues relating to their selection, not least their class. Competence might also be an issue. Experience of real work in the societies they aimed to change was fundamental.
to the development of two great African leaders, Amilcar Cabral and Samora Machel, whose stories are once again not recognised in a collection largely emanating from Anglophone Africa. Yet it was Cabral who not only railed against the ‘ignorance of the historical reality which these movements [liberation movements in general] aspire to transform’ (Cabral 1980, p. 122), but based the strategy of his own country’s fight for freedom on the intimate knowledge of the whole country gained when, as an agricultural engineer, he had conducted an agricultural census of the country.

Questions about the precise combination of themes and contributions overall – were there no trade unionists or even retired generals willing to reflect on the issues raised? – should in no way detract from the individual contributions, all of which in some way shed new light or stimulate further thought on the issues they address. Some, such as a reflection on the leadership of women at the grassroots in the fight against AIDS by Martha Chinouya, or an insider’s/outsider’s look at the changing configurations of a Nigerian village by Onyeachi Wambu, are essentially case studies. Others such as ‘Time for Change’ by Ndidi Nwuneli, ‘Creating the Business Leaders of Tomorrow’ by Taddy Blecher and ‘2017: Empowering and Engendering the Future’ by Susan and Juliet Kiguli offer vignettes of what might or could be different. Eva Dadrian, Wangui wa Goro and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza address respectively the roles of journalism, translation and intellectual engagement, each fundamentally important to the integrity of the political and social environment in which any leadership can take place.

I am not myself sure how well all these contributions relate to ‘leadership’ either as I understand it or as the issue is framed in the many pertinent questions raised in the introduction. However, this probably does not matter. They certainly relate to identities and personal roles in processes of potential change in Africa and they offer many lessons and food for thought that might not have emerged through a more focused approach. Perhaps this is the difference between a conversation and a debate, and the reason the producers of the book chose the former route.

Reference

rebellion so much more unrestrained in its violence than another? In answering the question, Weinstein shapes a hypothesis and a way of testing it from a host of influences. These include organisational sociology, new institutionalist economics, the largely gloomy ‘resource curse’ literature, and a concern with asymmetric information. But the book does not trot out the banalities of some of the sillier economics of conflict literature and, while it takes the opportunity for rebellion seriously, it does not presume that everyone is motivated exclusively by material gain. Rather, the main argument turns on how rebels deal with a series of organisational challenges that have been given too little attention in the literature: recruitment, control, governance, the use of violence and the need to demonstrate resilience. Through ‘thick description’, interviews and quantitative data, Weinstein explores the cases of the NRA in Uganda, Renamo in Mozambique, and the variation within Peru between the main Sendero Luminoso group and its regional committee in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Any aspiring rebel management has to mobilise resources to tackle these tasks. There are, Weinstein tells us, two types of resource endowment that help: economic endowments and social endowments. This distinction combines with another, between high and low commitment recruits, or between investors in and consumers of rebellion. Economic endowments are simpler to mobilise. Where rebels lack access to resource rents or external aid, they have to get embroiled in the slow and awkward business of cultivating ties of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity with local populations. Inconvenient as this may be, it primes rebels to respect non-combatants: organisation will be more centralised and disciplined, and civilian abuses are unlikely to escalate into a pattern of atrocity. If, however, rebels have access to economic endowments, they use them. This makes it easier to recruit sufficient soldiers and to mount a military challenge to governments. But it means rebel leaders will lead a jumble of high and low commitment recruits – thanks to selective material benefits – without knowing enough about which are which.

Initial endowments affect internal organisation and rebel behaviour. Most dramatically, Weinstein argues that endowments determine atrocity. If Jack Hirshleifer, a pioneer of neo-classical economic theories of violent conflict, suggested that thanks to low opportunity costs the poor had a comparative advantage in violence, Weinstein provides a factor endowment theory of atrocity: the model is Hecksher-Ohlin to Hirshleifer’s Ricardo. Thus, chapter six explains patterns of violence across the case study insurgencies. In rebellions with high economic endowments, low commitment rebels (consumers) go on the rampage, looting, raping, slicing at and shooting civilians. Management has to put up with this to maintain the labour force of rebellion so the abuses go unpunished. Rebels get a bad reputation and civilians avoid them: they become more difficult to control. This encourages further abuse and the pattern is set. In resource-poor insurgencies this behaviour is both less likely – because of a higher share of investors among recruits – and when it does happen more likely to be punished – because of a tighter organisation relying more on relations with non-combatants.

*Inside Rebellion* is brilliantly done – clear, tightly argued, in good command of its cases, and nicely attuned, at the end, to possibilities for further research and analytical probing and to the relevance of the argument for international policy. Some of the most interesting passages are those that engage with the question of what happens – for example, to the FARC in Colombia or to UNITA in Angola – when endowments change; and those that briefly point out the implications of the book’s argument for the value of naming and shaming strategies or for international criminal courts.
Students and researchers will benefit greatly from this book, which will enrich scholarly and policy debates. A number of questions are likely to be raised as a result. The explanation of violence and atrocity, like so many studies, leaps from organisational rationality to the observation of outcomes: it leaves the reader none the wiser about why even low-commitment recruits or consumer-rebels are so vicious. Because of anti-civilian ideologies? Or because of a ‘culture of violence’? Or something else? It is not clear how the model would illuminate, for example, the violence of the Spanish Civil War. Could the savagery of General Queipo de Llana, the cruelty of Franco himself and his early mentor, the beserk General Millán-Astray, or the violence of Lorca’s killers in Granada really be explained by the fact that the Germans and Italians came to the Nationalists’ aid financially while European democracies dithered behind a veil of non-interference? How do we explain the way these rebel leaders and followers were both investors and consumers? How can Republican communist and anarchist viciousness be explained? There are plenty of more recent examples, in which the violence of rebel groups is at least partly a function not of low-commitment rebels poorly controlled by central leaders but of the violence of leaders, their ideologies, and their treatment of lowly recruits.

There are also other ways of exploring the organisational sociology of insurgency, including the Durkheimian ‘grid-group’ matrix allowing for different combinations of institutional lock-in (rules) and institutional bonding, explored by Fithen and Richards in No Peace No War. The book does not help think through the way access to resource rent may help insurgent groups to invest in cultivating social resources of local legitimacy, for in Afghanistan, Angola and elsewhere economic and social resources have been complements rather than only substitutes.

Nor does the book really engage with the origins of insurgency. Is it always the case that prospective rebel entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market and then calculate which resources they can draw on to organise rebellions, rather than rebellion emerging from protracted social processes, in which violent uprising may be a contested option among a number? Might rebel behaviour be linked to the political economy of areas where it emerges? This might involve complex variations in how labour is mobilised or land allocated, and how these are regulated by institutions of local power. Finally, the richest way to explore the arguments of this book further might be through a different case selection, where there might be more intriguing combinations of economic resources and social ties, where atrocity and legitimacy have both been present, and where, perhaps as with the RUF in Sierra Leone, it was perhaps not so much the resource curse of diamonds that explained atrocity as the ‘endowment’ or history of fiercely felt social experiences of relational abuse and exclusion among many young people.


By the time that this review is published most people with a serious interest in the Cameroon Grassfields should already have a copy of Nicolas Argenti’s new and innovative monograph on their shelves. This relatively small upland area in the West and Northwest Provinces of Cameroon has always attracted considerable academic attention because of its rich material culture and complex political
history. Yet books on the Grassfields of this quality and substance are still rare, so this text will quickly take its place alongside the works by Jean-Pierre Warnier and Miriam Goheen and the edited volume by Iain Fowler and David Zeitlyn as absolutely compulsory reading for anyone interested in the area. In many ways this book is a much more exacting read than those volumes, but it repays the effort.

Although this is an ethnography that draws its authority from the intensity of Argenti’s specific fieldwork in the small polity of Oku and his subtle interpretations of the origin myths (chapter 2), witchcraft beliefs (chapter 3) masks, dances and dance associations (chapters 4 to 8) there, it develops a series of extremely bold arguments, which will provoke a much wider audience than just those with a concern for the Grassfields or Cameroon. Argenti’s canvas is ambitious: the book engages any reader interested in questions of the social category ‘youth’, of violence and its legacies, of historicity and memory and of the interpretation of dance. Indeed, given how much of the empirical material in the book is concerned with an analysis of dances, masks and dance associations in Oku it was odd that there is no mention of dance in the book’s subtitle. Argenti’s aim is ‘to analyze from an anthropological standpoint the ways in which the past continues to inform social relations between youth and elites in the present’ (p. 34). Chief amongst these is the way that the legacy of slavery remains important.

Amidst the smug self-congratulations of the 2007 anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade it is good to be reminded of the anarchic violence and genocidal brutality in the ‘human hunting grounds’ that were at the start of the slave commodity chain. The Grassfields were one such place. Central to the book’s argument is the claim that the social consequences of the West African slave trade in the hinterlands where slaves were captured remain relevant today and govern the relationship between youth and elites. If at times this argument seems a little over-determined it is forgivable given that the other explanations for the contemporary antagonism of this social relationship are over-familiar to the point of being hackneyed. If Argenti overstates his case it is perhaps because it is such a distinctive claim.

The book is undoubtedly a significant and substantial contribution to a number of current debates, but (for a number of reasons) it is not an easy read. First, the story it tells and the argument it develops is a profoundly depressing one. From slavery to colonial forced labour to venal post-colonial state, the ‘youth’ of Oku have endured three centuries of systematic exploitation and rank cruelty. Argenti is clinical in his denunciation of all of these forms of domination and his condemnation of the small group of ‘elites’ (who perpetually stand opposite the ‘youth’ and enjoy the benefits that are the concomitant consequence of their suffering) leaves little space for imagining a future rapprochement – although some ideas do emerge in the final chapter. Argenti never romanticises the reaction of ‘youth’ to oppression or talks of resistance, rather he draws on a vocabulary of ‘ambiguity’ and ‘mimesis’ to articulate what the youth can do through dance in response to their powerlessness.

Second, it is not an easy read because Argenti’s arguments about historicity and memory require that it must not be an easy read. There is a theoretically justified determination to resist the emergence of a simple chronological explanatory narrative. The aim (as I understand it) is to prevent his record of events from becoming the record and therefore a memorial (a bad thing in Argenti’s terms because it would suit the elite by providing an end to history) rather than an articulation of the meaning of memory (a good thing because it constantly reminds the elite of their history/ culpability). The essence of dance is that it says this without words so it is important (from Argenti’s theoretical-political perspective)
that the subject of the book remains unspoken – which is obviously a challenge for a writer. The beauty of dance from Argenti’s point of view is that it speaks the unspoken (which is why it holds such fascination for advocates of non-representational theory). People in Oku do not talk about the legacy of slavery so research methods that rely on talk-data are of no use in supporting his claim. Interpretations of dance fill the gap. But the danger of building an argument on the absence of spoken evidence is that it is very difficult for Argenti to be wrong or rather to be shown to be wrong. In many cases of ethnography readers rely on the interpretation of the ethnographer, but in this instance it becomes more than usually clear that there is little scope for challenging the interpretation.

Third, this is a densely conceptual work that draws on a very wide range of social theory (Freud, Bhabha, Derrida, Lyotard etc.), and despite Argenti’s lyrical and passionate prose style, the conceptual subtleties and virtuoso vocabulary make it a read that requires plenty of time, sustained concentration and a good dictionary. The protestant missionaries from Basel, the first missionaries to reach the Grassfields, would no doubt reassure us that the labour of tackling this text is integral to reaping the many rich rewards it offers. For those of us with less theological inclinations it is the combination of original insights, theoretical ambition and empirical detail that make this such an enthralling, if demanding, text.


This book interrogates the current orthodoxy ‘that corruption is an anathema to development’, which is the central tenet of the recent anti-corruption campaigns of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other unilateral donors (pp. 7–8). The edited volume is an assemblage of critical examinations of the anti-corruption campaigns, in various locales and sectors. It is enriched by contributions from academic fields including geography, development studies, political science, economics, international relations and law – with yet other contributions from practitioners. This breadth is also echoed in the spread of geographical locations examined, which range from Nigeria, the Philippines, Georgia to Nicaragua and others. Given this wide scope it is not surprising that the book emphasises the plurality of anti-corruption experiences, and argues that the effects of the anti-corruption campaigns need to be understood within the political and cultural context in which they are implemented (p. 17). The book highlights inconsistencies between the local experience of the anti-corruption campaigns and the IFIs’ technocratic universalised interpretation of the issue and criticises the application of the same brand of prescriptions ‘from Nigeria to Bulgaria’ (p. 28).

However, the argument is not one for localism. The importance of the international context in which the anti-corruption campaigns arose – even as their effects are felt variously – emerges throughout the volume. Ivanov argues that the origins of the anti-corruption campaigns lie ‘in the interests of the US government, multinational companies and multilateral donors’ (p. 29). In a similar vein, the geo-politics which govern the IFIs’ unequal application of anti-corruption policies is central to Brown, Cloke and Rocha’s analysis of anti-corruption in Nicaragua (pp. 182–201). Moreover, in her chapter on corruption in the Philippines, Co argues that the legacy of colonisation and international inequalities are key to the production of Pilipino corruption (p. 123). Bracking’s
own chapter offers the most in-depth analysis of the international in the book. Her chapter situates the anti-corruption campaigns within international power relations and explores the contradictions that these relations produce in development finance. She highlights how discourses of corruption ‘fix its meanings spatially, with coordinates within related ideas of race, space and nationality’ and so act to structure the international (p. 252).

Central to all the arguments in the book, both those that explore global power relations and local politics, is the relations between corruption and development. Hall-Mathews’ examination of President Mutharika of Malawi’s anti-corruption campaign, for example, reveals that the equation of anti-corruption measures and development allowed him to ‘claim to be pro-development by the fact of making arrests per se’ (p. 82). Moreover, many of the activities of Mutharika’s anti-corruption drive were arguably only targeted at undermining his political opponents. Anti-corruption measures in Malawi thus distracted and detracted from development priorities, rather than furthering them. Hall-Mathew’s conclusion is that corruption is only one issue for development and not necessarily the most significant one (p. 98). The role of the anti-corruption campaign in Malawi in obscuring Mutharika’s political goals is comprehended within the volume as only one example of how the foregrounding of corruption acts to obfuscate. This conceals not only political machinations, but also global inequalities and even the failures of the IMF and World Bank policies (p. 31). This chimerical nature of the anti-corruption campaigns, the book contends, also acts to obscure the gaps between the global and local discourses and Northern states’ culpability for corruption (pp. 28, 303).

The book achieves the objective stated by Bracking, namely to ‘critically review policy and practice in the field of corruption and anti-corruption’ (p. 17). The plurality of the chapters, all of which stand alone, is a great strength of the book and individual chapters may be of great interest to area specialists or, as in the case of Alolo’s work on gender and corruption in Ghana, to scholars with particular research foci. The conclusions of the book and a number of the chapters build on this critical review to problematise the orthodox conception of the relations between corruption and development. The pervasiveness of this orthodoxy in development thinking makes this book a significant critical contribution.


This collection is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the ongoing critical analysis of the World Bank’s activities during the past 15 years. David Moore presents a thoughtful and accessible edited volume that covers a broad range of topics related to the Bank’s neoliberal hegemonic project. Following the Bank’s discursive twists and turns throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the various chapters challenge the organisation’s attempts to persuade the outside world that a kinder, gentler approach to development has been adopted after the failure of Structural Adjustment.

The book begins by Moore establishing the theoretical framework guiding the volume. His Gramscian understanding of hegemony and counter-hegemony provide the inspiration for compiling the chapters, and Moore claims that the book ‘… is about how the World Bank attempts
to perform what Robert Wade (1997) has called the “Gramsci effect” (p. 27). Thus, central to the analysis are questions such as: how does the World Bank convince others to accept, and at times enthusiastically embrace, its policies and practices? How does the Bank respond to major challenges to its orthodoxy? How does it manufacture moral and intellectual leadership within the development industry? (p. 27). While not all contributors adhere to the Gramscian tradition, there is certainly a strong current throughout the book that aims to deconstruct and challenge the Bank’s hegemonic notions of development. The Gramscian conception of hegemony provides a crucial lens through which to view the Bank’s discourse and practice, and adds theoretical rigour to the volume.

Moore has re-published several classic texts on the World Bank for this volume (e.g. Robert Wade’s 1996 article in New Left Review on the ‘East Asian miracle’), some in their original form, others moderately or substantially revised for this book. These influential pieces are combined with several original chapters for the book addressing more contemporary issues, and written by ‘new entrants taking the field of what could be labelled “World Bank studies” into uncharted territory’ (p. viii). The book covers an impressive range of topics, including the Bank’s discourses around social capital, sustainable development, participation/ownership, good governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, Moore ends with a provocative chapter written by Patrick Bond calling for the abolition of the Bank, which is based on various positions and perspectives from radical ‘civil society’ formations. The book’s 16 chapters provide an excellent source of information – in one place – for those interested in accessing critical approaches to studying the Bank.

Despite the successful project accomplished by Moore, at least two critical points need to be mentioned regarding the volume. First, and most importantly, the book lacks feminist analysis of the World Bank. In light of the devastating, and disproportionate, consequences of Structural Adjustment for women in the ‘developing’ world, at least one or two chapters written from a feminist perspective would have helped to provide a more complete critique. Feminist critiques of the Bank have constituted some of the most articulate, sophisticated and consistent attempts by scholars and activists to challenge its neoliberal orthodoxy. Moreover, based on the editor’s statement that ‘...it is time to gather together the last decade and a half’s radical analytical assessments of the world’s most visible development institution’ (p. viii), the absence of a feminist critique appears to be a glaring, and potentially debilitating, omission.

Secondly, Moore is highly dismissive in his own chapters of the post-structural theoretical position on several of the issues under question. Although disagreeing on a theoretical and practical level with others is healthy and productive in many ways, Moore does so in a manner that does not truly engage with this perspective. He mentions post-structuralism very briefly, painting a crude caricature of its approach, only to tear down the straw man in due course. If a critique of post-structuralism is to be presented, then it is only appropriate that a more substantial and rigorous engagement with this perspective be elaborated.

Notwithstanding the criticisms raised above, this volume serves as a valuable resource for students, scholars, and activists who are interested in understanding the rhetorical shifts of the Bank during the past 15 years, and potential strategies for struggling against the current hegemony of the Bank.
Immigration from Africa to Europe is a historical phenomenon with important socio-economic and political implications for both continents. Although during the colonial period some level of human movement from the colonies to Europe was allowed, decolonisation brought this type of immigration to an end. Since then, any type of migration has been increasingly politicised in the European political arena. The politicisation of migration was also reflected in the international relations of the EU, particularly with Africa. As can be seen in both the Cotonou Agreement (2000) and the European Neighbourhood Policy with North African countries (2003), the management of immigration constitutes the hot spot of the politics of Euro-African relations. *Africa and Fortress Europe* aims to study this relationship in context of immigration, thus contributing to the Euro-African literature on relations by bringing the immigration dynamic into the discussion.

This engaging collection includes significantly diverse perspectives from scholars of economics, political science and international relations to practitioners who are currently working for EU-level agencies, including Frontex. The book is structured in two parts, with the first focusing on the contemporary political and economic situations in different regions of Africa and how these have become push factors for individuals. The second part focuses on EU-level responses from the Eurocrats to the legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. In this sense, *Africa and Fortress Europe* is a subtle collection which analyses the Euro-African relations in the context of immigration from both African and European perspectives. The general argument of the book is that the immigration problem should be tackled by African and European actors by focusing on an infamous dictum, “African solutions to African problems”.

The book discusses important issues. The analysis by Kohnert is the most comprehensive chapter, examining the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. It focuses on both socio-political and economic reasons for migration by questioning the rising xenophobia in the Maghreb countries towards immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (p. 42) and European attempts to convert North Africa into a buffer zone with ‘reception centres’ (p. 45). Both are attention-grabbing points that highlight how much European policies have determining and constitutive effects on Africa in the context of immigration. Unfortunately, not all contributors’ analyses are conducted in this particular context, as some studies only briefly mention immigration towards the end of their investigations.

Another criticism of the book is that it does not take the opportunity to connect a political-security analysis to the economic analysis. This separation results in a type of analysis, exemplified by Exenberger’s chapter, that examines the issue from an economic perspective which assumes the existence of ‘rational’ and ‘profit-maximising’ immigrants. This examination disregards the economic conditions under which individuals are forced to migrate. It is questionable to what extent migration in and from Africa is about a rational economic choice, if it is about ‘a choice’ at all. In addition, this type of analysis risks legitimising the rhetoric in Europe that African immigrants are coming to ‘take our jobs away’. Unfortunately, the Hendricks’ chapter on human security in Africa does not adequately address this issue and fails to fully illustrate the economic dimension of political crises.

While the chapters are well constructed, the explanatory framework is not sufficiently

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grounded theoretically. Two points are striking. First, the concept of ‘Fortress Europe’ is not evaluated. None of the contributors, except the Frontex Director, Laitinen, questions the concept. The historically constructed nature of politics should have been brought into the discussion to explain why Europe has become a ‘fortress’ to African immigrants, and why it is not a fortress to, say, Eastern European or North American immigrants. This might be also related to the concept of ‘Islamophobia’, which is repeatedly mentioned, but never developed. No chapter attempts to analyse or problematise this potentially important concept.

These underdeveloped issues leave question marks, one of which concerns the concept of ‘threat’. In the concluding chapter, Gebrewold suggests that readers differentiate between ‘perceived’ and ‘real’ threats (p. 173). This approach is understandable in a literature where immigration cannot be thought of without ‘securitisation’, which is the ‘common sense’ theory of immigration at present. However, if the name of the first part of the book is ‘Threats from Africa’ and if, throughout the chapters, the authors analyse different ‘threats’, it is essential for an editor to give a coherent account of ‘threat’. Many questions might have been asked: Are the threats ‘real’ or ‘perceived’? Perceived by whom? Real for whom? Are ‘perceived’ threats not ‘real’?

The last weak point of the book is its state-centricism. In almost all of the chapters, civil society movements in Africa are neglected in favour of inter-governmental organisations. It is another question why NGOs do not appear as alternative political agencies in Africa where both governmental and inter-governmental structures have suffered from various deficiencies. Therefore, the general argument of the book, ‘African solutions to African problems’, should be strengthened.

To conclude, *Africa and Fortress Europe* is a significant starting point, albeit with shortcomings, for understanding Euro-African relations in the context of immigration. Given the fact that both the crises in Africa and European responses to immigration, such as Frontex, have become ‘real’ security threats for those Africans who are caught in between human traffickers and European border patrols, this is a pressing political issue.

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Vera Chirwa’s remarkable book takes the reader to deep insights into political struggles and the meaning of freedom in Malawi. While it is a personal account demonstrating her selflessness, perseverance and hope in bringing freedom and justice to Malawi, the story reveals an important political history of the country. The story brings to light the struggles that Malawian political fighters encountered in their quest to bring freedom and justice to the country, from the fight against colonialism, federation and racism during the colonial administration to the fight against the dictatorial one party regime, under which many political opponents were subjected to inhumane treatment through unfair trials, long periods of detention without trial and in some cases unexplained deaths. The story also highlights the harsh realities and sacrifices that Vera, as a woman, a mother and a wife, had to go through in order to achieve her ambitions and

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accomplish what she and her husband, Orton Chirwa, believed in.

In the first four sections Vera brings to light how the transition from colonial government to independence created the dictatorial regime through the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi’s first President. Through power struggles and in an effort to legitimise his position, Banda is shown to have developed a mentality of viewing himself as unquestionable, tolerating no critique. This attitude led to the cabinet crisis of 1964, due to policy differences between the leader, some of the ministers, as well as prominent figures such as Vera and Orton Chirwa. Through these political persecutions, the self-rule that many fought for became their worst nightmare. The three sections that follow narrate a story of her family in exile and how she established her career and became the first woman lawyer in southern Africa. It also highlights their passion in politics as a couple wherever they went and how their children suffered and faced many challenges during these struggles of political power. After almost two decades in exile, the couple were abducted back to Malawi, convicted on the grounds of planning to topple Banda’s Government, and sentenced to death through a traditional court. Despite the death sentence, torture, unjust treatment and long period of separation from her husband and children, Vera maintained her will to live.

Back in society in 1993, after over a decade of imprisonment and unfortunately not with her husband who died in 1992, she actively dedicated herself to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights in Malawi. Her account shows how, through leading the transition to a democratic government, Bakili Muluzi fell into the same trap of the desire to cling to power by seeking to extend his terms of presidency and thereby threatening to take Malawi back into the political system that he and numerous others fought so hard to abolish. Vera’s book highlights the important challenges that face young democracies like Malawi. She notes the negative effects of a weak economy and poorly designed and implemented economic and social programmes on the advancement of democracy, and how the worsening conditions turned people to review the old days of the one party regime as better in meeting their needs. The argument is that the masses are still sceptical that democracy has managed to meet their needs as many had hoped for and were promised at the dawn of the era. As such, the temptation to view the old days as glorious is real for some people. In the new democratic era led by Muluzi, corruption has increased considerably while levels of discipline and people’s personal security has declined, making some Malawians uneasy about the new political set up. Vera concludes by highlighting how the political system in Malawi is democratic, but the leaders are not and how this threatens the full development of democracy in the country.

The core of the story is the life of Vera herself. It shows the two sides of Vera: a family person who cares deeply for her family, and a tough and resilient person who suffered and persevered despite political persecutions in all three political eras of Malawi. This remarkable story shows the inhumane treatment that she has suffered, while revealing her strength to stand up and fight for what she believed was right for Malawi and Malawians. Most startling is her ability to forgive those that made her suffer when she could seek justice. Furthermore, after 12 years in prison, Vera refused lucrative offers both abroad and at home as she still wanted to see her dreams come true by working to improve human rights, and making sure that she was in a position to be able to criticize leaders if they were not doing a good job.

However, in 2004 she expressed her interests to stand for the presidency. Here, unfortunately, there are not many details
regarding her change of ambitions from a freedom fighter to a presidential candidate. We are left with no clues as to how she planned to run the country and at the same time provide the much-needed critique to keep the presidency in check. In addition, we do not have much detail on how she cooperated with other opposition leaders in the period leading to the general elections of 2004 and the role she played after she dropped out of the contest for the top seat. It would have been good to have these details in order to appreciate how she envisioned her political future as a presidential figure and how different she would have been from the other leaders. The story being a personal one, it is perhaps understandable that the concepts of human rights and democracy are discussed as taken for granted concepts. For an academic audience, a more critical evaluation of these concepts could have opened up some fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, this is indeed an insightful account of the life of a fearless fighter, as well as of the political transformation and history of Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.


Rufus Norris’s production of Wole Soyinka’s Death and the King’s Horseman at the National Theatre was an arresting piece of theatre that demanded a second viewing simply because there was so much to feed the eye. The statue-filled stage that meets you on your entry into the Olivier Theatre immediately sets the tone for this journey into Yoruba existence and philosophy where the spirit world is an integral part of a very active belief system.

The setting is Oyo, Nigeria, 1943. Iyaloja, the leader of the market women’s stately entrance to ‘ignite’ the opening of this production, played with so much power and grace by Claire Benedict, situates our story in Abeokuta Market, the arena that serves as the ‘playground’ for the protagonist of this story. Elesin Oba, played by the imposing Nonso Anozie, is the King’s Horseman, who has a duty to accompany his dead Lord, the Alafin of Oyo, into the afterlife by committing ritual suicide. It is a duty that demands the ultimate sacrifice from the individual for the benefit of the community, a community that comes alive and inhabits the stage with song and dance, led by the Praise Singer (Giles Terera). The relationship between Elesin and his Praise Singer, articulated through highly poetic and proverbial language and supported by the women’s adoration of their ‘Horseman’ through flirtatious singing and dancing through the market place, keeps the audience engaged throughout the first half. This preparation for the journey into the world of the ancestors takes on a more earthly reality, quite removed from the ritual, when Elesin spots a maiden in whom he wants to plant his seed on this his last day on this earth. Act One closes with the arrangement of both a wedding and a funeral.

Act Two opens in the colonialist quarter, where Simon Pilkings, the British colonial officer, hears of the ritual suicide and decides to intervene by holding Elesin in custody, causing him to fail to perform this ritual which can only be done at a ‘specific time ordained by the cycle of the moon, so there is one night that he can do it and one night alone’. Meanwhile Olunde (Kobna Holbrook Smith), the son of Elesin who has returned from his studies in Britain to bury his father because he is aware of the implications of the traditional custom, is confounded when he becomes aware of the catastrophe
about to occur and sacrifices himself in a
bid to secure the spiritual well being of
his people.

Norris’s bold choice to use an all black cast
which resulted in the ‘whiting up’ of black
actors to play the white colonialists
released the humour within this text, for
which utmost credit must go to Jenny
Jules and Lucian Msamati, for their por-
trayal of these catalytic characters.
Drawing from a Caribbean, African and
British experience of white colonialists,
these performers displayed the integrity
of the colonialists, without caricaturing
them, which would have reduced the
work to a clash of cultures, which the
writer warns against. Rather, this choice
allows the production to complicate the
reading of these characters, because of
the glaring fact the words are being
spoken by a black person with a white
painted face. The multi-layered impli-
cations of this choice served as a constant
reminder of whose story was being pre-
sented. This controversial choice offers a
different perspective to this story, which
is told, in effect, by the people it actually
happened to. Norris’s subtle introduction
of this idea came in the form of the
whole cast of 31 taking the stage, in prep-
eration of a story, where members of the
‘community’ are ‘made up’ to play specific
characters within the tale. Essentially, sign-
posts were provided which resulted in a
big payoff when the Pilkings are revealed
in Act Two. But ultimately, what Norris
has done with this production is to
provide a rare opportunity for the host
culture of the West to see themselves as
viewed by the ‘other’.

Visually, this production was a feast for the
eyes. The first half was an unapologetic
thrust into the ‘exotic’, particularly for a
standard white National Theatre audience.
The many songs and dances and the
lyrical nature of the heightened conversa-
tion between Elesin and his Praise Singer
with its expected pomp and pageantry
exceeded my stereotypical expectations.
Norris’s execution of this act was for me
very measured and served the story
rather than playing to the gallery, which
could have been an easy choice.

What I have described as ‘the eye of the
outsider’ was what stood out in this pro-
duction. Coming to this production as an
outsider in terms of heritage was perhaps
a blessing in disguise, as it afforded the
director the opportunity to learn and trans-
fer that knowledge to an audience who are
largely ignorant of Yoruba culture. The big
tree in the centre of the market which then
transforms into a skyline of bundles, the
ingenious inhabited furniture, the constant
cycle of movement on stage, sometimes
barely noticeable, were manifestations of
the essence of the spirit life of the Yoruba,
not consciously written into the script.
With the help of his designer Katrina
Lindsay and choreographer Javier De
Frutos, the gap was bridged between the
two cultures, with Peter Badejo, the associ-
ate director/consultant as a much-valued
guide. The storytelling form was a
natural choice, which aided in the created
world of the ensemble telling their story
and evolving the environment themselves,
literally. A thought-provoking, energised
and daring production, which left me
wanting more.
As developmental realities, policy and research all stumble unproductively along well worn and long contested tramlines, any intellectual venture that tries to do things differently is to be welcomed. This collection of essays, brought together by Onyekachi Wambu with the title *Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa*, certainly offers a fresh approach. It consists of a variety of contributions looking at issues of leadership, and not just political leadership, from a variety of perspectives: the historical, from the top down, from the bottom up, from the present to the future, from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. The book’s declared aim is to promote an open dialogue, located in the personal experience of the authors, ‘under the talking tree’, which aims to move us on from the fixed positions and embedded conflicts of the past. As such it should not be blamed for avoiding, for the most part, the type of explicit political comment that can strangle dialogue at birth. Nor should it be blamed, from an academic perspective, for not offering a comprehensive conceptualisation and definition of leadership. Given the current interest in ‘leadership’ that would be interesting but, again, might close the door on the dialogue the book aims to promote.

However, the book stands as a deliberate collection of essays around a theme and, as such, some concerns can be expressed about notions of leadership that are or are not addressed within its pages. One concerns the conceptualisation of ‘leadership’ as a function in and of itself. As Ali Mazrui usefully explains, there are many possible types and characteristics of leadership, which individual leaders may mix and match in the way they think may serve them best. However, both he and the book neglect to explore the representative function of leadership. In all but the most extreme circumstances, leaders are in fact representing some existing social and political forces, however unrepresentative these may be of a general population. It is surely through an exploration of the multiple facets of this representation that the relationship of the governing and the governed and the accountability of leaders – both stated concerns of the book – can be enhanced.

A second concern relates to who the leaders are to be. Several contributions talk, without additional reflection, of ‘emerging leaders’ and the book, published by a think-tank of the British Council, is related to a wider British Council project aimed at ‘networking and supporting the next generation of African leaders’. Who are these people? Are they simply bright young things with lots of energy and ideas? In which case, fine, but surely they should be supported in whatever direction they most want to serve the further development of their societies? Or are they people who define themselves as simply wanting to become leaders? If the latter, there are surely significant political issues relating to their selection, not least their class. Competence might also be an issue. Experience of real work in the societies they aimed to change was fundamental.
to the development of two great African leaders, Amílcar Cabral and Samora Machel, whose stories are once again not recognised in a collection largely emanating from Anglophone Africa. Yet it was Cabral who not only railed against the ‘ignorance of the historical reality which these movements [liberation movements in general] aspire to transform’ (Cabral 1980, p. 122), but based the strategy of his own country’s fight for freedom on the intimate knowledge of the whole country gained when, as an agricultural engineer, he had conducted an agricultural census of the country.

Questions about the precise combination of themes and contributions overall – were there no trade unionists or even retired generals willing to reflect on the issues raised? – should in no way detract from the individual contributions, all of which in some way shed new light or stimulate further thought on the issues they address. Some, such as a reflection on the leadership of women at the grassroots in the fight against AIDS by Martha Chinouya, or an insider’s/outsider’s look at the changing configurations of a Nigerian village by Onyeachi Wambu, are essentially case studies. Others such as ‘Time for Change’ by Ndidi Nwuneli, ‘Creating the Business Leaders of Tomorrow’ by Taddy Blecher and ‘2017: Empowering and Engendering the Future’ by Susan and Juliet Kiguli offer vignettes of what might or could be different. Eva Dadrian, Wangui wa Goro and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza address respectively the roles of journalism, translation and intellectual engagement, each fundamentally important to the integrity of the political and social environment in which any leadership can take place.

I am not myself sure how well all these contributions relate to ‘leadership’ either as I understand it or as the issue is framed in the many pertinent questions raised in the introduction. However, this probably does not matter. They certainly relate to identities and personal roles in processes of potential change in Africa and they offer many lessons and food for thought that might not have emerged through a more focused approach. Perhaps this is the difference between a conversation and a debate, and the reason the producers of the book chose the former route.

Reference


Researchers have been going through the tangled forms of wars in developing countries with a finer comb than that of large-N statistical studies. At their best, such studies combine research methods, engage in fieldwork and/or archival research, and test their shapely models with a refreshing clarity and honesty. It has become easier to appreciate that there are varieties of violent conflict and of rationalism. Inside Rebellion is very much in this vein.

Why do some insurgent groups seem committed to abuse and atrocity, while others appear to pursue a kinder rebellion? In Peru, why was one branch of a
rebellion so much more unrestrained in its violence than another? In answering the question, Weinstein shapes a hypothesis and a way of testing it from a host of influences. These include organisational sociology, new institutionalist economics, the largely gloomy ‘resource curse’ literature, and a concern with asymmetric information. But the book does not trot out the banalities of some of the sillier economics of conflict literature and, while it takes the opportunity for rebellion seriously, it does not presume that everyone is motivated exclusively by material gain. Rather, the main argument turns on how rebels deal with a series of organisational challenges that have been given too little attention in the literature: recruitment, control, governance, the use of violence and the need to demonstrate resilience. Through ‘thick description’, interviews and quantitative data, Weinstein explores the cases of the NRA in Uganda, Renamo in Mozambique, and the variation within Peru between the main Sendero Luminoso group and its regional committee in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Any aspiring rebel management has to mobilise resources to tackle these tasks. There are, Weinstein tells us, two types of resource endowment that help: economic endowments and social endowments. This distinction combines with another, between high and low commitment recruits, or between investors in and consumers of rebellion. Economic endowments are simpler to mobilise. Where rebels lack access to resource rents or external aid, they have to get embroiled in the slow and awkward business of cultivating ties of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity with local populations. Inconvenient as this may be, it primes rebels to respect non-combatants: organisation will be more centralised and disciplined, and civilian abuses are unlikely to escalate into a pattern of atrocity. If, however, rebels have access to economic endowments, they use them. This makes it easier to recruit sufficient soldiers and to mount a military challenge to governments. But it means rebel leaders will lead a jumble of high and low commitment recruits – thanks to selective material benefits – without knowing enough about which are which.

Initial endowments affect internal organisation and rebel behaviour. Most dramatically, Weinstein argues that endowments determine atrocity. If Jack Hirshleifer, a pioneer of neo-classical economic theories of violent conflict, suggested that thanks to low opportunity costs the poor had a comparative advantage in violence, Weinstein provides a factor endowment theory of atrocity: the model is Hecksher-Ohlin to Hirshleifer’s Ricardo. Thus, chapter six explains patterns of violence across the case study insurgencies. In rebellions with high economic endowments, low commitment rebels (consumers) go on the rampage, looting, raping, slicing at and shooting civilians. Management has to put up with this to maintain the labour force of rebellion so the abuses go unpunished. Rebels get a bad reputation and civilians avoid them: they become more difficult to control. This encourages further abuse and the pattern is set. In resource-poor insurgencies this behaviour is both less likely – because of a higher share of investors among recruits – and when it does happen more likely to be punished – because of a tighter organisation relying more on relations with non-combatants.

Inside Rebellion is brilliantly done – clear, tightly argued, in good command of its cases, and nicely attuned, at the end, to possibilities for further research and analytical probing and to the relevance of the argument for international policy. Some of the most interesting passages are those that engage with the question of what happens – for example, to the FARC in Colombia or to UNITA in Angola – when endowments change; and those that briefly point out the implications of the book’s argument for the value of naming and shaming strategies or for international criminal courts.
Students and researchers will benefit greatly from this book, which will enrich scholarly and policy debates. A number of questions are likely to be raised as a result. The explanation of violence and atrocity, like so many studies, leaps from organisational rationality to the observation of outcomes: it leaves the reader none the wiser about why even low-commitment recruits or consumer-rebels are so vicious. Because of anti-civilian ideologies? Or because of a 'culture of violence'? Or something else? It is not clear how the model would illuminate, for example, the violence of the Spanish Civil War. Could the savagery of General Queipo de Llana, the cruelty of Franco himself and his early mentor, the beserk General Millán-Astray, or the violence of Lorca's killers in Granada really be explained by the fact that the Germans and Italians came to the Nationalists' aid financially while European democracies dithered behind a veil of non-interference? How do we explain the way these rebel leaders and followers were both investors and consumers? How can Republican communist and anarchist viciousness be explained? There are plenty of more recent examples, in which the violence of rebel groups is at least partly a function not of low-commitment rebels poorly controlled by central leaders but of the violence of leaders, their ideologies, and their treatment of lowly recruits.

There are also other ways of exploring the organisational sociology of insurgency, including the Durkheimian 'grid-group' matrix allowing for different combinations of institutional lock-in (rules) and institutional bonding, explored by Fithen and Richards in No Peace No War. The book does not help think through the way access to resource rent may help insurgent groups to invest in cultivating social resources of local legitimacy, for in Afghanistan, Angola and elsewhere economic and social resources have been complements rather than only substitutes.

Nor does the book really engage with the origins of insurgency. Is it always the case that prospective rebel entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market and then calculate which resources they can draw on to organise rebellions, rather than rebellion emerging from protracted social processes, in which violent uprising may be a contested option among a number? Might rebel behaviour be linked to the political economy of areas where it emerges? This might involve complex variations in how labour is mobilised or land allocated, and how these are regulated by institutions of local power. Finally, the richest way to explore the arguments of this book further might be through a different case selection, where there might be more intriguing combinations of economic resources and social ties, where atrocity and legitimacy have both been present, and where, perhaps as with the RUF in Sierra Leone, it was perhaps not so much the resource curse of diamonds that explained atrocity as the 'endowment' or history of fiercely felt social experiences of relational abuse and exclusion among many young people.


By the time that this review is published most people with a serious interest in the Cameroon Grassfields should already have a copy of Nicolas Argenti’s new and innovative monograph on their shelves. This relatively small upland area in the West and Northwest Provinces of Cameroon has always attracted considerable academic attention because of its rich material culture and complex political
history. Yet books on the Grassfields of this quality and substance are still rare, so this text will quickly take its place alongside the works by Jean-Pierre Warnier and Miriam Goheen and the edited volume by Iain Fowler and David Zeitlyn as absolutely compulsory reading for anyone interested in the area. In many ways this book is a much more exacting read than those volumes, but it repays the effort.

Although this is an ethnography that draws its authority from the intensity of Argenti’s specific fieldwork in the small polity of Oku and his subtle interpretations of the origin myths (chapter 2), witchcraft beliefs (chapter 3) masks, dances and dance associations (chapters 4 to 8) there, it develops a series of extremely bold arguments, which will provoke a much wider audience than just those with a concern for the Grassfields or Cameroon. Argenti’s canvas is ambitious: the book engages any reader interested in questions of the social category ‘youth’, of violence and its legacies, of historicity and memory and of the interpretation of dance. Indeed, given how much of the empirical material in the book is concerned with an analysis of dances, masks and dance associations in Oku it was odd that there is no mention of dance in the book’s subtitle. Argenti’s aim is ‘to analyze from an anthropological standpoint the ways in which the past continues to inform social relations between youth and elites in the present’ (p. 34). Chief amongst these is the way that the legacy of slavery remains important.

Amidst the smug self-congratulations of the 2007 anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade it is good to be reminded of the anarchic violence and genocidal brutality in the ‘human hunting grounds’ that were at the start of the slave commodity chain. The Grassfields were one such place. Central to the book’s argument is the claim that the social consequences of the West African slave trade in the hinterlands where slaves were captured remain relevant today and govern the relationship between youth and elites. If at times this argument seems a little over-determined it is forgivable given that the other explanations for the contemporary antagonism of this social relationship are over-familiar to the point of being hackneyed. If Argenti overstates his case it is perhaps because it is such a distinctive claim.

The book is undoubtedly a significant and substantial contribution to a number of current debates, but (for a number of reasons) it is not an easy read. First, the story it tells and the argument it develops is a profoundly depressing one. From slavery to colonial forced labour to venal post-colonial state, the ‘youth’ of Oku have endured three centuries of systematic exploitation and rank cruelty. Argenti is clinical in his denunciation of all of these forms of domination and his condemnation of the small group of ‘elites’ (who perpetually stand opposite the ‘youth’ and enjoy the benefits that are the concomitant consequence of their suffering) leaves little space for imagining a future rapprochement – although some ideas do emerge in the final chapter. Argenti never romanticises the reaction of ‘youth’ to oppression or talks of resistance, rather he draws on a vocabulary of ‘ambiguity’ and ‘mimesis’ to articulate what the youth can do through dance in response to their powerlessness. Second, it is not an easy read because Argenti’s arguments about historicity and memory require that it must not be an easy read. There is a theoretically justified determination to resist the emergence of a simple chronological explanatory narrative. The aim (as I understand it) is to prevent his record of events from becoming the record and therefore a memorial (a bad thing in Argenti’s terms because it would suit the elite by providing an end to history) rather than an articulation of the meaning of memory (a good thing because it constantly reminds the elite of their history/ culpability). The essence of dance is that it says this without words so it is important (from Argenti’s theoretical-political perspective)
that the subject of the book remains unspoken – which is obviously a challenge for a writer. The beauty of dance from Argenti’s point of view is that it speaks the unspoken (which is why it holds such fascination for advocates of non-representational theory). People in Oku do not talk about the legacy of slavery so research methods that rely on talk-data are of no use in supporting his claim. Interpretations of dance fill the gap. But the danger of building an argument on the absence of spoken evidence is that it is very difficult for Argenti to be wrong or rather to be shown to be wrong. In many cases of ethnography readers rely on the interpretation of the ethnographer, but in this instance it becomes more than usually clear that there is little scope for challenging the interpretation.

Third, this is a densely conceptual work that draws on a very wide range of social theory (Freud, Bhabha, Derrida, Lyotard etc.), and despite Argenti’s lyrical and passionate prose style, the conceptual subtleties and virtuoso vocabulary make it a read that requires plenty of time, sustained concentration and a good dictionary. The protestant missionaries from Basel, the first missionaries to reach the Grassfields, would no doubt reassure us that the labour of tackling this text is integral to reaping the many rich rewards it offers. For those of us with less theological inclinations it is the combination of original insights, theoretical ambition and empirical detail that make this such an enthralling, if demanding, text.

This book interrogates the current orthodoxy ‘that corruption is an anathema to development’, which is the central tenet of the recent anti-corruption campaigns of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other unilateral donors (pp. 7–8). The edited volume is an assemblage of critical examinations of the anti-corruption campaigns, in various locales and sectors. It is enriched by contributions from academic fields including geography, development studies, political science, economics, international relations and law – with yet other contributions from practitioners. This breadth is also echoed in the spread of geographical locations examined, which range from Nigeria, the Philippines, Georgia to Nicaragua and others. Given this wide scope it is not surprising that the book emphasises the plurality of anti-corruption experiences, and argues that the effects of the anti-corruption campaigns need to be understood within the political and cultural context in which they are implemented (p. 17). The book highlights inconsistencies between the local experience of the anti-corruption campaigns and the IFIs’ technocratic universalised interpretation of the issue and criticises the application of the same brand of prescriptions ‘from Nigeria to Bulgaria’ (p. 28).

However, the argument is not one for localism. The importance of the international context in which the anti-corruption campaigns arose – even as their effects are felt variously – emerges throughout the volume. Ivanov argues that the origins of the anti-corruption campaigns lie ‘in the interests of the US government, multinational companies and multilateral donors’ (p. 29). In a similar vein, the geo-politics which govern the IFIs’ unequal application of anti-corruption policies is central to Brown, Cloke and Rocha’s analysis of anti-corruption in Nicaragua (pp. 182–201). Moreover, in her chapter on corruption in the Philippines, Co argues that the legacy of colonisation and international inequalities are key to the production of Pilipino corruption (p. 123). Bracking’s


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own chapter offers the most in-depth analysis of the international in the book. Her chapter situates the anti-corruption campaigns within international power relations and explores the contradictions that these relations produce in development finance. She highlights how discourses of corruption ‘fix its meanings spatially, with coordinates within related ideas of race, space and nationality’ and so act to structure the international (p. 252).

Central to all the arguments in the book, both those that explore global power relations and local politics, is the relations between corruption and development. Hall-Mathews’ examination of President Mutharika of Malawi’s anti-corruption campaign, for example, reveals that the equation of anti-corruption measures and development allowed him to ‘claim to be pro-development by the fact of making arrests per se’ (p. 82). Moreover, many of the activities of Mutharika’s anti-corruption drive were arguably only targeted at undermining his political opponents. Anti-corruption measures in Malawi thus distracted and detracted from development priorities, rather than furthering them. Hall-Mathew’s conclusion is that corruption is only one issue for development and not necessarily the most significant one (p. 98). The role of the anti-corruption campaign in Malawi in obscuring Mutharika’s political goals is comprehended within the volume as only one example of how the foregrounding of corruption acts to obfuscate. This conceals not only political machinations, but also global inequalities and even the failures of the IMF and World Bank policies (p. 31). This chimerical nature of the anti-corruption campaigns, the book contends, also acts to obscure the gaps between the global and local discourses and Northern states’ culpability for corruption (pp. 28, 303).

The book achieves the objective stated by Bracking, namely to ‘critically review policy and practice in the field of corruption and anti-corruption’ (p. 17). The plurality of the chapters, all of which stand alone, is a great strength of the book and individual chapters may be of great interest to area specialists or, as in the case of Alolo’s work on gender and corruption in Ghana, to scholars with particular research foci. The conclusions of the book and a number of the chapters build on this critical review to problematise the orthodox conception of the relations between corruption and development. The pervasiveness of this orthodoxy in development thinking makes this book a significant critical contribution.
to perform what Robert Wade (1997) has called the “Gramsci effect” (p. 27). Thus, central to the analysis are questions such as: how does the World Bank convince others to accept, and at times enthusiastically embrace, its policies and practices? How does the Bank respond to major challenges to its orthodoxy? How does it manufacture moral and intellectual leadership within the development industry? (p. 27). While not all contributors adhere to the Gramscian tradition, there is certainly a strong current throughout the book that aims to deconstruct and challenge the Bank’s hegemonic notions of development. The Gramscian conception of hegemony provides a crucial lens through which to view the Bank’s discourse and practice, and adds theoretical rigour to the volume.

Moore has re-published several classic texts on the World Bank for this volume (e.g. Robert Wade’s 1996 article in New Left Review on the ‘East Asian miracle’), some in their original form, others moderately or substantially revised for this book. These influential pieces are combined with several original chapters for the book addressing more contemporary issues, and written by ‘new entrants taking the field of what could be labelled “World Bank studies” into uncharted territory’ (p. viii). The book covers an impressive range of topics, including the Bank’s discourses around social capital, sustainable development, participation/ownership, good governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, Moore ends with a provocative chapter written by Patrick Bond calling for the abolition of the Bank, which is based on various positions and perspectives from radical ‘civil society’ formations. The book’s 16 chapters provide an excellent source of information – in one place – for those interested in accessing critical approaches to studying the Bank.

Despite the successful project accomplished by Moore, at least two critical points need to be mentioned regarding the volume. First, and most importantly, the book lacks feminist analysis of the World Bank. In light of the devastating, and disproportionate, consequences of Structural Adjustment for women in the ‘developing’ world, at least one or two chapters written from a feminist perspective would have helped to provide a more complete critique. Feminist critiques of the Bank have constituted some of the most articulate, sophisticated and consistent attempts by scholars and activists to challenge its neoliberal orthodoxy. Moreover, based on the editor’s statement that ‘…it is time to gather together the last decade and a half’s radical analytical assessments of the world’s most visible development institution’ (p. viii), the absence of a feminist critique appears to be a glaring, and potentially debilitating, omission.

Secondly, Moore is highly dismissive in his own chapters of the post-structural theoretical position on several of the issues under question. Although disagreeing on a theoretical and practical level with others is healthy and productive in many ways, Moore does so in a manner that does not truly engage with this perspective. He mentions post-structuralism very briefly, painting a crude caricature of its approach, only to tear down the straw man in due course. If a critique of post-structuralism is to be presented, then it is only appropriate that a more substantial and rigorous engagement with this perspective be elaborated.

Notwithstanding the criticisms raised above, this volume serves as a valuable resource for students, scholars, and activists who are interested in understanding the rhetorical shifts of the Bank during the past 15 years, and potential strategies for struggling against the current hegemony of the Bank.

Immigration from Africa to Europe is a historical phenomenon with important socio-economic and political implications for both continents. Although during the colonial period some level of human movement from the colonies to Europe was allowed, decolonisation brought this type of immigration to an end. Since then, any type of migration has been increasingly politicised in the European political arena. The politicisation of migration was also reflected in the international relations of the EU, particularly with Africa. As can be seen in both the Cotonou Agreement (2000) and the European Neighbourhood Policy with North African countries (2003), the management of immigration constitutes the hot spot of the politics of Euro-African relations. Africa and Fortress Europe aims to study this relationship in context of immigration, thus contributing to the Euro-African literature on relations by bringing the immigration dynamic into the discussion.

This engaging collection includes significantly diverse perspectives from scholars of economics, political science and international relations to practitioners who are currently working for EU-level agencies, including Frontex. The book is structured in two parts, with the first focusing on the contemporary political and economic situations in different regions of Africa and how these have become push factors for individuals. The second part focuses on EU-level responses from the Eurocrats to the legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. In this sense, Africa and Fortress Europe is a subtle collection which analyses the Euro-African relations in the context of immigration from both African and European perspectives. The general argument of the book is that the immigration problem should be tackled by African and European actors by focusing on an infamous dictum, “African solutions to African problems”.

The book discusses important issues. The analysis by Kohnert is the most comprehensive chapter, examining the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. It focuses on both socio-political and economic reasons for migration by questioning the rising xenophobia in the Maghreb countries towards immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (p. 42) and European attempts to convert North Africa into a buffer zone with ‘reception centres’ (p. 45). Both are attention-grabbing points that highlight how much European policies have determining and constitutive effects on Africa in the context of immigration. Unfortunately, not all contributors’ analyses are conducted in this particular context, as some studies only briefly mention immigration towards the end of their investigations.

Another criticism of the book is that it does not take the opportunity to connect a political-security analysis to the economic analysis. This separation results in a type of analysis, exemplified by Exenberger’s chapter, that examines the issue from an economic perspective which assumes the existence of ‘rational’ and ‘profit-maximising’ immigrants. This examination disregards the economic conditions under which individuals are forced to migrate. It is questionable to what extent migration in and from Africa is about a rational economic choice, if it is about ‘a choice’ at all. In addition, this type of analysis risks legitimising the rhetoric in Europe that African immigrants are coming to ‘take our jobs away’. Unfortunately, the Hendricks’ chapter on human security in Africa does not adequately address this issue and fails to fully illustrate the economic dimension of political crises.

While the chapters are well constructed, the explanatory framework is not sufficiently
grounded theoretically. Two points are striking. First, the concept of 'Fortress Europe' is not evaluated. None of the contributors, except the Frontex Director, Laitinen, questions the concept. The historically constructed nature of politics should have been brought into the discussion to explain why Europe has become a 'fortress' to African immigrants, and why it is not a fortress to, say, Eastern European or North American immigrants. This might be also related to the concept of 'Islamophobia', which is repeatedly mentioned, but never developed. No chapter attempts to analyse or problematise this potentially important concept.

These underdeveloped issues leave question marks, one of which concerns the concept of 'threat'. In the concluding chapter, Gebrewold suggests that readers differentiate between 'perceived' and 'real' threats (p. 173). This approach is understandable in a literature where immigration cannot be thought of without 'securitisation', which is the 'common sense' theory of immigration at present. However, if the name of the first part of the book is 'Threats from Africa' and if, throughout the chapters, the authors analyse different 'threats', it is essential for an editor to give a coherent account of 'threat'. Many questions might have been asked: Are the threats 'real' or 'perceived'? Perceived by whom? Real for whom? Are 'perceived' threats not 'real'?

The last weak point of the book is its state-centricism. In almost all of the chapters, civil society movements in Africa are neglected in favour of inter-governmental organisations. It is another question why NGOs do not appear as alternative political agencies in Africa where both governmental and inter-governmental structures have suffered from various deficiencies. Therefore, the general argument of the book, 'African solutions to African problems', should be strengthened.

To conclude, Africa and Fortress Europe is a significant starting point, albeit with shortcomings, for understanding Euro-African relations in the context of immigration. Given the fact that both the crises in Africa and European responses to immigration, such as Frontex, have become 'real' security threats for those Africans who are caught in between human traffickers and European border patrols, this is a pressing political issue.


Vera Chirwa’s remarkable book takes the reader to deep insights into political struggles and the meaning of freedom in Malawi. While it is a personal account demonstrating her selflessness, perseverance and hope in bringing freedom and justice to Malawi, the story reveals an important political history of the country. The story brings to light the struggles that Malawian political fighters encountered in their quest to bring freedom and justice to the country, from the fight against colonialism, federation and racism during the colonial administration to the fight against the dictatorial one party regime, under which many political opponents were subjected to inhumane treatment through unfair trials, long periods of detention without trial and in some cases unexplained deaths. The story also highlights the harsh realities and sacrifices that Vera, as a woman, a mother and a wife, had to go through in order to achieve her ambitions and

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accomplish what she and her husband, Orton Chirwa, believed in.

In the first four sections Vera brings to light how the transition from colonial government to independence created the dictatorial regime through the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi’s first President. Through power struggles and in an effort to legitimise his position, Banda is shown to have developed a mentality of viewing himself as unquestionable, tolerating no critique. This attitude led to the cabinet crisis of 1964, due to policy differences between the leader, some of the ministers, as well as prominent figures such as Vera and Orton Chirwa. Through these political persecutions, the self-rule that many fought for became their worst nightmare. The three sections that follow narrate a story of her family in exile and how she established her career and became the first woman lawyer in southern Africa. It also highlights their passion in politics as a couple wherever they went and how their children suffered and faced many challenges during these struggles of political power. After almost two decades in exile, the couple were abducted back to Malawi, convicted on the grounds of planning to topple Banda’s Government, and sentenced to death through a traditional court. Despite the death sentence, torture, unjust treatment and long period of separation from her husband and children, Vera maintained her will to live.

Back in society in 1993, after over a decade of imprisonment and unfortunately not with her husband who died in 1992, she actively dedicated herself to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights in Malawi. Her account shows how, through leading the transition to a democratic government, Bakili Muluzi fell into the same trap of the desire to cling to power by seeking to extend his terms of presidency and thereby threatening to take Malawi back into the political system that he and numerous others fought so hard to abolish. Vera’s book highlights the important challenges that face young democracies like Malawi. She notes the negative effects of a weak economy and poorly designed and implemented economic and social programmes on the advancement of democracy, and how the worsening conditions turned people to review the old days of the one party regime as better in meeting their needs. The argument is that the masses are still sceptical that democracy has managed to meet their needs as many had hoped for and were promised at the dawn of the era. As such, the temptation to view the old days as glorious is real for some people. In the new democratic era led by Muluzi, corruption has increased considerably while levels of discipline and people’s personal security has declined, making some Malawians uneasy about the new political set up. Vera concludes by highlighting how the political system in Malawi is democratic, but the leaders are not and how this threatens the full development of democracy in the country.

The core of the story is the life of Vera herself. It shows the two sides of Vera: a family person who cares deeply for her family, and a tough and resilient person who suffered and persevered despite political persecutions in all three political eras of Malawi. This remarkable story shows the inhumane treatment that she has suffered, while revealing her strength to stand up and fight for what she believed was right for Malaw and Malawians. Most startling is her ability to forgive those that made her suffer when she could seek justice. Furthermore, after 12 years in prison, Vera refused lucrative offers both abroad and at home as she still wanted to see her dreams come true by working to improve human rights, and making sure that she was in a position to be able to criticize leaders if they were not doing a good job.

However, in 2004 she expressed her interests to stand for the presidency. Here, unfortunately, there are not many details
regarding her change of ambitions from a freedom fighter to a presidential candidate. We are left with no clues as to how she planned to run the country and at the same time provide the much-needed critique to keep the presidency in check. In addition, we do not have much detail on how she cooperated with other opposition leaders in the period leading to the general elections of 2004 and the role she played after she dropped out of the contest for the top seat. It would have been good to have these details in order to appreciate how she envisioned her political future as a presidential figure and how different she would have been from the other leaders. The story being a personal one, it is perhaps understandable that the concepts of human rights and democracy are discussed as taken for granted concepts. For an academic audience, a more critical evaluation of these concepts could have opened up some fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, this is indeed an insightful account of the life of a fearless fighter, as well as of the political transformation and history of Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.


Rufus Norris’s production of Wole Soyinka’s Death and the King’s Horseman at the National Theatre was an arresting piece of theatre that demanded a second viewing simply because there was so much to feed the eye. The statue-filled stage that meets you on your entry into the Olivier Theatre immediately sets the tone for this journey into Yoruba existence and philosophy where the spirit world is an integral part of a very active belief system.

The setting is Oyo, Nigeria, 1943. Iyaloja, the leader of the market women’s stately entrance to ‘ignite’ the opening of this production, played with so much power and grace by Claire Benedict, situates our story in Abeokuta Market, the arena that serves as the ‘playground’ for the protagonist of this story. Elesin Oba, played by the imposing Nonso Anozie, is the King’s Horseman, who has a duty to accompany his dead Lord, the Alafin of Oyo, into the afterlife by committing ritual suicide. It is a duty that demands the ultimate sacrifice from the individual for the benefit of the community, a community that comes alive and inhabits the stage with song and dance, led by the Praise Singer (Giles Terera). The relationship between Elesin and his Praise Singer, articulated through highly poetic and proverbial language and supported by the women’s adoration of their ‘Horseman’ through flirtatious singing and dancing through the market place, keeps the audience engaged throughout the first half. This preparation for the journey into the world of the ancestors takes on a more earthly reality, quite removed from the ritual, when Elesin spots a maiden in whom he wants to plant his seed on this his last day on this earth. Act One closes with the arrangement of both a wedding and a funeral.

Act Two opens in the colonialist quarter, where Simon Pilkings, the British colonial officer, hears of the ritual suicide and decides to intervene by holding Elesin in custody, causing him to fail to perform this ritual which can only be done at a ‘specific time ordained by the cycle of the moon, so there is one night that he can do it and one night alone’. Meanwhile Olunde (Kobna Holbrook Smith), the son of Elesin who has returned from his studies in Britain to bury his father because he is aware of the implications of the traditional custom, is confounded when he becomes aware of the catastrophe

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about to occur and sacrifices himself in a bid to secure the spiritual well being of his people.

Norris’s bold choice to use an all black cast which resulted in the ‘whiting up’ of black actors to play the white colonialists released the humour within this text, for which utmost credit must go to Jenny Jules and Lucian Msamati, for their portrayal of these catalytic characters. Drawing from a Caribbean, African and British experience of white colonialists, these performers displayed the integrity of the colonialists, without caricaturing them, which would have reduced the work to a clash of cultures, which the writer warns against. Rather, this choice allows the production to complicate the reading of these characters, because of the glaring fact the words are being spoken by a black person with a white painted face. The multi-layered implications of this choice served as a constant reminder of whose story was being presented. This controversial choice offers a different perspective to this story, which is told, in effect, by the people it actually happened to. Norris’s subtle introduction of this idea came in the form of the whole cast of 31 taking the stage, in preparation of a story, where members of the ‘community’ are ‘made up’ to play specific characters within the tale. Essentially, signposts were provided which resulted in a big payoff when the Pilkings are revealed in Act Two. But ultimately, what Norris has done with this production is to provide a rare opportunity for the host culture of the West to see themselves as viewed by the ‘other’.

Visually, this production was a feast for the eyes. The first half was an unapologetic thrust into the ‘exotic’, particularly for a standard white National Theatre audience. The many songs and dances and the lyrical nature of the heightened conversation between Elesin and his Praise Singer with its expected pomp and pageantry exceeded my stereotypical expectations. Norris’s execution of this act was for me very measured and served the story rather than playing to the gallery, which could have been an easy choice.

What I have described as ‘the eye of the outsider’ was what stood out in this production. Coming to this production as an outsider in terms of heritage was perhaps a blessing in disguise, as it afforded the director the opportunity to learn and transfer that knowledge to an audience who are largely ignorant of Yoruba culture. The big tree in the centre of the market which then transforms into a skyline of bundles, the ingenious inhabited furniture, the constant cycle of movement on stage, sometimes barely noticeable, were manifestations of the essence of the spirit life of the Yoruba, not consciously written into the script. With the help of his designer Katrina Lindsay and choreographer Javier De Frutos, the gap was bridged between the two cultures, with Peter Badejo, the associate director/consultant as a much-valued guide. The storytelling form was a natural choice, which aided in the created world of the ensemble telling their story and evolving the environment themselves, literally. A thought-provoking, energised and daring production, which left me wanting more.
As developmental realities, policy and research all stumble unproductively along well worn and long contested tramlines, any intellectual venture that tries to do things differently is to be welcomed. This collection of essays, brought together by Onyekachi Wambu with the title Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa, certainly offers a fresh approach. It consists of a variety of contributions looking at issues of leadership, and not just political leadership, from a variety of perspectives: the historical, from the top down, from the bottom up, from the present to the future, from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. The book’s declared aim is to promote an open dialogue, located in the personal experience of the authors, ‘under the talking tree’, which aims to move us on from the fixed positions and embedded conflicts of the past. As such it should not be blamed for avoiding, for the most part, the type of explicit political comment that can strangle dialogue at birth. Nor should it be blamed, from an academic perspective, for not offering a comprehensive conceptualisation and definition of leadership. Given the current interest in ‘leadership’ that would be interesting but, again, might close the door on the dialogue the book aims to promote.

However, the book stands as a deliberate collection of essays around a theme and, as such, some concerns can be expressed about notions of leadership that are or are not addressed within its pages. One concerns the conceptualisation of ‘leadership’ as a function in and of itself. As Ali Mazrui usefully explains, there are many possible types and characteristics of leadership, which individual leaders may mix and match in the way they think may serve them best. However, both he and the book neglect to explore the representative function of leadership. In all but the most extreme circumstances, leaders are in fact representing some existing social and political forces, however unrepresentative these may be of a general population. It is surely through an exploration of the multiple facets of this representation that the relationship of the governing and the governed and the accountability of leaders – both stated concerns of the book – can be enhanced.

A second concern relates to who the leaders are to be. Several contributions talk, without additional reflection, of ‘emerging leaders’ and the book, published by a think-tank of the British Council, is related to a wider British Council project aimed at ‘networking and supporting the next generation of African leaders’. Who are these people? Are they simply bright young things with lots of energy and ideas? In which case, fine, but surely they should be supported in whatever direction they most want to serve the further development of their societies? Or are they people who define themselves as simply wanting to become leaders? If the latter, there are surely significant political issues relating to their selection, not least their class. Competence might also be an issue. Experience of real work in the societies they aimed to change was fundamental...
to the development of two great African leaders, Amilcar Cabral and Samora Machel, whose stories are once again not recognised in a collection largely emanating from Anglophone Africa. Yet it was Cabral who not only railed against the ‘ignorance of the historical reality which these movements [liberation movements in general] aspire to transform’ (Cabral 1980, p. 122), but based the strategy of his own country’s fight for freedom on the intimate knowledge of the whole country gained when, as an agricultural engineer, he had conducted an agricultural census of the country.

Questions about the precise combination of themes and contributions overall – were there no trade unionists or even retired generals willing to reflect on the issues raised? – should in no way detract from the individual contributions, all of which in some way shed new light or stimulate further thought on the issues they address. Some, such as a reflection on the leadership of women at the grassroots in the fight against AIDS by Martha Chinouya, or an insider’s/outsider’s look at the changing configurations of a Nigerian village by Onyeachi Wambu, are essentially case studies. Others such as ‘Time for Change’ by Ndidi Nwuneli, ‘Creating the Business Leaders of Tomorrow’ by Taddy Blecher and ‘2017: Empowering and Engendering the Future’ by Susan and Juliet Kiguli offer vignettes of what might or could be different. Eva Dadrian, Wangui wa Goro and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza address respectively the roles of journalism, translation and intellectual engagement, each fundamentally important to the integrity of the political and social environment in which any leadership can take place.

I am not myself sure how well all these contributions relate to ‘leadership’ either as I understand it or as the issue is framed in the many pertinent questions raised in the introduction. However, this probably does not matter. They certainly relate to identities and personal roles in processes of potential change in Africa and they offer many lessons and food for thought that might not have emerged through a more focused approach. Perhaps this is the difference between a conversation and a debate, and the reason the producers of the book chose the former route.

Reference


Researchers have been going through the tangled forms of wars in developing countries with a finer comb than that of large-N statistical studies. At their best, such studies combine research methods, engage in fieldwork and/or archival research, and test their shapely models with a refreshing clarity and honesty. It has become easier to appreciate that there are varieties of violent conflict and of rationalism. Inside Rebellion is very much in this vein.

Why do some insurgent groups seem committed to abuse and atrocity, while others appear to pursue a kinder rebellion? In Peru, why was one branch of a
rebellion so much more unrestrained in its violence than another? In answering the question, Weinstein shapes a hypothesis and a way of testing it from a host of influences. These include organisational sociology, new institutionalist economics, the largely gloomy ‘resource curse’ literature, and a concern with asymmetric information. But the book does not trot out the banalities of some of the sillier economics of conflict literature and, while it takes the opportunity for rebellion seriously, it does not presume that everyone is motivated exclusively by material gain. Rather, the main argument turns on how rebels deal with a series of organisational challenges that have been given too little attention in the literature: recruitment, control, governance, the use of violence and the need to demonstrate resilience. Through ‘thick description’, interviews and quantitative data, Weinstein explores the cases of the NRA in Uganda, Renamo in Mozambique, and the variation within Peru between the main Sendero Luminoso group and its regional committee in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Any aspiring rebel management has to mobilise resources to tackle these tasks. There are, Weinstein tells us, two types of resource endowment that help: economic endowments and social endowments. This distinction combines with another, between high and low commitment recruits, or between investors in and consumers of rebellion. Economic endowments are simpler to mobilise. Where rebels lack access to resource rents or external aid, they have to get embroiled in the slow and awkward business of cultivating ties of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity with local populations. Inconvenient as this may be, it primes rebels to respect non-combatants: organisation will be more centralised and disciplined, and civilian abuses are unlikely to escalate into a pattern of atrocity. If, however, rebels have access to economic endowments, they use them. This makes it easier to recruit sufficient soldiers and to mount a military challenge to governments. But it means rebel leaders will lead a jumble of high and low commitment recruits – thanks to selective material benefits – without knowing enough about which are which.

Initial endowments affect internal organisation and rebel behaviour. Most dramatically, Weinstein argues that endowments determine atrocity. If Jack Hirshleifer, a pioneer of neo-classical economic theories of violent conflict, suggested that thanks to low opportunity costs the poor had a comparative advantage in violence, Weinstein provides a factor endowment theory of atrocity: the model is Hecksher-Ohlin to Hirshleifer’s Ricardo. Thus, chapter six explains patterns of violence across the case study insurgencies. In rebellions with high economic endowments, low commitment rebels (consumers) go on the rampage, looting, raping, slicing at and shooting civilians. Management has to put up with this to maintain the labour force of rebellion so the abuses go unpunished. Rebels get a bad reputation and civilians avoid them: they become more difficult to control. This encourages further abuse and the pattern is set. In resource-poor insurgencies this behaviour is both less likely – because of a higher share of investors among recruits – and when it does happen more likely to be punished – because of a tighter organisation relying more on relations with non-combatants.

Inside Rebellion is brilliantly done – clear, tightly argued, in good command of its cases, and nicely attuned, at the end, to possibilities for further research and analytical probing and to the relevance of the argument for international policy. Some of the most interesting passages are those that engage with the question of what happens – for example, to the FARC in Colombia or to UNITA in Angola – when endowments change; and those that briefly point out the implications of the book’s argument for the value of naming and shaming strategies or for international criminal courts.
Students and researchers will benefit greatly from this book, which will enrich scholarly and policy debates. A number of questions are likely to be raised as a result. The explanation of violence and atrocity, like so many studies, leaps from organisational rationality to the observation of outcomes: it leaves the reader none the wiser about why even low-commitment recruits or consumer-rebels are so vicious. Because of anti-civilian ideologies? Or because of a ‘culture of violence’? Or something else? It is not clear how the model would illuminate, for example, the violence of the Spanish Civil War. Could the savagery of General Queipo de Llana, the cruelty of Franco himself and his early mentor, the beserk General Millán-Astray, or the violence of Lorca’s killers in Granada really be explained by the fact that the Germans and Italians came to the Nationalists’ aid financially while European democracies dithered behind a veil of non-interference? How do we explain the way these rebel leaders and followers were both investors and consumers? How can Republican communist and anarchist viciousness be explained? There are plenty of more recent examples, in which the violence of rebel groups is at least partly a function not of low-commitment rebels poorly controlled by central leaders but of the violence of leaders, their ideologies, and their treatment of lowly recruits.

There are also other ways of exploring the organisational sociology of insurgency, including the Durkheimian ‘grid-group’ matrix allowing for different combinations of institutional lock-in (rules) and institutional bonding, explored by Fithen and Richards in No Peace No War. The book does not help think through the way access to resource rent may help insurgent groups to invest in cultivating social resources of local legitimacy, for in Afghanistan, Angola and elsewhere economic and social resources have been complements rather than only substitutes.

Nor does the book really engage with the origins of insurgency. Is it always the case that prospective rebel entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market and then calculate which resources they can draw on to organise rebellions, rather than rebellion emerging from protracted social processes, in which violent uprising may be a contested option among a number? Might rebel behaviour be linked to the political economy of areas where it emerges? This might involve complex variations in how labour is mobilised or land allocated, and how these are regulated by institutions of local power. Finally, the richest way to explore the arguments of this book further might be through a different case selection, where there might be more intriguing combinations of economic resources and social ties, where atrocity and legitimacy have both been present, and where, perhaps as with the RUF in Sierra Leone, it was perhaps not so much the resource curse of diamonds that explained atrocity as the ‘endowment’ or history of fiercely felt social experiences of relational abuse and exclusion among many young people.


By the time that this review is published most people with a serious interest in the Cameroon Grassfields should already have a copy of Nicolas Argenti’s new and innovative monograph on their shelves. This relatively small upland area in the West and Northwest Provinces of Cameroon has always attracted considerable academic attention because of its rich material culture and complex political
history. Yet books on the Grassfields of this quality and substance are still rare, so this text will quickly take its place alongside the works by Jean-Pierre Warnier and Miriam Goheen and the edited volume by Iain Fowler and David Zeitlyn as absolutely compulsory reading for anyone interested in the area. In many ways this book is a much more exacting read than those volumes, but it repays the effort.

Although this is an ethnography that draws its authority from the intensity of Argenti’s specific fieldwork in the small polity of Oku and his subtle interpretations of the origin myths (chapter 2), witchcraft beliefs (chapter 3) masks, dances and dance associations (chapters 4 to 8) there, it develops a series of extremely bold arguments, which will provoke a much wider audience than just those with a concern for the Grassfields or Cameroon. Argenti’s canvas is ambitious: the book engages any reader interested in questions of the social category ‘youth’, of violence and its legacies, of historicity and memory and of the interpretation of dance. Indeed, given how much of the empirical material in the book is concerned with an analysis of dances, masks and dance associations in Oku it was odd that there is no mention of dance in the book’s subtitle. Argenti’s aim is ‘to analyze from an anthropological standpoint the ways in which the past continues to inform social relations between youth and elites in the present’ (p. 34). Chief amongst these is the way that the legacy of slavery remains important.

Amidst the smug self-congratulations of the 2007 anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade it is good to be reminded of the anarchic violence and genocidal brutality in the ‘human hunting grounds’ that were at the start of the slave commodity chain. The Grassfields were one such place. Central to the book’s argument is the claim that the social consequences of the West African slave trade in the hinterlands where slaves were captured remain relevant today and govern the relationship between youth and elites. If at times this argument seems a little over-determined it is forgivable given that the other explanations for the contemporary antagonism of this social relationship are over-familiar to the point of being hackneyed. If Argenti overstates his case it is perhaps because it is such a distinctive claim.

The book is undoubtedly a significant and substantial contribution to a number of current debates, but (for a number of reasons) it is not an easy read. First, the story it tells and the argument it develops is a profoundly depressing one. From slavery to colonial forced labour to venal post-colonial state, the ‘youth’ of Oku have endured three centuries of systematic exploitation and rank cruelty. Argenti is clinical in his denunciation of all of these forms of domination and his condemnation of the small group of ‘elites’ (who perpetually stand opposite the ‘youth’ and enjoy the benefits that are the concomitant consequence of their suffering) leaves little space for imagining a future rapprochement – although some ideas do emerge in the final chapter. Argenti never romanticises the reaction of ‘youth’ to oppression or talks of resistance, rather he draws on a vocabulary of ‘ambiguity’ and ‘mimesis’ to articulate what the youth can do through dance in response to their powerlessness.

Second, it is not an easy read because Argenti’s arguments about historicity and memory require that it must not be an easy read. There is a theoretically justified determination to resist the emergence of a simple chronological explanatory narrative. The aim (as I understand it) is to prevent his record of events from becoming the record and therefore a memorial (a bad thing in Argenti’s terms because it would suit the elite by providing an end to history) rather than an articulation of the meaning of memory (a good thing because it constantly reminds the elite of their history/culpability). The essence of dance is that it says this without words so it is important (from Argenti’s theoretical-political perspective)
that the subject of the book remains unspoken – which is obviously a challenge for a writer. The beauty of dance from Argenti’s point of view is that it speaks the unspoken (which is why it holds such fascination for advocates of non-representational theory). People in Oku do not talk about the legacy of slavery so research methods that rely on talk-data are of no use in supporting his claim. Interpretations of dance fill the gap. But the danger of building an argument on the absence of spoken evidence is that it is very difficult for Argenti to be wrong or rather to be shown to be wrong. In many cases of ethnography readers rely on the interpretation of the ethnographer, but in this instance it becomes more than usually clear that there is little scope for challenging the interpretation.

Third, this is a densely conceptual work that draws on a very wide range of social theory (Freud, Bhabha, Derrida, Lyotard etc.), and despite Argenti’s lyrical and passionate prose style, the conceptual subtleties and virtuoso vocabulary make it a read that requires plenty of time, sustained concentration and a good dictionary. The protestant missionaries from Basel, the first missionaries to reach the Grassfields, would no doubt reassure us that the labour of tackling this text is integral to reaping the many rich rewards it offers. For those of us with less theological inclinations it is the combination of original insights, theoretical ambition and empirical detail that make this such an enthralling, if demanding, text.


This book interrogates the current orthodoxy ‘that corruption is an anathema to development’, which is the central tenet of the recent anti-corruption campaigns of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other unilateral donors (pp. 7–8). The edited volume is an assemblage of critical examinations of the anti-corruption campaigns, in various locales and sectors. It is enriched by contributions from academic fields including geography, development studies, political science, economics, international relations and law – with yet other contributions from practitioners. This breadth is also echoed in the spread of geographical locations examined, which range from Nigeria, the Philippines, Georgia to Nicaragua and others. Given this wide scope it is not surprising that the book emphasises the plurality of anti-corruption experiences, and argues that the effects of the anti-corruption campaigns need to be understood within the political and cultural context in which they are implemented (p. 17).

The book highlights inconsistencies between the local experience of the anti-corruption campaigns and the IFIs’ technocratic universalised interpretation of the issue and criticises the application of the same brand of prescriptions ‘from Nigeria to Bulgaria’ (p. 28).

However, the argument is not one for localism. The importance of the international context in which the anti-corruption campaigns arose – even as their effects are felt variously – emerges throughout the volume. Ivanov argues that the origins of the anti-corruption campaigns lie “in the interests of the US government, multinational companies and multilateral donors’ (p. 29). In a similar vein, the geo-politics which govern the IFIs’ unequal application of anti-corruption policies is central to Brown, Cloke and Rocha’s analysis of anti-corruption in Nicaragua (pp. 182–201). Moreover, in her chapter on corruption in the Philippines, Co argues that the legacy of colonisation and international inequalities are key to the production of Pilipino corruption (p. 123). Bracking’s
own chapter offers the most in-depth analysis of the international in the book. Her chapter situates the anti-corruption campaigns within international power relations and explores the contradictions that these relations produce in development finance. She highlights how discourses of corruption ‘fix its meanings spatially, with coordinates within related ideas of race, space and nationality’ and so act to structure the international (p. 252).

Central to all the arguments in the book, both those that explore global power relations and local politics, is the relations between corruption and development. Hall-Mathews’ examination of President Mutharika of Malawi’s anti-corruption campaign, for example, reveals that the equation of anti-corruption measures and development allowed him to ‘claim to be pro-development by the fact of making arrests per se’ (p. 82). Moreover, many of the activities of Mutharika’s anti-corruption drive were arguably only targeted at undermining his political opponents. Anti-corruption measures in Malawi thus distracted and detracted from development priorities, rather than furthering them. Hall-Mathew’s conclusion is that corruption is only one issue for development and not necessarily the most significant one (p. 98). The role of the anti-corruption campaign in Malawi in obscuring Mutharika’s political goals is comprehended within the volume as only one example of how the foregrounding of corruption acts to obfuscate. This conceals not only political machinations, but also global inequalities and even the failures of the IMF and World Bank policies (p. 31). This chimerical nature of the anti-corruption campaigns, the book contends, also acts to obscure the gaps between the global and local discourses and Northern states’ culpability for corruption (pp. 28, 303).

The book achieves the objective stated by Bracking, namely to ‘critically review policy and practice in the field of corruption and anti-corruption’ (p. 17). The plurality of the chapters, all of which stand alone, is a great strength of the book and individual chapters may be of great interest to area specialists or, as in the case of Alolo’s work on gender and corruption in Ghana, to scholars with particular research foci. The conclusions of the book and a number of the chapters build on this critical review to problematise the orthodox conception of the relations between corruption and development. The pervasiveness of this orthodoxy in development thinking makes this book a significant critical contribution.


This collection is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the ongoing critical analysis of the World Bank’s activities during the past 15 years. David Moore presents a thoughtful and accessible edited volume that covers a broad range of topics related to the Bank’s neoliberal hegemonic project. Following the Bank’s discursive twists and turns throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the various chapters challenge the organisation’s attempts to persuade the outside world that a kinder, gentler approach to development has been adopted after the failure of Structural Adjustment.

The book begins by Moore establishing the theoretical framework guiding the volume. His Gramscian understanding of hegemony and counter-hegemony provide the inspiration for compiling the chapters, and Moore claims that the book ‘...is about how the World Bank attempts

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to perform what Robert Wade (1997) has called the “Gramsci effect” (p. 27). Thus, central to the analysis are questions such as: how does the World Bank convince others to accept, and at times enthusiastically embrace, its policies and practices? How does the Bank respond to major challenges to its orthodoxy? How does it manufacture moral and intellectual leadership within the development industry? (p. 27). While not all contributors adhere to the Gramscian tradition, there is certainly a strong current throughout the book that aims to deconstruct and challenge the Bank’s hegemonic notions of development. The Gramscian conception of hegemony provides a crucial lens through which to view the Bank’s discourse and practice, and adds theoretical rigour to the volume.

Moore has re-published several classic texts on the World Bank for this volume (e.g. Robert Wade’s 1996 article in New Left Review on the ‘East Asian miracle’), some in their original form, others moderately or substantially revised for this book. These influential pieces are combined with several original chapters for the book addressing more contemporary issues, and written by ‘new entrants taking the field of what could be labelled “World Bank studies” into uncharted territory’ (p. viii). The book covers an impressive range of topics, including the Bank’s discourses around social capital, sustainable development, participation/ownership, good governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, Moore ends with a provocative chapter written by Patrick Bond calling for the abolition of the Bank, which is based on various positions and perspectives from radical ‘civil society’ formations. The book’s 16 chapters provide an excellent source of information – in one place – for those interested in accessing critical approaches to studying the Bank.

Despite the successful project accomplished by Moore, at least two critical points need to be mentioned regarding the volume. First, and most importantly, the book lacks feminist analysis of the World Bank. In light of the devastating, and disproportionate, consequences of Structural Adjustment for women in the ‘developing’ world, at least one or two chapters written from a feminist perspective would have helped to provide a more complete critique. Feminist critiques of the Bank have constituted some of the most articulate, sophisticated and consistent attempts by scholars and activists to challenge its neoliberal orthodoxy. Moreover, based on the editor’s statement that ‘…it is time to gather together the last decade and a half’s radical analytical assessments of the world’s most visible development institution’ (p. viii), the absence of a feminist critique appears to be a glaring, and potentially debilitating, omission.

Secondly, Moore is highly dismissive in his own chapters of the post-structural theoretical position on several of the issues under question. Although disagreeing on a theoretical and practical level with others is healthy and productive in many ways, Moore does so in a manner that does not truly engage with this perspective. He mentions post-structuralism very briefly, painting a crude caricature of its approach, only to tear down the straw man in due course. If a critique of post-structuralism is to be presented, then it is only appropriate that a more substantial and rigorous engagement with this perspective be elaborated.

Notwithstanding the criticisms raised above, this volume serves as a valuable resource for students, scholars, and activists who are interested in understanding the rhetorical shifts of the Bank during the past 15 years, and potential strategies for struggling against the current hegemony of the Bank.
Immigration from Africa to Europe is a historical phenomenon with important socio-economic and political implications for both continents. Although during the colonial period some level of human movement from the colonies to Europe was allowed, decolonisation brought this type of immigration to an end. Since then, any type of migration has been increasingly politicised in the European political arena. The politicisation of migration was also reflected in the international relations of the EU, particularly with Africa. As can be seen in both the Cotonou Agreement (2000) and the European Neighbourhood Policy with North African countries (2003), the management of immigration constitutes the hot spot of the politics of Euro-African relations. *Africa and Fortress Europe* aims to study this relationship in context of immigration, thus contributing to the Euro-African literature on relations by bringing the immigration dynamic into the discussion.

This engaging collection includes significantly diverse perspectives from scholars of economics, political science and international relations to practitioners who are currently working for EU-level agencies, including Frontex. The book is structured in two parts, with the first focusing on the contemporary political and economic situations in different regions of Africa and how these have become push factors for individuals. The second part focuses on EU-level responses from the Eurocrats to the legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. In this sense, *Africa and Fortress Europe* is a subtle collection which analyses the Euro-African relations in the context of immigration from both African and European perspectives. The general argument of the book is that the immigration problem should be tackled by African and European actors by focusing on an infamous dictum, “African solutions to African problems”.

The book discusses important issues. The analysis by Kohnert is the most comprehensive chapter, examining the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. It focuses on both socio-political and economic reasons for migration by questioning the rising xenophobia in the Maghreb countries towards immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (p. 42) and European attempts to convert North Africa into a buffer zone with ‘reception centres’ (p. 45). Both are attention-grabbing points that highlight how much European policies have determining and constitutive effects on Africa in the context of immigration. Unfortunately, not all contributors’ analyses are conducted in this particular context, as some studies only briefly mention immigration towards the end of their investigations.

Another criticism of the book is that it does not take the opportunity to connect a political-security analysis to the economic analysis. This separation results in a type of analysis, exemplified by Exenberger’s chapter, that examines the issue from an economic perspective which assumes the existence of ‘rational’ and ‘profit-maximising’ immigrants. This examination disregards the economic conditions under which individuals are forced to migrate. It is questionable to what extent migration in and from Africa is about a rational economic choice, if it is about ‘a choice’ at all. In addition, this type of analysis risks legitimising the rhetoric in Europe that African immigrants are coming to ‘take our jobs away’. Unfortunately, the Hendricks’ chapter on human security in Africa does not adequately address this issue and fails to fully illustrate the economic dimension of political crises.

While the chapters are well constructed, the explanatory framework is not sufficiently

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grounded theoretically. Two points are striking. First, the concept of ‘Fortress Europe’ is not evaluated. None of the contributors, except the Frontex Director, Laitinen, questions the concept. The historically constructed nature of politics should have been brought into the discussion to explain why Europe has become a ‘fortress’ to African immigrants, and why it is not a fortress to, say, Eastern European or North American immigrants. This might be also related to the concept of ‘Islamophobia’, which is repeatedly mentioned, but never developed. No chapter attempts to analyse or problematise this potentially important concept.

These underdeveloped issues leave question marks, one of which concerns the concept of ‘threat’. In the concluding chapter, Gebrewold suggests that readers differentiate between ‘perceived’ and ‘real’ threats (p. 173). This approach is understandable in a literature where immigration cannot be thought of without ‘securitisation’, which is the ‘common sense’ theory of immigration at present. However, if the name of the first part of the book is ‘Threats from Africa’ and if, throughout the chapters, the authors analyse different ‘threats’, it is essential for an editor to give a coherent account of ‘threat’. Many questions might have been asked: Are the threats ‘real’ or ‘perceived’? Perceived by whom? Real for whom? Are ‘perceived’ threats not ‘real’?

The last weak point of the book is its state-centrism. In almost all of the chapters, civil society movements in Africa are neglected in favour of inter-governmental organisations. It is another question why NGOs do not appear as alternative political agencies in Africa where both governmental and inter-governmental structures have suffered from various deficiencies. Therefore, the general argument of the book, ‘African solutions to African problems’, should be strengthened.

To conclude, Africa and Fortress Europe is a significant starting point, albeit with shortcomings, for understanding Euro-African relations in the context of immigration. Given the fact that both the crises in Africa and European responses to immigration, such as Frontex, have become ‘real’ security threats for those Africans who are caught in between human traffickers and European border patrols, this is a pressing political issue.

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Vera Chirwa’s remarkable book takes the reader to deep insights into political struggles and the meaning of freedom in Malawi. While it is a personal account demonstrating her selflessness, perseverance and hope in bringing freedom and justice to Malawi, the story reveals an important political history of the country. The story brings to light the struggles that Malawian political fighters encountered in their quest to bring freedom and justice to the country, from the fight against colonialism, federation and racism during the colonial administration to the fight against the dictatorial one party regime, under which many political opponents were subjected to inhumane treatment through unfair trials, long periods of detention without trial and in some cases unexplained deaths. The story also highlights the harsh realities and sacrifices that Vera, as a woman, a mother and a wife, had to go through in order to achieve her ambitions and
accomplish what she and her husband, Orton Chirwa, believed in.

In the first four sections Vera brings to light how the transition from colonial government to independence created the dictatorial regime through the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi's first President. Through power struggles and in an effort to legitimise his position, Banda is shown to have developed a mentality of viewing himself as unquestionable, tolerating no critique. This attitude led to the cabinet crisis of 1964, due to policy differences between the leader, some of the ministers, as well as prominent figures such as Vera and Orton Chirwa. Through these political persecutions, the self-rule that many fought for became their worst nightmare. The three sections that follow narrate a story of her family in exile and how she established her career and became the first woman lawyer in southern Africa. It also highlights their passion in politics as a couple wherever they went and how their children suffered and faced many challenges during these struggles of political power. After almost two decades in exile, the couple were abducted back to Malawi, convicted on the grounds of planning to topple Banda's Government, and sentenced to death through a traditional court. Despite the death sentence, torture, unjust treatment and long period of separation from her husband and children, Vera maintained her will to live.

Back in society in 1993, after over a decade of imprisonment and unfortunately not with her husband who died in 1992, she actively dedicated herself to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights in Malawi. Her account shows how, through leading the transition to a democratic government, Bakili Muluzi fell into the same trap of the desire to cling to power by seeking to extend his terms of presidency and thereby threatening to take Malawi back into the political system that he and numerous others fought so hard to abolish. Vera’s book highlights the important challenges that face young democracies like Malawi. She notes the negative effects of a weak economy and poorly designed and implemented economic and social programmes on the advancement of democracy, and how the worsening conditions turned people to review the old days of the one party regime as better in meeting their needs. The argument is that the masses are still sceptical that democracy has managed to meet their needs as many had hoped for and were promised at the dawn of the era. As such, the temptation to view the old days as glorious is real for some people. In the new democratic era led by Muluzi, corruption has increased considerably while levels of discipline and people’s personal security has declined, making some Malawians uneasy about the new political set up. Vera concludes by highlighting how the political system in Malawi is democratic, but the leaders are not and how this threatens the full development of democracy in the country.

The core of the story is the life of Vera herself. It shows the two sides of Vera: a family person who cares deeply for her family, and a tough and resilient person who suffered and persevered despite political persecutions in all three political eras of Malawi. This remarkable story shows the inhumane treatment that she has suffered, while revealing her strength to stand up and fight for what she believed was right for Malawi and Malawians. Most startling is her ability to forgive those that made her suffer when she could seek justice. Furthermore, after 12 years in prison, Vera refused lucrative offers both abroad and at home as she still wanted to see her dreams come true by working to improve human rights, and making sure that she was in a position to be able to criticize leaders if they were not doing a good job.

However, in 2004 she expressed her interests to stand for the presidency. Here, unfortunately, there are not many details
regarding her change of ambitions from a freedom fighter to a presidential candidate. We are left with no clues as to how she planned to run the country and at the same time provide the much-needed critique to keep the presidency in check. In addition, we do not have much detail on how she cooperated with other opposition leaders in the period leading to the general elections of 2004 and the role she played after she dropped out of the contest for the top seat. It would have been good to have these details in order to appreciate how she envisioned her political future as a presidential figure and how different she would have been from the other leaders. The story being a personal one, it is perhaps understandable that the concepts of human rights and democracy are discussed as taken for granted concepts. For an academic audience, a more critical evaluation of these concepts could have opened up some fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, this is indeed an insightful account of the life of a fearless fighter, as well as of the political transformation and history of Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.


Rufus Norris’s production of Wole Soyinka’s *Death and the King’s Horseman* at the National Theatre was an arresting piece of theatre that demanded a second viewing simply because there was so much to feed the eye. The statue-filled stage that meets you on your entry into the Olivier Theatre immediately sets the tone for this journey into Yoruba existence and philosophy where the spirit world is an integral part of a very active belief system.

The setting is Oyo, Nigeria, 1943. Iyaloja, the leader of the market women’s stately entrance to ‘ignite’ the opening of this production, played with so much power and grace by Claire Benedict, situates our story in Abeokuta Market, the arena that serves as the ‘playground’ for the protagonist of this story. Elesin Oba, played by the imposing Nonso Anozie, is the King’s Horseman, who has a duty to accompany his dead Lord, the Alafin of Oyo, into the afterlife by committing ritual suicide. It is a duty that demands the ultimate sacrifice from the individual for the benefit of the community, a community that comes alive and inhabits the stage with song and dance, led by the Praise Singer (Giles Terera). The relationship between Elesin and his Praise Singer, articulated through highly poetic and proverbial language and supported by the women’s adoration of their ‘Horseman’ through flirtatious singing and dancing through the market place, keeps the audience engaged throughout the first half. This preparation for the journey into the world of the ancestors takes on a more earthly reality, quite removed from the ritual, when Elesin spots a maiden in whom he wants to plant his seed on this his last day on this earth. Act One closes with the arrangement of both a wedding and a funeral.

Act Two opens in the colonialist quarter, where Simon Pilkings, the British colonial officer, hears of the ritual suicide and decides to intervene by holding Elesin in custody, causing him to fail to perform this ritual which can only be done at a ‘specific time ordained by the cycle of the moon, so there is one night that he can do it and one night alone’. Meanwhile Olunde (Kobna Holbrook Smith), the son of Elesin who has returned from his studies in Britain to bury his father because he is aware of the implications of the traditional custom, is confounded when he becomes aware of the catastrophe.

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about to occur and sacrifices himself in a bid to secure the spiritual well being of his people.

Norris’s bold choice to use an all black cast which resulted in the ‘whiting up’ of black actors to play the white colonialists released the humour within this text, for which utmost credit must go to Jenny Jules and Lucian Msamati, for their portrayal of these catalytic characters. Drawing from a Caribbean, African and British experience of white colonialists, these performers displayed the integrity of the colonialists, without caricaturing them, which would have reduced the work to a clash of cultures, which the writer warns against. Rather, this choice allows the production to complicate the reading of these characters, because of the glaring fact the words are being spoken by a black person with a white painted face. The multi-layered implications of this choice served as a constant reminder of whose story was being presented. This controversial choice offers a different perspective to this story, which is told, in effect, by the people it actually happened to. Norris’s subtle introduction of this idea came in the form of the whole cast of 31 taking the stage, in preparation of a story, where members of the ‘community’ are ‘made up’ to play specific characters within the tale. Essentially, signposts were provided which resulted in a big payoff when the Pilkings are revealed in Act Two. But ultimately, what Norris has done with this production is to provide a rare opportunity for the host culture of the West to see themselves as viewed by the ‘other’.

Visually, this production was a feast for the eyes. The first half was an unapologetic thrust into the ‘exotic’, particularly for a standard white National Theatre audience. The many songs and dances and the lyrical nature of the heightened conversation between Elesin and his Praise Singer with its expected pomp and pageantry exceeded my stereotypical expectations. Norris’s execution of this act was for me very measured and served the story rather than playing to the gallery, which could have been an easy choice.

What I have described as ‘the eye of the outsider’ was what stood out in this production. Coming to this production as an outsider in terms of heritage was perhaps a blessing in disguise, as it afforded the director the opportunity to learn and transfer that knowledge to an audience who are largely ignorant of Yoruba culture. The big tree in the centre of the market which then transforms into a skyline of bundles, the ingenious inhabited furniture, the constant cycle of movement on stage, sometimes barely noticeable, were manifestations of the essence of the spirit life of the Yoruba, not consciously written into the script. With the help of his designer Katrina Lindsay and choreographer Javier De Frutos, the gap was bridged between the two cultures, with Peter Badejo, the associate director/consultant as a much-valued guide. The storytelling form was a natural choice, which aided in the created world of the ensemble telling their story and evolving the environment themselves, literally. A thought-provoking, energised and daring production, which left me wanting more.
Book Reviews


As developmental realities, policy and research all stumble unproductively along well worn and long contested tramlines, any intellectual venture that tries to do things differently is to be welcomed. This collection of essays, brought together by Onyekachi Wambu with the title Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa, certainly offers a fresh approach. It consists of a variety of contributions looking at issues of leadership, and not just political leadership, from a variety of perspectives: the historical, from the top down, from the bottom up, from the present to the future, from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. The book’s declared aim is to promote an open dialogue, located in the personal experience of the authors, ‘under the talking tree’, which aims to move us on from the fixed positions and embedded conflicts of the past. As such it should not be blamed for avoiding, for the most part, the type of explicit political comment that can strangle dialogue at birth. Nor should it be blamed, from an academic perspective, for not offering a comprehensive conceptualisation and definition of leadership. Given the current interest in ‘leadership’ that would be interesting but, again, might close the door on the dialogue the book aims to promote.

However, the book stands as a deliberate collection of essays around a theme and, as such, some concerns can be expressed about notions of leadership that are or are not addressed within its pages. One concerns the conceptualisation of ‘leadership’ as a function in and of itself. As Ali Mazrui usefully explains, there are many possible types and characteristics of leadership, which individual leaders may mix and match in the way they think may serve them best. However, both he and the book neglect to explore the representative function of leadership. In all but the most extreme circumstances, leaders are in fact representing some existing social and political forces, however unrepresentative these may be of a general population. It is surely through an exploration of the multiple facets of this representation that the relationship of the governing and the governed and the accountability of leaders – both stated concerns of the book – can be enhanced.

A second concern relates to who the leaders are to be. Several contributions talk, without additional reflection, of ‘emerging leaders’ and the book, published by a think-tank of the British Council, is related to a wider British Council project aimed at ‘networking and supporting the next generation of African leaders’. Who are these people? Are they simply bright young things with lots of energy and ideas? In which case, fine, but surely they should be supported in whatever direction they most want to serve the further development of their societies? Or are they people who define themselves as simply wanting to become leaders? If the latter, there are surely significant political issues relating to their selection, not least their class. Competence might also be an issue. Experience of real work in the societies they aimed to change was fundamental...
to the development of two great African leaders, Amílcar Cabral and Samora Machel, whose stories are once again not recognised in a collection largely emanating from Anglophone Africa. Yet it was Cabral who not only railed against the ‘ignorance of the historical reality which these movements [liberation movements in general] aspire to transform’ (Cabral 1980, p. 122), but based the strategy of his own country’s fight for freedom on the intimate knowledge of the whole country gained when, as an agricultural engineer, he had conducted an agricultural census of the country.

Questions about the precise combination of themes and contributions overall – were there no trade unionists or even retired generals willing to reflect on the issues raised? – should in no way detract from the individual contributions, all of which in some way shed new light or stimulate further thought on the issues they address. Some, such as a reflection on the leadership of women at the grassroots in the fight against AIDS by Martha Chinouya, or an insider’s/outsider’s look at the changing configurations of a Nigerian village by Onyeachi Wambu, are essentially case studies. Others such as ‘Time for Change’ by Ndidi Nwuneli, ‘Creating the Business Leaders of Tomorrow’ by Taddy Blecher and ‘2017: Empowering and Engendering the Future’ by Susan and Juliet Kiguli offer vignettes of what might or could be different. Eva Dadrian, Wangiwa wa Goro and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza address respectively the roles of journalism, translation and intellectual engagement, each fundamentally important to the integrity of the political and social environment in which any leadership can take place.

I am not myself sure how well all these contributions relate to ‘leadership’ either as I understand it or as the issue is framed in the many pertinent questions raised in the introduction. However, this probably does not matter. They certainly relate to identities and personal roles in processes of potential change in Africa and they offer many lessons and food for thought that might not have emerged through a more focused approach. Perhaps this is the difference between a conversation and a debate, and the reason the producers of the book chose the former route.

Reference


Researchers have been going through the tangled forms of wars in developing countries with a finer comb than that of large-N statistical studies. At their best, such studies combine research methods, engage in fieldwork and/or archival research, and test their shapely models with a refreshing clarity and honesty. It has become easier to appreciate that there are varieties of violent conflict and of rationalism. Inside Rebellion is very much in this vein.

Why do some insurgent groups seem committed to abuse and atrocity, while others appear to pursue a kinder rebellion? In Peru, why was one branch of a
rebellion so much more unrestrained in its violence than another? In answering the question, Weinstein shapes a hypothesis and a way of testing it from a host of influences. These include organisational sociology, new institutionalist economics, the largely gloomy ‘resource curse’ literature, and a concern with asymmetric information. But the book does not trot out the banalities of some of the sillier economics of conflict literature and, while it takes the opportunity for rebellion seriously, it does not presume that everyone is motivated exclusively by material gain. Rather, the main argument turns on how rebels deal with a series of organisational challenges that have been given too little attention in the literature: recruitment, control, governance, the use of violence and the need to demonstrate resilience. Through ‘thick description’, interviews and quantitative data, Weinstein explores the cases of the NRA in Uganda, Renamo in Mozambique, and the variation within Peru between the main Sendero Luminoso group and its regional committee in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Any aspiring rebel management has to mobilise resources to tackle these tasks. There are, Weinstein tells us, two types of resource endowment that help: economic endowments and social endowments. This distinction combines with another, between high and low commitment recruits, or between investors in and consumers of rebellion. Economic endowments are simpler to mobilise. Where rebels lack access to resource rents or external aid, they have to get embroiled in the slow and awkward business of cultivating ties of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity with local populations. Inconvenient as this may be, it primes rebels to respect non-combatants: organisation will be more centralised and disciplined, and civilian abuses are unlikely to escalate into a pattern of atrocity. If, however, rebels have access to economic endowments, they use them. This makes it easier to recruit sufficient soldiers and to mount a military challenge to governments. But it means rebel leaders will lead a jumble of high and low commitment recruits – thanks to selective material benefits – without knowing enough about which are which.

Initial endowments affect internal organisation and rebel behaviour. Most dramatically, Weinstein argues that endowments determine atrocity. If Jack Hirshleifer, a pioneer of neo-classical economic theories of violent conflict, suggested that thanks to low opportunity costs the poor had a comparative advantage in violence, Weinstein provides a factor endowment theory of atrocity: the model is Hecksher-Ohlin to Hirshleifer’s Ricardo. Thus, chapter six explains patterns of violence across the case study insurgencies. In rebellions with high economic endowments, low commitment rebels (consumers) go on the rampage, looting, raping, slicing at and shooting civilians. Management has to put up with this to maintain the labour force of rebellion so the abuses go unpunished. Rebels get a bad reputation and civilians avoid them: they become more difficult to control. This encourages further abuse and the pattern is set. In resource-poor insurgencies this behaviour is both less likely – because of a higher share of investors among recruits – and when it does happen more likely to be punished – because of a tighter organisation relying more on relations with non-combatants.

*Inside Rebellion* is brilliantly done – clear, tightly argued, in good command of its cases, and nicely attuned, at the end, to possibilities for further research and analytical probing and to the relevance of the argument for international policy. Some of the most interesting passages are those that engage with the question of what happens – for example, to the FARC in Colombia or to UNITA in Angola – when endowments change; and those that briefly point out the implications of the book’s argument for the value of naming and shaming strategies or for international criminal courts.
Students and researchers will benefit greatly from this book, which will enrich scholarly and policy debates. A number of questions are likely to be raised as a result. The explanation of violence and atrocity, like so many studies, leaps from organisational rationality to the observation of outcomes: it leaves the reader none the wiser about why even low-commitment recruits or consumer-rebels are so vicious. Because of anti-civilian ideologies? Or because of a ‘culture of violence’? Or something else? It is not clear how the model would illuminate, for example, the violence of the Spanish Civil War. Could the savagery of General Queipo de Llana, the cruelty of Franco himself and his early mentor, the beserk General Millán-Astray, or the violence of Lorca’s killers in Granada really be explained by the fact that the Germans and Italians came to the Nationalists’ aid financially while European democracies dithered behind a veil of non-interference? How do we explain the way these rebel leaders and followers were both investors and consumers? How can Republican communist and anarchist viciousness be explained? There are plenty of more recent examples, in which the violence of rebel groups is at least partly a function not of low-commitment rebels poorly controlled by central leaders but of the violence of leaders, their ideologies, and their treatment of lowly recruits.

There are also other ways of exploring the organisational sociology of insurgency, including the Durkheimian ‘grid-group’ matrix allowing for different combinations of institutional lock-in (rules) and institutional bonding, explored by Fithen and Richards in No Peace No War. The book does not help think through the way access to resource rent may help insurgent groups to invest in cultivating social resources of local legitimacy, for in Afghanistan, Angola and elsewhere economic and social resources have been complements rather than only substitutes.

Nor does the book really engage with the origins of insurgency. Is it always the case that prospective rebel entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market and then calculate which resources they can draw on to organise rebellions, rather than rebellion emerging from protracted social processes, in which violent uprising may be a contested option among a number? Might rebel behaviour be linked to the political economy of areas where it emerges? This might involve complex variations in how labour is mobilised or land allocated, and how these are regulated by institutions of local power. Finally, the richest way to explore the arguments of this book further might be through a different case selection, where there might be more intriguing combinations of economic resources and social ties, where atrocity and legitimacy have both been present, and where, perhaps as with the RUF in Sierra Leone, it was perhaps not so much the resource curse of diamonds that explained atrocity as the ‘endowment’ or history of fiercely felt social experiences of relational abuse and exclusion among many young people.


By the time that this review is published most people with a serious interest in the Cameroon Grassfields should already have a copy of Nicolas Argenti’s new and innovative monograph on their shelves. This relatively small upland area in the West and Northwest Provinces of Cameroon has always attracted considerable academic attention because of its rich material culture and complex political
history. Yet books on the Grassfields of this quality and substance are still rare, so this text will quickly take its place alongside the works by Jean-Pierre Warnier and Miriam Goheen and the edited volume by Iain Fowler and David Zeitlyn as absolutely compulsory reading for anyone interested in the area. In many ways this book is a much more exacting read than those volumes, but it repays the effort.

Although this is an ethnography that draws its authority from the intensity of Argenti’s specific fieldwork in the small polity of Oku and his subtle interpretations of the origin myths (chapter 2), witchcraft beliefs (chapter 3) masks, dances and dance associations (chapters 4 to 8) there, it develops a series of extremely bold arguments, which will provoke a much wider audience than just those with a concern for the Grassfields or Cameroon. Argenti’s canvas is ambitious: the book engages any reader interested in questions of the social category ‘youth’, of violence and its legacies, of historicity and memory and of the interpretation of dance. Indeed, given how much of the empirical material in the book is concerned with an analysis of dances, masks and dance associations in Oku it was odd that there is no mention of dance in the book’s subtitle. Argenti’s aim is ‘to analyze from an anthropological standpoint the ways in which the past continues to inform social relations between youth and elites in the present’ (p. 34). Chief amongst these is the way that the legacy of slavery remains important.

Amidst the smug self-congratulations of the 2007 anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade it is good to be reminded of the anarchic violence and genocidal brutality in the ‘human hunting grounds’ that were at the start of the slave commodity chain. The Grassfields were one such place. Central to the book’s argument is the claim that the social consequences of the West African slave trade in the hinterlands where slaves were captured remain relevant today and govern the relationship between youth and elites. If at times this argument seems a little over-determined it is forgivable given that the other explanations for the contemporary antagonism of this social relationship are over-familiar to the point of being hackneyed. If Argenti overstates his case it is perhaps because it is such a distinctive claim.

The book is undoubtedly a significant and substantial contribution to a number of current debates, but (for a number of reasons) it is not an easy read. First, the story it tells and the argument it develops is a profoundly depressing one. From slavery to colonial forced labour to venal post-colonial state, the ‘youth’ of Oku have endured three centuries of systematic exploitation and rank cruelty. Argenti is clinical in his denunciation of all of these forms of domination and his condemnation of the small group of ‘elites’ (who perpetually stand opposite the ‘youth’ and enjoy the benefits that are the concomitant consequence of their suffering) leaves little space for imagining a future rapprochement – although some ideas do emerge in the final chapter. Argenti never romanticises the reaction of ‘youth’ to oppression or talks of resistance, rather he draws on a vocabulary of ‘ambiguity’ and ‘mimesis’ to articulate what the youth can do through dance in response to their powerlessness.

Second, it is not an easy read because Argenti’s arguments about historicity and memory require that it must not be an easy read. There is a theoretically justified determination to resist the emergence of a simple chronological explanatory narrative. The aim (as I understand it) is to prevent his record of events from becoming the record and therefore a memorial (a bad thing in Argenti’s terms because it would suit the elite by providing an end to history) rather than an articulation of the meaning of memory (a good thing because it constantly reminds the elite of their history/ culpability). The essence of dance is that it says this without words so it is important (from Argenti’s theoretical-political perspective)
that the subject of the book remains unspoken – which is obviously a challenge for a writer. The beauty of dance from Argenti’s point of view is that it speaks the unspoken (which is why it holds such fascination for advocates of non-representational theory). People in Oku do not talk about the legacy of slavery so research methods that rely on talk-data are of no use in supporting his claim. Interpretations of dance fill the gap. But the danger of building an argument on the absence of spoken evidence is that it is very difficult for Argenti to be wrong or rather to be shown to be wrong. In many cases of ethnography readers rely on the interpretation of the ethnographer, but in this instance it becomes more than usually clear that there is little scope for challenging the interpretation.

Third, this is a densely conceptual work that draws on a very wide range of social theory (Freud, Bhabha, Derrida, Lyotard etc.), and despite Argenti’s lyrical and passionate prose style, the conceptual subtleties and virtuoso vocabulary make it a read that requires plenty of time, sustained concentration and a good dictionary. The protestant missionaries from Basel, the first missionaries to reach the Grassfields, would no doubt reassure us that the labour of tackling this text is integral to reaping the many rich rewards it offers. For those of us with less theological inclinations it is the combination of original insights, theoretical ambition and empirical detail that make this such an enthralling, if demanding, text.

This book interrogates the current orthodoxy ‘that corruption is an anathema to development’, which is the central tenet of the recent anti-corruption campaigns of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other unilateral donors (pp. 7–8). The edited volume is an assemblage of critical examinations of the anti-corruption campaigns, in various locales and sectors. It is enriched by contributions from academic fields including geography, development studies, political science, economics, international relations and law – with yet other contributions from practitioners. This breadth is also echoed in the spread of geographical locations examined, which range from Nigeria, the Philippines, Georgia to Nicaragua and others. Given this wide scope it is not surprising that the book emphasises the plurality of anti-corruption experiences, and argues that the effects of the anti-corruption campaigns need to be understood within the political and cultural context in which they are implemented (p. 17). The book highlights inconsistencies between the local experience of the anti-corruption campaigns and the IFIs’ technocratic universalised interpretation of the issue and criticises the application of the same brand of prescriptions ‘from Nigeria to Bulgaria’ (p. 28).

However, the argument is not one for localism. The importance of the international context in which the anti-corruption campaigns arose – even as their effects are felt variously – emerges throughout the volume. Ivanov argues that the origins of the anti-corruption campaigns lie ‘in the interests of the US government, multinational companies and multilateral donors’ (p. 29). In a similar vein, the geo-politics which govern the IFIs’ unequal application of anti-corruption policies is central to Brown, Cloke and Rocha’s analysis of anti-corruption in Nicaragua (pp. 182–201). Moreover, in her chapter on corruption in the Philippines, Co argues that the legacy of colonisation and international inequalities are key to the production of Pilipino corruption (p. 123). Bracking’s
own chapter offers the most in-depth analysis of the international in the book. Her chapter situates the anti-corruption campaigns within international power relations and explores the contradictions that these relations produce in development finance. She highlights how discourses of corruption ‘fix its meanings spatially, with coordinates within related ideas of race, space and nationality’ and so act to structure the international (p. 252).

Central to all the arguments in the book, both those that explore global power relations and local politics, is the relations between corruption and development. Hall-Mathews’ examination of President Mutharika of Malawi’s anti-corruption campaign, for example, reveals that the equation of anti-corruption measures and development allowed him to ‘claim to be pro-development by the fact of making arrests per se’ (p. 82). Moreover, many of the activities of Mutharika’s anti-corruption drive were arguably only targeted at undermining his political opponents. Anti-corruption measures in Malawi thus distracted and detracted from development priorities, rather than furthering them. Hall-Mathew’s conclusion is that corruption is only one issue for development and not necessarily the most significant one (p. 98). The role of the anti-corruption campaign in Malawi in obscuring Mutharika’s political goals is comprehended within the volume as only one example of how the foregrounding of corruption acts to obfuscate. This conceals not only political machinations, but also global inequalities and even the failures of the IMF and World Bank policies (p. 31). This chimerical nature of the anti-corruption campaigns, the book contends, also acts to obscure the gaps between the global and local discourses and Northern states’ culpability for corruption (pp. 28, 303).

The book achieves the objective stated by Bracking, namely to ‘critically review policy and practice in the field of corruption and anti-corruption’ (p. 17). The plurality of the chapters, all of which stand alone, is a great strength of the book and individual chapters may be of great interest to area specialists or, as in the case of Alolo’s work on gender and corruption in Ghana, to scholars with particular research foci. The conclusions of the book and a number of the chapters build on this critical review to problematise the orthodox conception of the relations between corruption and development. The pervasiveness of this orthodoxy in development thinking makes this book a significant critical contribution.
to perform what Robert Wade (1997) has called the “Gramsci effect” (p. 27). Thus, central to the analysis are questions such as: how does the World Bank convince others to accept, and at times enthusiastically embrace, its policies and practices? How does the Bank respond to major challenges to its orthodoxy? How does it manufacture moral and intellectual leadership within the development industry? (p. 27). While not all contributors adhere to the Gramscian tradition, there is certainly a strong current throughout the book that aims to deconstruct and challenge the Bank’s hegemonic notions of development. The Gramscian conception of hegemony provides a crucial lens through which to view the Bank’s discourse and practice, and adds theoretical rigour to the volume.

Moore has re-published several classic texts on the World Bank for this volume (e.g. Robert Wade’s 1996 article in New Left Review on the ‘East Asian miracle’), some in their original form, others moderately or substantially revised for this book. These influential pieces are combined with several original chapters for the book addressing more contemporary issues, and written by ‘new entrants taking the field of what could be labelled “World Bank studies” into uncharted territory’ (p. viii). The book covers an impressive range of topics, including the Bank’s discourses around social capital, sustainable development, participation/ownership, good governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, Moore ends with a provocative chapter written by Patrick Bond calling for the abolition of the Bank, which is based on various positions and perspectives from radical ‘civil society’ formations. The book’s 16 chapters provide an excellent source of information – in one place – for those interested in accessing critical approaches to studying the Bank.

Notwithstanding the criticisms raised above, this volume serves as a valuable resource for students, scholars, and activists who are interested in understanding the rhetorical shifts of the Bank during the past 15 years, and potential strategies for struggling against the current hegemony of the Bank.

Despite the successful project accomplished by Moore, at least two critical points need to be mentioned regarding the volume. First, and most importantly, the book lacks feminist analysis of the World Bank. In light of the devastating, and disproportionate, consequences of Structural Adjustment for women in the ‘developing’ world, at least one or two chapters written from a feminist perspective would have helped to provide a more complete critique. Feminist critiques of the Bank have constituted some of the most articulate, sophisticated and consistent attempts by scholars and activists to challenge its neoliberal orthodoxy. Moreover, based on the editor’s statement that ‘…it is time to gather together the last decade and a half’s radical analytical assessments of the world’s most visible development institution’ (p. viii), the absence of a feminist critique appears to be a glaring, and potentially debilitating, omission.

Secondly, Moore is highly dismissive in his own chapters of the post-structural theoretical position on several of the issues under question. Although disagreeing on a theoretical and practical level with others is healthy and productive in many ways, Moore does so in a manner that does not truly engage with this perspective. He mentions post-structuralism very briefly, painting a crude caricature of its approach, only to tear down the straw man in due course. If a critique of post-structuralism is to be presented, then it is only appropriate that a more substantial and rigorous engagement with this perspective be elaborated.
Immigration from Africa to Europe is a historical phenomenon with important socio-economic and political implications for both continents. Although during the colonial period some level of human movement from the colonies to Europe was allowed, decolonisation brought this type of immigration to an end. Since then, any type of migration has been increasingly politicised in the European political arena. The politicisation of migration was also reflected in the international relations of the EU, particularly with Africa. As can be seen in both the Cotonou Agreement (2000) and the European Neighbourhood Policy with North African countries (2003), the management of immigration constitutes the hot spot of the politics of Euro-African relations. 

Africa and Fortress Europe aims to study this relationship in context of immigration, thus contributing to the Euro-African literature on relations by bringing the immigration dynamic into the discussion.

This engaging collection includes significantly diverse perspectives from scholars of economics, political science and international relations to practitioners who are currently working for EU-level agencies, including Frontex. The book is structured in two parts, with the first focusing on the contemporary political and economic situations in different regions of Africa and how these have become push factors for individuals. The second part focuses on EU-level responses from the Eurocrats to the legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. In this sense, Africa and Fortress Europe is a subtle collection which analyses the Euro-African relations in the context of immigration from both African and European perspectives. The general argument of the book is that the immigration problem should be tackled by African and European actors by focusing on an infamous dictum, “African solutions to African problems”.

The book discusses important issues. The analysis by Kohnert is the most comprehensive chapter, examining the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. It focuses on both socio-political and economic reasons for migration by questioning the rising xenophobia in the Maghreb countries towards immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (p. 42) and European attempts to convert North Africa into a buffer zone with ‘reception centres’ (p. 45). Both are attention-grabbing points that highlight how much European policies have determining and constitutive effects on Africa in the context of immigration. Unfortunately, not all contributors’ analyses are conducted in this particular context, as some studies only briefly mention immigration towards the end of their investigations.

Another criticism of the book is that it does not take the opportunity to connect a political-security analysis to the economic analysis. This separation results in a type of analysis, exemplified by Exenberger’s chapter, that examines the issue from an economic perspective which assumes the existence of ‘rational’ and ‘profit-maximising’ immigrants. This examination disregards the economic conditions under which individuals are forced to migrate. It is questionable to what extent migration in and from Africa is about a rational economic choice, if it is about ‘a choice’ at all. In addition, this type of analysis risks legitimising the rhetoric in Europe that African immigrants are coming to ‘take our jobs away’. Unfortunately, the Hendricks’ chapter on human security in Africa does not adequately address this issue and fails to fully illustrate the economic dimension of political crises.

While the chapters are well constructed, the explanatory framework is not sufficiently
grounded theoretically. Two points are striking. First, the concept of ‘Fortress Europe’ is not evaluated. None of the contributors, except the Frontex Director, Laitinen, questions the concept. The historically constructed nature of politics should have been brought into the discussion to explain why Europe has become a ‘fortress’ to African immigrants, and why it is not a fortress to, say, Eastern European or North American immigrants. This might be also related to the concept of ‘Islamophobia’, which is repeatedly mentioned, but never developed. No chapter attempts to analyse or problematise this potentially important concept.

These underdeveloped issues leave question marks, one of which concerns the concept of ‘threat’. In the concluding chapter, Gebrewold suggests that readers differentiate between ‘perceived’ and ‘real’ threats (p. 173). This approach is understandable in a literature where immigration cannot be thought of without ‘securitisation’, which is the ‘common sense’ theory of immigration at present. However, if the name of the first part of the book is ‘Threats from Africa’ and if, throughout the chapters, the authors analyse different ‘threats’, it is essential for an editor to give a coherent account of ‘threat’. Many questions might have been asked: Are the threats ‘real’ or ‘perceived’? Perceived by whom? Real for whom? Are ‘perceived’ threats not ‘real’?

The last weak point of the book is its state-centrism. In almost all of the chapters, civil society movements in Africa are neglected in favour of inter-governmental organisations. It is another question why NGOs do not appear as alternative political agencies in Africa where both governmental and inter-governmental structures have suffered from various deficiencies. Therefore, the general argument of the book, ‘African solutions to African problems’, should be strengthened.

To conclude, Africa and Fortress Europe is a significant starting point, albeit with shortcomings, for understanding Euro-African relations in the context of immigration. Given the fact that both the crises in Africa and European responses to immigration, such as Frontex, have become ‘real’ security threats for those Africans who are caught in between human traffickers and European border patrols, this is a pressing political issue.


Vera Chirwa’s remarkable book takes the reader to deep insights into political struggles and the meaning of freedom in Malawi. While it is a personal account demonstrating her selflessness, perseverance and hope in bringing freedom and justice to Malawi, the story reveals an important political history of the country. The story brings to light the struggles that Malawian political fighters encountered in their quest to bring freedom and justice to the country, from the fight against colonialism, federation and racism during the colonial administration to the fight against the dictatorial one party regime, under which many political opponents were subjected to inhumane treatment through unfair trials, long periods of detention without trial and in some cases unexplained deaths. The story also highlights the harsh realities and sacrifices that Vera, as a woman, a mother and a wife, had to go through in order to achieve her ambitions and
accomplish what she and her husband, Orton Chirwa, believed in.

In the first four sections Vera brings to light how the transition from colonial government to independence created the dictatorial regime through the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi’s first President. Through power struggles and in an effort to legitimise his position, Banda is shown to have developed a mentality of viewing himself as unquestionable, tolerating no critique. This attitude led to the cabinet crisis of 1964, due to policy differences between the leader, some of the ministers, as well as prominent figures such as Vera and Orton Chirwa. Through these political persecutions, the self-rule that many fought for became their worst nightmare. The three sections that follow narrate a story of her family in exile and how she established her career and became the first woman lawyer in southern Africa. It also highlights their passion in politics as a couple wherever they went and how their children suffered and faced many challenges during these struggles of political power. After almost two decades in exile, the couple were abducted back to Malawi, convicted on the grounds of planning to topple Banda’s Government, and sentenced to death through a traditional court. Despite the death sentence, torture, unjust treatment and long period of separation from her husband and children, Vera maintained her will to live.

Back in society in 1993, after over a decade of imprisonment and unfortunately not with her husband who died in 1992, she actively dedicated herself to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights in Malawi. Her account shows how, through leading the transition to a democratic government, Bakili Muluzi fell into the same trap of the desire to cling to power by seeking to extend his terms of presidency and thereby threatening to take Malawi back into the political system that he and numerous others fought so hard to abolish. Vera’s book highlights the important challenges that face young democracies like Malawi. She notes the negative effects of a weak economy and poorly designed and implemented economic and social programmes on the advancement of democracy, and how the worsening conditions turned people to review the old days of the one party regime as better in meeting their needs. The argument is that the masses are still sceptical that democracy has managed to meet their needs as many had hoped for and were promised at the dawn of the era. As such, the temptation to view the old days as glorious is real for some people. In the new democratic era led by Muluzi, corruption has increased considerably while levels of discipline and people’s personal security has declined, making some Malawians uneasy about the new political set up. Vera concludes by highlighting how the political system in Malawi is democratic, but the leaders are not and how this threatens the full development of democracy in the country.

The core of the story is the life of Vera herself. It shows the two sides of Vera: a family person who cares deeply for her family, and a tough and resilient person who suffered and persevered despite political persecutions in all three political eras of Malawi. This remarkable story shows the inhumane treatment that she has suffered, while revealing her strength to stand up and fight for what she believed was right for Malawi and Malawians. Most startling is her ability to forgive those that made her suffer when she could seek justice. Furthermore, after 12 years in prison, Vera refused lucrative offers both abroad and at home as she still wanted to see her dreams come true by working to improve human rights, and making sure that she was in a position to be able to criticize leaders if they were not doing a good job.

However, in 2004 she expressed her interests to stand for the presidency. Here, unfortunately, there are not many details
regarding her change of ambitions from a freedom fighter to a presidential candidate. We are left with no clues as to how she planned to run the country and at the same time provide the much-needed critique to keep the presidency in check. In addition, we do not have much detail on how she cooperated with other opposition leaders in the period leading to the general elections of 2004 and the role she played after she dropped out of the contest for the top seat. It would have been good to have these details in order to appreciate how she envisioned her political future as a presidential figure and how different she would have been from the other leaders. The story being a personal one, it is perhaps understandable that the concepts of human rights and democracy are discussed as taken for granted concepts. For an academic audience, a more critical evaluation of these concepts could have opened up some fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, this is indeed an insightful account of the life of a fearless fighter, as well as of the political transformation and history of Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.


Rufus Norris’s production of Wole Soyinka’s Death and the King’s Horseman at the National Theatre was an arresting piece of theatre that demanded a second viewing simply because there was so much to feed the eye. The statue-filled stage that meets you on your entry into the Olivier Theatre immediately sets the tone for this journey into Yoruba existence and philosophy where the spirit world is an integral part of a very active belief system.

The setting is Oyo, Nigeria, 1943. Iyalọja, the leader of the market women’s stately entrance to ‘ignite’ the opening of this production, played with so much power and grace by Claire Benedict, situates our story in Abeokuta Market, the arena that serves as the ‘playground’ for the protagonist of this story. Elesin Oba, played by the imposing Nonso Anozie, is the King’s Horseman, who has a duty to accompany his dead Lord, the Alafin of Oyo, into the afterlife by committing ritual suicide. It is a duty that demands the ultimate sacrifice from the individual for the benefit of the community, a community that comes alive and inhabits the stage with song and dance, led by the Praise Singer (Giles Terera). The relationship between Elesin and his Praise Singer, articulated through highly poetic and proverbial language and supported by the women’s adoration of their ‘Horseman’ through flirtatious singing and dancing through the market place, keeps the audience engaged throughout the first half. This preparation for the journey into the world of the ancestors takes on a more earthly reality, quite removed from the ritual, when Elesin spots a maiden in whom he wants to plant his seed on this his last day on this earth. Act One closes with the arrangement of both a wedding and a funeral.

Act Two opens in the colonialist quarter, where Simon Pilkings, the British colonial officer, hears of the ritual suicide and decides to intervene by holding Elesin in custody, causing him to fail to perform this ritual which can only be done at a ‘specific time ordained by the cycle of the moon, so there is one night that he can do it and one night alone’. Meanwhile Olunde (Kobna Holbrook Smith), the son of Elesin who has returned from his studies in Britain to bury his father because he is aware of the implications of the traditional custom, is confounded when he becomes aware of the catastrophe

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about to occur and sacrifices himself in a bid to secure the spiritual well being of his people.

Norris’s bold choice to use an all black cast which resulted in the ‘whiting up’ of black actors to play the white colonialists released the humour within this text, for which utmost credit must go to Jenny Jules and Lucian Msamati, for their portrayal of these catalytic characters. Drawing from a Caribbean, African and British experience of white colonialists, these performers displayed the integrity of the colonialists, without caricaturing them, which would have reduced the work to a clash of cultures, which the writer warns against. Rather, this choice allows the production to complicate the reading of these characters, because of the glaring fact the words are being spoken by a black person with a white painted face. The multi-layered implications of this choice served as a constant reminder of whose story was being presented. This controversial choice offers a different perspective to this story, which is told, in effect, by the people it actually happened to. Norris’s subtle introduction of this idea came in the form of the whole cast of 31 taking the stage, in preparation of a story, where members of the ‘community’ are ‘made up’ to play specific characters within the tale. Essentially, signposts were provided which resulted in a big payoff when the Pilkings are revealed in Act Two. But ultimately, what Norris has done with this production is to provide a rare opportunity for the host culture of the West to see themselves as viewed by the ‘other’.

Visually, this production was a feast for the eyes. The first half was an unapologetic thrust into the ‘exotic’, particularly for a standard white National Theatre audience. The many songs and dances and the lyrical nature of the heightened conversation between Elesin and his Praise Singer with its expected pomp and pageantry exceeded my stereotypical expectations. Norris’s execution of this act was for me very measured and served the story rather than playing to the gallery, which could have been an easy choice.

What I have described as ‘the eye of the outsider’ was what stood out in this production. Coming to this production as an outsider in terms of heritage was perhaps a blessing in disguise, as it afforded the director the opportunity to learn and transfer that knowledge to an audience who are largely ignorant of Yoruba culture. The big tree in the centre of the market which then transforms into a skyline of bundles, the ingenious inhabited furniture, the constant cycle of movement on stage, sometimes barely noticeable, were manifestations of the essence of the spirit life of the Yoruba, not consciously written into the script. With the help of his designer Katrina Lindsay and choreographer Javier De Frutos, the gap was bridged between the two cultures, with Peter Badejo, the associate director/consultant as a much-valued guide. The storytelling form was a natural choice, which aided in the created world of the ensemble telling their story and evolving the environment themselves, literally. A thought-provoking, energised and daring production, which left me wanting more.

As developmental realities, policy and research all stumble unproductively along well worn and long contested tramlines, any intellectual venture that tries to do things differently is to be welcomed. This collection of essays, brought together by Onyekachi Wambu with the title Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa, certainly offers a fresh approach. It consists of a variety of contributions looking at issues of leadership, and not just political leadership, from a variety of perspectives: the historical, from the top down, from the bottom up, from the present to the future, from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. The book’s declared aim is to promote an open dialogue, located in the personal experience of the authors, ‘under the talking tree’, which aims to move us on from the fixed positions and embedded conflicts of the past. As such it should not be blamed for avoiding, for the most part, the type of explicit political comment that can strangle dialogue at birth. Nor should it be blamed, from an academic perspective, for not offering a comprehensive conceptualisation and definition of leadership. Given the current interest in ‘leadership’ that would be interesting but, again, might close the door on the dialogue the book aims to promote.

However, the book stands as a deliberate collection of essays around a theme and, as such, some concerns can be expressed about notions of leadership that are or are not addressed within its pages. One concerns the conceptualisation of ‘leadership’ as a function in and of itself. As Ali Mazrui usefully explains, there are many possible types and characteristics of leadership, which individual leaders may mix and match in the way they think may serve them best. However, both he and the book neglect to explore the representative function of leadership. In all but the most extreme circumstances, leaders are in fact representing some existing social and political forces, however unrepresentative these may be of a general population. It is surely through an exploration of the multiple facets of this representation that the relationship of the governing and the governed and the accountability of leaders – both stated concerns of the book – can be enhanced.

A second concern relates to who the leaders are to be. Several contributions talk, without additional reflection, of ‘emerging leaders’ and the book, published by a think-tank of the British Council, is related to a wider British Council project aimed at ‘networking and supporting the next generation of African leaders’. Who are these people? Are they simply bright young things with lots of energy and ideas? In which case, fine, but surely they should be supported in whatever direction they most want to serve the further development of their societies? Or are they people who define themselves as simply wanting to become leaders? If the latter, there are surely significant political issues relating to their selection, not least their class. Competence might also be an issue. Experience of real work in the societies they aimed to change was fundamental
to the development of two great African leaders, Amílcar Cabral and Samora Machel, whose stories are once again not recognised in a collection largely emanating from Anglophone Africa. Yet it was Cabral who not only railed against the ‘ignorance of the historical reality which these movements [liberation movements in general] aspire to transform’ (Cabral 1980, p. 122), but based the strategy of his own country’s fight for freedom on the intimate knowledge of the whole country gained when, as an agricultural engineer, he had conducted an agricultural census of the country.

Questions about the precise combination of themes and contributions overall – were there no trade unionists or even retired generals willing to reflect on the issues raised? – should in no way detract from the individual contributions, all of which in some way shed new light or stimulate further thought on the issues they address. Some, such as a reflection on the leadership of women at the grassroots in the fight against AIDS by Martha Chinouya, or an insider’s/outsider’s look at the changing configurations of a Nigerian village by Onyeachi Wambu, are essentially case studies. Others such as ‘Time for Change’ by Ndidi Nwuneli, ‘Creating the Business Leaders of Tomorrow’ by Taddy Blecher and ‘2017: Empowering and Engendering the Future’ by Susan and Juliet Kiguli offer vignettes of what might or could be different. Eva Dadrian, Wangui wa Goro and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza address respectively the roles of journalism, translation and intellectual engagement, each fundamentally important to the integrity of the political and social environment in which any leadership can take place.

I am not myself sure how well all these contributions relate to ‘leadership’ either as I understand it or as the issue is framed in the many pertinent questions raised in the introduction. However, this probably does not matter. They certainly relate to identities and personal roles in processes of potential change in Africa and they offer many lessons and food for thought that might not have emerged through a more focused approach. Perhaps this is the difference between a conversation and a debate, and the reason the producers of the book chose the former route.

Reference


Researchers have been going through the tangled forms of wars in developing countries with a finer comb than that of large-N statistical studies. At their best, such studies combine research methods, engage in fieldwork and/or archival research, and test their shapely models with a refreshing clarity and honesty. It has become easier to appreciate that there are varieties of violent conflict and of rationalism. Inside Rebellion is very much in this vein.

Why do some insurgent groups seem committed to abuse and atrocity, while others appear to pursue a kinder rebellion? In Peru, why was one branch of a
rebellion so much more unrestrained in its violence than another? In answering the question, Weinstein shapes a hypothesis and a way of testing it from a host of influences. These include organisational sociology, new institutionalist economics, the largely gloomy ‘resource curse’ literature, and a concern with asymmetric information. But the book does not trot out the banalities of some of the sillier economics of conflict literature and, while it takes the opportunity for rebellion seriously, it does not presume that everyone is motivated exclusively by material gain. Rather, the main argument turns on how rebels deal with a series of organisational challenges that have been given too little attention in the literature: recruitment, control, governance, the use of violence and the need to demonstrate resilience. Through ‘thick description’, interviews and quantitative data, Weinstein explores the cases of the NRA in Uganda, Renamo in Mozambique, and the variation within Peru between the main Sendero Luminoso group and its regional committee in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Any aspiring rebel management has to mobilise resources to tackle these tasks. There are, Weinstein tells us, two types of resource endowment that help: economic endowments and social endowments. This distinction combines with another, between high and low commitment recruits, or between investors in and consumers of rebellion. Economic endowments are simpler to mobilise. Where rebels lack access to resource rents or external aid, they have to get embroiled in the slow and awkward business of cultivating ties of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity with local populations. Inconvenient as this may be, it primes rebels to respect non-combatants: organisation will be more centralised and disciplined, and civilian abuses are unlikely to escalate into a pattern of atrocity. If, however, rebels have access to economic endowments, they use them. This makes it easier to recruit sufficient soldiers and to mount a military challenge to governments. But it means rebel leaders will lead a jumble of high and low commitment recruits – thanks to selective material benefits – without knowing enough about which are which.

Initial endowments affect internal organisation and rebel behaviour. Most dramatically, Weinstein argues that endowments determine atrocity. If Jack Hirshleifer, a pioneer of neo-classical economic theories of violent conflict, suggested that thanks to low opportunity costs the poor had a comparative advantage in violence, Weinstein provides a factor endowment theory of atrocity: the model is Hecksher-Ohlin to Hirshleifer’s Ricardo. Thus, chapter six explains patterns of violence across the case study insurgencies. In rebellions with high economic endowments, low commitment rebels (consumers) go on the rampage, looting, raping, slicing at and shooting civilians. Management has to put up with this to maintain the labour force of rebellion so the abuses go unpunished. Rebels get a bad reputation and civilians avoid them: they become more difficult to control. This encourages further abuse and the pattern is set. In resource-poor insurgencies this behaviour is both less likely – because of a higher share of investors among recruits – and when it does happen more likely to be punished – because of a tighter organisation relying more on relations with non-combatants.

_Inside Rebellion_ is brilliantly done – clear, tightly argued, in good command of its cases, and nicely attuned, at the end, to possibilities for further research and analytical probing and to the relevance of the argument for international policy. Some of the most interesting passages are those that engage with the question of what happens – for example, to the FARC in Colombia or to UNITA in Angola – when endowments change; and those that briefly point out the implications of the book’s argument for the value of naming and shaming strategies or for international criminal courts.
Students and researchers will benefit greatly from this book, which will enrich scholarly and policy debates. A number of questions are likely to be raised as a result. The explanation of violence and atrocity, like so many studies, leaps from organisational rationality to the observation of outcomes: it leaves the reader none the wiser about why even low-commitment recruits or consumer-rebels are so vicious. Because of anti-civilian ideologies? Or because of a ‘culture of violence’? Or something else? It is not clear how the model would illuminate, for example, the violence of the Spanish Civil War. Could the savagery of General Queipo de Llana, the cruelty of Franco himself and his early mentor, the beserk General Millán-Astray, or the violence of Lorca’s killers in Granada really be explained by the fact that the Germans and Italians came to the Nationalists’ aid financially while European democracies dithered behind a veil of non-interference? How do we explain the way these rebel leaders and followers were both investors and consumers? How can Republican communist and anarchist viciousness be explained? There are plenty of more recent examples, in which the violence of rebel groups is at least partly a function not of low-commitment rebels poorly controlled by central leaders but of the violence of leaders, their ideologies, and their treatment of lowly recruits.

There are also other ways of exploring the organisational sociology of insurgency, including the Durkheimian ‘grid-group’ matrix allowing for different combinations of institutional lock-in (rules) and institutional bonding, explored by Fithen and Richards in No Peace No War. The book does not help think through the way access to resource rent may help insurgent groups to invest in cultivating social resources of local legitimacy, for in Afghanistan, Angola and elsewhere economic and social resources have been complements rather than only substitutes.

Nor does the book really engage with the origins of insurgency. Is it always the case that prospective rebel entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market and then calculate which resources they can draw on to organise rebellions, rather than rebellion emerging from protracted social processes, in which violent uprising may be a contested option among a number? Might rebel behaviour be linked to the political economy of areas where it emerges? This might involve complex variations in how labour is mobilised or land allocated, and how these are regulated by institutions of local power. Finally, the richest way to explore the arguments of this book further might be through a different case selection, where there might be more intriguing combinations of economic resources and social ties, where atrocity and legitimacy have both been present, and where, perhaps as with the RUF in Sierra Leone, it was perhaps not so much the resource curse of diamonds that explained atrocity as the ‘endowment’ or history of fiercely felt social experiences of relational abuse and exclusion among many young people.


By the time that this review is published most people with a serious interest in the Cameroon Grassfields should already have a copy of Nicolas Argenti’s new and innovative monograph on their shelves. This relatively small upland area in the West and Northwest Provinces of Cameroon has always attracted considerable academic attention because of its rich material culture and complex political
history. Yet books on the Grassfields of this quality and substance are still rare, so this text will quickly take its place alongside the works by Jean-Pierre Warnier and Miriam Goheen and the edited volume by Iain Fowler and David Zeitlyn as absolutely compulsory reading for anyone interested in the area. In many ways this book is a much more exacting read than those volumes, but it repays the effort.

Although this is an ethnography that draws its authority from the intensity of Argenti’s specific fieldwork in the small polity of Oku and his subtle interpretations of the origin myths (chapter 2), witchcraft beliefs (chapter 3) masks, dances and dance associations (chapters 4 to 8) there, it develops a series of extremely bold arguments, which will provoke a much wider audience than just those with a concern for the Grassfields or Cameroon. Argenti’s canvas is ambitious: the book engages any reader interested in questions of the social category ‘youth’, of violence and its legacies, of historicity and memory and of the interpretation of dance. Indeed, given how much of the empirical material in the book is concerned with an analysis of dances, masks and dance associations in Oku it was odd that there is no mention of dance in the book’s subtitle. Argenti’s aim is ‘to analyze from an anthropological standpoint the ways in which the past continues to inform social relations between youth and elites in the present’ (p. 34). Chief amongst these is the way that the legacy of slavery remains important.

Amidst the smug self-congratulations of the 2007 anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade it is good to be reminded of the anarchic violence and genocidal brutality in the ‘human hunting grounds’ that were at the start of the slave commodity chain. The Grassfields were one such place. Central to the book’s argument is the claim that the social consequences of the West African slave trade in the hinterlands where slaves were captured remain relevant today and govern the relationship between youth and elites. If at times this argument seems a little over-determined it is forgivable given that the other explanations for the contemporary antagonism of this social relationship are over-familiar to the point of being hackneyed. If Argenti overstates his case it is perhaps because it is such a distinctive claim.

The book is undoubtedly a significant and substantial contribution to a number of current debates, but (for a number of reasons) it is not an easy read. First, the story it tells and the argument it develops is a profoundly depressing one. From slavery to colonial forced labour to venal post-colonial state, the ‘youth’ of Oku have endured three centuries of systematic exploitation and rank cruelty. Argenti is clinical in his denunciation of all of these forms of domination and his condemnation of the small group of ‘elites’ (who perpetually stand opposite the ‘youth’ and enjoy the benefits that are the concomitant consequence of their suffering) leaves little space for imagining a future rapprochement – although some ideas do emerge in the final chapter. Argenti never romanticises the reaction of ‘youth’ to oppression or talks of resistance, rather he draws on a vocabulary of ‘ambiguity’ and ‘mimesis’ to articulate what the youth can do through dance in response to their powerlessness.

Second, it is not an easy read because Argenti’s arguments about historicity and memory require that it must not be an easy read. There is a theoretically justified determination to resist the emergence of a simple chronological explanatory narrative. The aim (as I understand it) is to prevent his record of events from becoming the record and therefore a memorial (a bad thing in Argenti’s terms because it would suit the elite by providing an end to history) rather than an articulation of the meaning of memory (a good thing because it constantly reminds the elite of their history/culpability). The essence of dance is that it says this without words so it is important (from Argenti’s theoretical-political perspective)
that the subject of the book remains unspoken – which is obviously a challenge for a writer. The beauty of dance from Argenti’s point of view is that it speaks the unspoken (which is why it holds such fascination for advocates of non-representational theory). People in Oku do not talk about the legacy of slavery so research methods that rely on talk-data are of no use in supporting his claim. Interpretations of dance fill the gap. But the danger of building an argument on the absence of spoken evidence is that it is very difficult for Argenti to be wrong or rather to be shown to be wrong. In many cases of ethnography readers rely on the interpretation of the ethnographer, but in this instance it becomes more than usually clear that there is little scope for challenging the interpretation.

Third, this is a densely conceptual work that draws on a very wide range of social theory (Freud, Bhabha, Derrida, Lyotard etc.), and despite Argenti’s lyrical and passionate prose style, the conceptual subtleties and virtuoso vocabulary make it a read that requires plenty of time, sustained concentration and a good dictionary. The protestant missionaries from Basel, the first missionaries to reach the Grassfields, would no doubt reassure us that the labour of tackling this text is integral to reaping the many rich rewards it offers. For those of us with less theological inclinations it is the combination of original insights, theoretical ambition and empirical detail that make this such an enthralling, if demanding, text.

This book interrogates the current orthodoxy ‘that corruption is an anathema to development’, which is the central tenet of the recent anti-corruption campaigns of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other unilateral donors (pp. 7–8). The edited volume is an assemblage of critical examinations of the anti-corruption campaigns, in various locales and sectors. It is enriched by contributions from academic fields including geography, development studies, political science, economics, international relations and law – with yet other contributions from practitioners. This breadth is also echoed in the spread of geographical locations examined, which range from Nigeria, the Philippines, Georgia to Nicaragua and others. Given this wide scope it is not surprising that the book emphasises the plurality of anti-corruption experiences, and argues that the effects of the anti-corruption campaigns need to be understood within the political and cultural context in which they are implemented (p. 17). The book highlights inconsistencies between the local experience of the anti-corruption campaigns and the IFIs’ technocratic universalised interpretation of the issue and criticises the application of the same brand of prescriptions ‘from Nigeria to Bulgaria’ (p. 28).

However, the argument is not one for localism. The importance of the international context in which the anti-corruption campaigns arose – even as their effects are felt variously – emerges throughout the volume. Ivanov argues that the origins of the anti-corruption campaigns lie ‘in the interests of the US government, multinational companies and multilateral donors’ (p. 29). In a similar vein, the geo-politics which govern the IFIs’ unequal application of anti-corruption policies is central to Brown, Cloke and Rocha’s analysis of anti-corruption in Nicaragua (pp. 182–201). Moreover, in her chapter on corruption in the Philippines, Co argues that the legacy of colonisation and international inequalities are key to the production of Pilipino corruption (p. 123). Bracking’s
own chapter offers the most in-depth analysis of the international in the book. Her chapter situates the anti-corruption campaigns within international power relations and explores the contradictions that these relations produce in development finance. She highlights how discourses of corruption ‘fix its meanings spatially, with coordinates within related ideas of race, space and nationality’ and so act to structure the international (p. 252).

Central to all the arguments in the book, both those that explore global power relations and local politics, is the relations between corruption and development. Hall-Mathews’ examination of President Mutharika of Malawi’s anti-corruption campaign, for example, reveals that the equation of anti-corruption measures and development allowed him to ‘claim to be pro-development by the fact of making arrests per se’ (p. 82). Moreover, many of the activities of Mutharika’s anti-corruption drive were arguably only targeted at undermining his political opponents. Anti-corruption measures in Malawi thus distracted and detracted from development priorities, rather than furthering them. Hall-Mathew’s conclusion is that corruption is only one issue for development and not necessarily the most significant one (p. 98). The role of the anti-corruption campaign in Malawi in obscuring Mutharika’s political goals is comprehended within the volume as only one example of how the foregrounding of corruption acts to obfuscate. This conceals not only political machinations, but also global inequalities and even the failures of the IMF and World Bank policies (p. 31). This chimerical nature of the anti-corruption campaigns, the book contends, also acts to obscure the gaps between the global and local discourses and Northern states’ culpability for corruption (pp. 28, 303).

The book achieves the objective stated by Bracking, namely to ‘critically review policy and practice in the field of corruption and anti-corruption’ (p. 17). The plurality of the chapters, all of which stand alone, is a great strength of the book and individual chapters may be of great interest to area specialists or, as in the case of Alolo’s work on gender and corruption in Ghana, to scholars with particular research foci. The conclusions of the book and a number of the chapters build on this critical review to problematise the orthodox conception of the relations between corruption and development. The pervasiveness of this orthodoxy in development thinking makes this book a significant critical contribution.

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This collection is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the ongoing critical analysis of the World Bank’s activities during the past 15 years. David Moore presents a thoughtful and accessible edited volume that covers a broad range of topics related to the Bank’s neoliberal hegemonic project. Following the Bank’s discursive twists and turns throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the various chapters challenge the organisation’s attempts to persuade the outside world that a kinder, gentler approach to development has been adopted after the failure of Structural Adjustment.

The book begins by Moore establishing the theoretical framework guiding the volume. His Gramscian understanding of hegemony and counter-hegemony provide the inspiration for compiling the chapters, and Moore claims that the book ‘... is about how the World Bank attempts...’

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to perform what Robert Wade (1997) has called the “Gramsci effect” (p. 27). Thus, central to the analysis are questions such as: how does the World Bank convince others to accept, and at times enthusiastically embrace, its policies and practices? How does the Bank respond to major challenges to its orthodoxy? How does it manufacture moral and intellectual leadership within the development industry? (p. 27).

While not all contributors adhere to the Gramscian tradition, there is certainly a strong current throughout the book that aims to deconstruct and challenge the Bank’s hegemonic notions of development. The Gramscian conception of hegemony provides a crucial lens through which to view the Bank’s discourse and practice, and adds theoretical rigour to the volume.

Moore has re-published several classic texts on the World Bank for this volume (e.g. Robert Wade’s 1996 article in *New Left Review* on the ‘East Asian miracle’), some in their original form, others moderately or substantially revised for this book. These influential pieces are combined with several original chapters for the book addressing more contemporary issues, and written by ‘new entrants taking the field of what could be labelled “World Bank studies” into uncharted territory’ (p. viii). The book covers an impressive range of topics, including the Bank’s discourses around social capital, sustainable development, participation/ownership, good governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, Moore ends with a provocative chapter written by Patrick Bond calling for the abolition of the Bank, which is based on various positions and perspectives from radical ‘civil society’ formations. The book’s 16 chapters provide an excellent source of information – in one place – for those interested in accessing critical approaches to studying the Bank.

Despite the successful project accomplished by Moore, at least two critical points need to be mentioned regarding the volume. First, and most importantly, the book lacks feminist analysis of the World Bank. In light of the devastating, and disproportionate, consequences of Structural Adjustment for women in the ‘developing’ world, at least one or two chapters written from a feminist perspective would have helped to provide a more complete critique. Feminist critiques of the Bank have constituted some of the most articulate, sophisticated and consistent attempts by scholars and activists to challenge its neoliberal orthodoxy. Moreover, based on the editor’s statement that ‘...it is time to gather together the last decade and a half’s radical analytical assessments of the world’s most visible development institution’ (p. viii), the absence of a feminist critique appears to be a glaring, and potentially debilitating, omission.

Secondly, Moore is highly dismissive in his own chapters of the post-structural theoretical position on several of the issues under question. Although disagreeing on a theoretical and practical level with others is healthy and productive in many ways, Moore does so in a manner that does not truly engage with this perspective. He mentions post-structuralism very briefly, painting a crude caricature of its approach, only to tear down the straw man in due course. If a critique of post-structuralism is to be presented, then it is only appropriate that a more substantial and rigorous engagement with this perspective be elaborated.

Notwithstanding the criticisms raised above, this volume serves as a valuable resource for students, scholars, and activists who are interested in understanding the rhetorical shifts of the Bank during the past 15 years, and potential strategies for struggling against the current hegemony of the Bank.
Immigration from Africa to Europe is a historical phenomenon with important socio-economic and political implications for both continents. Although during the colonial period some level of human movement from the colonies to Europe was allowed, decolonisation brought this type of immigration to an end. Since then, any type of migration has been increasingly politicised in the European political arena. The politicisation of migration was also reflected in the international relations of the EU, particularly with Africa. As can be seen in both the Cotonou Agreement (2000) and the European Neighbourhood Policy with North African countries (2003), the management of immigration constitutes the hot spot of the politics of Euro-African relations. *Africa and Fortress Europe* aims to study this relationship in context of immigration, thus contributing to the Euro-African literature on relations by bringing the immigration dynamic into the discussion.

This engaging collection includes significantly diverse perspectives from scholars of economics, political science and international relations to practitioners who are currently working for EU-level agencies, including Frontex. The book is structured in two parts, with the first focusing on the contemporary political and economic situations in different regions of Africa and how these have become push factors for individuals. The second part focuses on EU-level responses from the Eurocrats to the legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. In this sense, *Africa and Fortress Europe* is a subtle collection which analyses the Euro-African relations in the context of immigration from both African and European perspectives. The general argument of the book is that the immigration problem should be tackled by African and European actors by focusing on an infamous dictum, “African solutions to African problems”.

The book discusses important issues. The analysis by Kohnert is the most comprehensive chapter, examining the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. It focuses on both socio-political and economic reasons for migration by questioning the rising xenophobia in the Maghreb countries towards immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (p. 42) and European attempts to convert North Africa into a buffer zone with ‘reception centres’ (p. 45). Both are attention-grabbing points that highlight how much European policies have determining and constitutive effects on Africa in the context of immigration. Unfortunately, not all contributors’ analyses are conducted in this particular context, as some studies only briefly mention immigration towards the end of their investigations.

Another criticism of the book is that it does not take the opportunity to connect a political-security analysis to the economic analysis. This separation results in a type of analysis, exemplified by Exenberger’s chapter, that examines the issue from an economic perspective which assumes the existence of ‘rational’ and ‘profit-maximising’ immigrants. This examination disregards the economic conditions under which individuals are forced to migrate. It is questionable to what extent migration in and from Africa is about a rational economic choice, if it is about ‘a choice’ at all. In addition, this type of analysis risks legitimising the rhetoric in Europe that African immigrants are coming to ‘take our jobs away’. Unfortunately, the Hendricks’ chapter on human security in Africa does not adequately address this issue and fails to fully illustrate the economic dimension of political crises.

While the chapters are well constructed, the explanatory framework is not sufficiently

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grounded theoretically. Two points are striking. First, the concept of ‘Fortress Europe’ is not evaluated. None of the contributors, except the Frontex Director, Laitinen, questions the concept. The historically constructed nature of politics should have been brought into the discussion to explain why Europe has become a ‘fortress’ to African immigrants, and why it is not a fortress to, say, Eastern European or North American immigrants. This might be also related to the concept of ‘Islamophobia’, which is repeatedly mentioned, but never developed. No chapter attempts to analyse or problematise this potentially important concept.

These underdeveloped issues leave question marks, one of which concerns the concept of ‘threat’. In the concluding chapter, Gebrewold suggests that readers differentiate between ‘perceived’ and ‘real’ threats (p. 173). This approach is understandable in a literature where immigration cannot be thought of without ‘securitisation’, which is the ‘common sense’ theory of immigration at present. However, if the name of the first part of the book is ‘Threats from Africa’ and if, throughout the chapters, the authors analyse different ‘threats’, it is essential for an editor to give a coherent account of ‘threat’. Many questions might have been asked: Are the threats ‘real’ or ‘perceived’? Perceived by whom? Real for whom? Are ‘perceived’ threats not ‘real’?

The last weak point of the book is its state-centrism. In almost all of the chapters, civil society movements in Africa are neglected in favour of inter-governmental organisations. It is another question why NGOs do not appear as alternative political agencies in Africa where both governmental and inter-governmental structures have suffered from various deficiencies. Therefore, the general argument of the book, ‘African solutions to African problems’, should be strengthened.

To conclude, *Africa and Fortress Europe* is a significant starting point, albeit with shortcomings, for understanding Euro-African relations in the context of immigration. Given the fact that both the crises in Africa and European responses to immigration, such as Frontex, have become ‘real’ security threats for those Africans who are caught in between human traffickers and European border patrols, this is a pressing political issue.

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Vera Chirwa’s remarkable book takes the reader to deep insights into political struggles and the meaning of freedom in Malawi. While it is a personal account demonstrating her selflessness, perseverance and hope in bringing freedom and justice to Malawi, the story reveals an important political history of the country. The story brings to light the struggles that Malawian political fighters encountered in their quest to bring freedom and justice to the country, from the fight against colonialism, federation and racism during the colonial administration to the fight against the dictatorial one party regime, under which many political opponents were subjected to inhumane treatment through unfair trials, long periods of detention without trial and in some cases unexplained deaths. The story also highlights the harsh realities and sacrifices that Vera, as a woman, a mother and a wife, had to go through in order to achieve her ambitions and
accomplish what she and her husband, Orton Chirwa, believed in.

In the first four sections Vera brings to light how the transition from colonial government to independence created the dictatorial regime through the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi’s first President. Through power struggles and in an effort to legitimise his position, Banda is shown to have developed a mentality of viewing himself as unquestionable, tolerating no critique. This attitude led to the cabinet crisis of 1964, due to policy differences between the leader, some of the ministers, as well as prominent figures such as Vera and Orton Chirwa. Through these political persecutions, the self-rule that many fought for became their worst nightmare. The three sections that follow narrate a story of her family in exile and how she established her career and became the first woman lawyer in southern Africa. It also highlights their passion in politics as a couple wherever they went and how their children suffered and faced many challenges during these struggles of political power. After almost two decades in exile, the couple were abducted back to Malawi, convicted on the grounds of planning to topple Banda’s Government, and sentenced to death through a traditional court. Despite the death sentence, torture, unjust treatment and long period of separation from her husband and children, Vera maintained her will to live.

Back in society in 1993, after over a decade of imprisonment and unfortunately not with her husband who died in 1992, she actively dedicated herself to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights in Malawi. Her account shows how, through leading the transition to a democratic government, Bakili Muluzi fell into the same trap of the desire to cling to power by seeking to extend his terms of presidency and thereby threatening to take Malawi back into the political system that he and numerous others fought so hard to abolish. Vera’s book highlights the important challenges that face young democracies like Malawi. She notes the negative effects of a weak economy and poorly designed and implemented economic and social programmes on the advancement of democracy, and how the worsening conditions turned people to review the old days of the one party regime as better in meeting their needs. The argument is that the masses are still sceptical that democracy has managed to meet their needs as many had hoped for and were promised at the dawn of the era. As such, the temptation to view the old days as glorious is real for some people. In the new democratic era led by Muluzi, corruption has increased considerably while levels of discipline and people’s personal security has declined, making some Malawians uneasy about the new political set up. Vera concludes by highlighting how the political system in Malawi is democratic, but the leaders are not and how this threatens the full development of democracy in the country.

The core of the story is the life of Vera herself. It shows the two sides of Vera: a family person who cares deeply for her family, and a tough and resilient person who suffered and persevered despite political persecutions in all three political eras of Malawi. This remarkable story shows the inhumane treatment that she has suffered, while revealing her strength to stand up and fight for what she believed was right for Malawi and Malawians. Most startling is her ability to forgive those that made her suffer when she could seek justice. Furthermore, after 12 years in prison, Vera refused lucrative offers both abroad and at home as she still wanted to see her dreams come true by working to improve human rights, and making sure that she was in a position to be able to criticize leaders if they were not doing a good job.

However, in 2004 she expressed her interests to stand for the presidency. Here, unfortunately, there are not many details
Regarding her change of ambitions from a freedom fighter to a presidential candidate. We are left with no clues as to how she planned to run the country and at the same time provide the much-needed critique to keep the presidency in check. In addition, we do not have much detail on how she cooperated with other opposition leaders in the period leading to the general elections of 2004 and the role she played after she dropped out of the contest for the top seat. It would have been good to have these details in order to appreciate how she envisioned her political future as a presidential figure and how different she would have been from the other leaders. The story being a personal one, it is perhaps understandable that the concepts of human rights and democracy are discussed as taken for granted concepts. For an academic audience, a more critical evaluation of these concepts could have opened up some fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, this is indeed an insightful account of the life of a fearless fighter, as well as of the political transformation and history of Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.


Rufus Norris’s production of Wole Soyinka’s Death and the King’s Horseman at the National Theatre was an arresting piece of theatre that demanded a second viewing simply because there was so much to feed the eye. The statue-filled stage that meets you on your entry into the Olivier Theatre immediately sets the tone for this journey into Yoruba existence and philosophy where the spirit world is an integral part of a very active belief system.

The setting is Oyo, Nigeria, 1943. Iyaloja, the leader of the market women’s stately entrance to ‘ignite’ the opening of this production, played with so much power and grace by Claire Benedict, situates our story in Abeokuta Market, the arena that serves as the ‘playground’ for the protagonist of this story. Elesin Oba, played by the imposing Nonso Anozie, is the King’s Horseman, who has a duty to accompany his dead Lord, the Alafin of Oyo, into the afterlife by committing ritual suicide. It is a duty that demands the ultimate sacrifice from the individual for the benefit of the community, a community that comes alive and inhabits the stage with song and dance, led by the Praise Singer (Giles Terera). The relationship between Elesin and his Praise Singer, articulated through highly poetic and proverbial language and supported by the women’s adoration of their ‘Horseman’ through flirtatious singing and dancing through the market place, keeps the audience engaged throughout the first half. This preparation for the journey into the world of the ancestors takes on a more earthly reality, quite removed from the ritual, when Elesin spots a maiden in whom he wants to plant his seed on this his last day on this earth. Act One closes with the arrangement of both a wedding and a funeral.

Act Two opens in the colonialist quarter, where Simon Pilkings, the British colonial officer, hears of the ritual suicide and decides to intervene by holding Elesin in custody, causing him to fail to perform this ritual which can only be done at a ‘specific time ordained by the cycle of the moon, so there is one night that he can do it and one night alone’. Meanwhile Olunde (Kobna Holbrook Smith), the son of Elesin who has returned from his studies in Britain to bury his father because he is aware of the implications of the traditional custom, is confounded when he becomes aware of the catastrophe...
about to occur and sacrifices himself in a bid to secure the spiritual well being of his people.

Norris’s bold choice to use an all black cast which resulted in the ‘whiting up’ of black actors to play the white colonialists released the humour within this text, for which utmost credit must go to Jenny Jules and Lucian Msamati, for their portrayal of these catalytic characters. Drawing from a Caribbean, African and British experience of white colonialists, these performers displayed the integrity of the colonialists, without caricaturing them, which would have reduced the work to a clash of cultures, which the writer warns against. Rather, this choice allows the production to complicate the reading of these characters, because of the glaring fact the words are being spoken by a black person with a white painted face. The multi-layered implications of this choice served as a constant reminder of whose story was being presented. This controversial choice offers a different perspective to this story, which is told, in effect, by the people it actually happened to. Norris’s subtle introduction of this idea came in the form of the whole cast of 31 taking the stage, in preparation of a story, where members of the ‘community’ are ‘made up’ to play specific characters within the tale. Essentially, signposts were provided which resulted in a big payoff when the Pilkings are revealed in Act Two. But ultimately, what Norris has done with this production is to provide a rare opportunity for the host culture of the West to see themselves as viewed by the ‘other’.

Visually, this production was a feast for the eyes. The first half was an unapologetic thrust into the ‘exotic’, particularly for a standard white National Theatre audience. The many songs and dances and the lyrical nature of the heightened conversation between Elesin and his Praise Singer with its expected pomp and pageantry exceeded my stereotypical expectations. Norris’s execution of this act was for me very measured and served the story rather than playing to the gallery, which could have been an easy choice.

What I have described as ‘the eye of the outsider’ was what stood out in this production. Coming to this production as an outsider in terms of heritage was perhaps a blessing in disguise, as it afforded the director the opportunity to learn and transfer that knowledge to an audience who are largely ignorant of Yoruba culture. The big tree in the centre of the market which then transforms into a skyline of bundles, the ingenious inhabited furniture, the constant cycle of movement on stage, sometimes barely noticeable, were manifestations of the essence of the spirit life of the Yoruba, not consciously written into the script. With the help of his designer Katrina Lindsay and choreographer Javier De Frutos, the gap was bridged between the two cultures, with Peter Badejo, the associate director/consultant as a much-valued guide. The storytelling form was a natural choice, which aided in the created world of the ensemble telling their story and evolving the environment themselves, literally. A thought-provoking, energised and daring production, which left me wanting more.
As developmental realities, policy and research all stumble unproductively along well worn and long contested tram-lines, any intellectual venture that tries to do things differently is to be welcomed. This collection of essays, brought together by Onyekachi Wambu with the title Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa, certainly offers a fresh approach. It consists of a variety of contributions looking at issues of leadership, and not just political leadership, from a variety of perspectives: the historical, from the top down, from the bottom up, from the present to the future, from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. The book’s declared aim is to promote an open dialogue, located in the personal experience of the authors, ‘under the talking tree’, which aims to move us on from the fixed positions and embedded conflicts of the past. As such it should not be blamed for avoiding, for the most part, the type of explicit political comment that can strangle dialogue at birth. Nor should it be blamed, from an academic perspective, for not offering a comprehensive conceptualisation and definition of leadership. Given the current interest in ‘leadership’ that would be interesting but, again, might close the door on the dialogue the book aims to promote.

However, the book stands as a deliberate collection of essays around a theme and, as such, some concerns can be expressed about notions of leadership that are or are not addressed within its pages. One concerns the conceptualisation of ‘leadership’ as a function in and of itself. As Ali Mazrui usefully explains, there are many possible types and characteristics of leadership, which individual leaders may mix and match in the way they think may serve them best. However, both he and the book neglect to explore the representative function of leadership. In all but the most extreme circumstances, leaders are in fact representing some existing social and political forces, however unrepresentative these may be of a general population. It is surely through an exploration of the multiple facets of this representation that the relationship of the governing and the governed and the accountability of leaders – both stated concerns of the book – can be enhanced.

A second concern relates to who the leaders are to be. Several contributions talk, without additional reflection, of ‘emerging leaders’ and the book, published by a think-tank of the British Council, is related to a wider British Council project aimed at ‘networking and supporting the next generation of African leaders’. Who are these people? Are they simply bright young things with lots of energy and ideas? In which case, fine, but surely they should be supported in whatever direction they most want to serve the further development of their societies? Or are they people who define themselves as simply wanting to become leaders? If the latter, there are surely significant political issues relating to their selection, not least their class. Competence might also be an issue. Experience of real work in the societies they aimed to change was fundamental.
to the development of two great African leaders, Amílcar Cabral and Samora Machel, whose stories are once again not recognised in a collection largely emanating from Anglophone Africa. Yet it was Cabral who not only railed against the ‘ignorance of the historical reality which these movements [liberation movements in general] aspire to transform’ (Cabral 1980, p. 122), but based the strategy of his own country’s fight for freedom on the intimate knowledge of the whole country gained when, as an agricultural engineer, he had conducted an agricultural census of the country.

Questions about the precise combination of themes and contributions overall – were there no trade unionists or even retired generals willing to reflect on the issues raised? – should in no way detract from the individual contributions, all of which in some way shed new light or stimulate further thought on the issues they address. Some, such as a reflection on the leadership of women at the grassroots in the fight against AIDS by Martha Chinouya, or an insider’s outsider’s look at the changing configurations of a Nigerian village by Onyeachi Wambu, are essentially case studies. Others such as ‘Time for Change’ by Ndidi Nwuneli, ‘Creating the Business Leaders of Tomorrow’ by Taddy Blecher and ‘2017: Empowering and Engendering the Future’ by Susan and Juliet Kiguli offer vignettes of what might or could be different. Eva Dadrian, Wangui wa Goro and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza address respectively the roles of journalism, translation and intellectual engagement, each fundamentally important to the integrity of the political and social environment in which any leadership can take place.

I am not myself sure how well all these contributions relate to ‘leadership’ either as I understand it or as the issue is framed in the many pertinent questions raised in the introduction. However, this probably does not matter. They certainly relate to identities and personal roles in processes of potential change in Africa and they offer many lessons and food for thought that might not have emerged through a more focused approach. Perhaps this is the difference between a conversation and a debate, and the reason the producers of the book chose the former route.

Reference


Researchers have been going through the tangled forms of wars in developing countries with a finer comb than that of large-N statistical studies. At their best, such studies combine research methods, engage in fieldwork and/or archival research, and test their shapely models with a refreshing clarity and honesty. It has become easier to appreciate that there are varieties of violent conflict and of rationalism. Inside Rebellion is very much in this vein.

Why do some insurgent groups seem committed to abuse and atrocity, while others appear to pursue a kinder rebellion? In Peru, why was one branch of a
rebellion so much more unrestrained in its violence than another? In answering the question, Weinstein shapes a hypothesis and a way of testing it from a host of influences. These include organisational sociology, new institutionalist economics, the largely gloomy ‘resource curse’ literature, and a concern with asymmetric information. But the book does not trot out the banalities of some of the sillier economics of conflict literature and, while it takes the opportunity for rebellion seriously, it does not presume that everyone is motivated exclusively by material gain. Rather, the main argument turns on how rebels deal with a series of organisational challenges that have been given too little attention in the literature: recruitment, control, governance, the use of violence and the need to demonstrate resilience. Through ‘thick description’, interviews and quantitative data, Weinstein explores the cases of the NRA in Uganda, Renamo in Mozambique, and the variation within Peru between the main Sendero Luminoso group and its regional committee in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Any aspiring rebel management has to mobilise resources to tackle these tasks. There are, Weinstein tells us, two types of resource endowment that help: economic endowments and social endowments. This distinction combines with another, between high and low commitment recruits, or between investors in and consumers of rebellion. Economic endowments are simpler to mobilise. Where rebels lack access to resource rents or external aid, they have to get embroiled in the slow and awkward business of cultivating ties of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity with local populations. Inconvenient as this may be, it primes rebels to respect non-combatants: organisation will be more centralised and disciplined, and civilian abuses are unlikely to escalate into a pattern of atrocity. If, however, rebels have access to economic endowments, they use them. This makes it easier to recruit sufficient soldiers and to mount a military challenge to governments. But it means rebel leaders will lead a jumble of high and low commitment recruits – thanks to selective material benefits – without knowing enough about which are which.

Initial endowments affect internal organisation and rebel behaviour. Most dramatically, Weinstein argues that endowments determine atrocity. If Jack Hirshleifer, a pioneer of neo-classical economic theories of violent conflict, suggested that thanks to low opportunity costs the poor had a comparative advantage in violence, Weinstein provides a factor endowment theory of atrocity: the model is Hecksher-Ohlin to Hirshleifer’s Ricardo. Thus, chapter six explains patterns of violence across the case study insurgencies. In rebellions with high economic endowments, low commitment rebels (consumers) go on the rampage, looting, raping, slicing at and shooting civilians. Management has to put up with this to maintain the labour force of rebellion so the abuses go unpunished. Rebels get a bad reputation and civilians avoid them: they become more difficult to control. This encourages further abuse and the pattern is set. In resource-poor insurgencies this behaviour is both less likely – because of a higher share of investors among recruits – and when it does happen more likely to be punished – because of a tighter organisation relying more on relations with non-combatants.

*Inside Rebellion* is brilliantly done – clear, tightly argued, in good command of its cases, and nicely attuned, at the end, to possibilities for further research and analytical probing and to the relevance of the argument for international policy. Some of the most interesting passages are those that engage with the question of what happens – for example, to the FARC in Colombia or to UNITA in Angola – when endowments change; and those that briefly point out the implications of the book’s argument for the value of naming and shaming strategies or for international criminal courts.
Students and researchers will benefit greatly from this book, which will enrich scholarly and policy debates. A number of questions are likely to be raised as a result. The explanation of violence and atrocity, like so many studies, leaps from organisational rationality to the observation of outcomes: it leaves the reader none the wiser about why even low-commitment recruits or consumer-rebels are so vicious. Because of anti-civilian ideologies? Or because of a ‘culture of violence’? Or something else? It is not clear how the model would illuminate, for example, the violence of the Spanish Civil War. Could the savagery of General Queipo de Llana, the cruelty of Franco himself and his early mentor, the beserk General Millán-Astray, or the violence of Lorca’s killers in Granada really be explained by the fact that the Germans and Italians came to the Nationalists’ aid financially while European democracies dithered behind a veil of non-interference? How do we explain the way these rebel leaders and followers were both investors and consumers? How can Republican communist and anarchist viciousness be explained? There are plenty of more recent examples, in which the violence of rebel groups is at least partly a function not of low-commitment rebels poorly controlled by central leaders but of the violence of leaders, their ideologies, and their treatment of lowly recruits.

There are also other ways of exploring the organisational sociology of insurgency, including the Durkheimian ‘grid-group’ matrix allowing for different combinations of institutional lock-in (rules) and institutional bonding, explored by Fithen and Richards in No Peace No War. The book does not help think through the way access to resource rent may help insurgent groups to invest in cultivating social resources of local legitimacy, for in Afghanistan, Angola and elsewhere economic and social resources have been complements rather than only substitutes.

Nor does the book really engage with the origins of insurgency. Is it always the case that prospective rebel entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market and then calculate which resources they can draw on to organise rebellions, rather than rebellion emerging from protracted social processes, in which violent uprising may be a contested option among a number? Might rebel behaviour be linked to the political economy of areas where it emerges? This might involve complex variations in how labour is mobilised or land allocated, and how these are regulated by institutions of local power. Finally, the richest way to explore the arguments of this book further might be through a different case selection, where there might be more intriguing combinations of economic resources and social ties, where atrocity and legitimacy have both been present, and where, perhaps as with the RUF in Sierra Leone, it was perhaps not so much the resource curse of diamonds that explained atrocity as the ‘endowment’ or history of fiercely felt social experiences of relational abuse and exclusion among many young people.


By the time that this review is published most people with a serious interest in the Cameroon Grassfields should already have a copy of Nicolas Argenti’s new and innovative monograph on their shelves. This relatively small upland area in the West and Northwest Provinces of Cameroon has always attracted considerable academic attention because of its rich material culture and complex political
history. Yet books on the Grassfields of this quality and substance are still rare, so this text will quickly take its place alongside the works by Jean-Pierre Warnier and Miriam Goheen and the edited volume by Iain Fowler and David Zeitlyn as absolutely compulsory reading for anyone interested in the area. In many ways this book is a much more exacting read than those volumes, but it repays the effort.

Although this is an ethnography that draws its authority from the intensity of Argenti’s specific fieldwork in the small polity of Oku and his subtle interpretations of the origin myths (chapter 2), witchcraft beliefs (chapter 3) masks, dances and dance associations (chapters 4 to 8) there, it develops a series of extremely bold arguments, which will provoke a much wider audience than just those with a concern for the Grassfields or Cameroon. Argenti’s canvas is ambitious: the book engages any reader interested in questions of the social category ‘youth’, of violence and its legacies, of historicity and memory and of the interpretation of dance. Indeed, given how much of the empirical material in the book is concerned with an analysis of dances, masks and dance associations in Oku it was odd that there is no mention of dance in the book’s subtitle. Argenti’s aim is ‘to analyze from an anthropological standpoint the ways in which the past continues to inform social relations between youth and elites in the present’ (p. 34). Chief amongst these is the way that the legacy of slavery remains important.

Amidst the smug self-congratulations of the 2007 anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade it is good to be reminded of the anarchic violence and genocidal brutality in the ‘human hunting grounds’ that were at the start of the slave commodity chain. The Grassfields were one such place. Central to the book’s argument is the claim that the social consequences of the West African slave trade in the hinterlands where slaves were captured remain relevant today and govern the relationship between youth and elites. If at times this argument seems a little over-determined it is forgivable given that the other explanations for the contemporary antagonism of this social relationship are over-familiar to the point of being hackneyed. If Argenti overstates his case it is perhaps because it is such a distinctive claim.

The book is undoubtedly a significant and substantial contribution to a number of current debates, but (for a number of reasons) it is not an easy read. First, the story it tells and the argument it develops is a profoundly depressing one. From slavery to colonial forced labour to venal post-colonial state, the ‘youth’ of Oku have endured three centuries of systemic exploitation and rank cruelty. Argenti is clinical in his denunciation of all of these forms of domination and his condemnation of the small group of ‘elites’ (who perpetually stand opposite the ‘youth’ and enjoy the benefits that are the concomitant consequence of their suffering) leaves little space for imagining a future rapprochement – although some ideas do emerge in the final chapter. Argenti never romanticises the reaction of ‘youth’ to oppression or talks of resistance, rather he draws on a vocabulary of ‘ambiguity’ and ‘mimesis’ to articulate what the youth can do through dance in response to their powerlessness.

Second, it is not an easy read because Argenti’s arguments about historicity and memory require that it must not be an easy read. There is a theoretically justified determination to resist the emergence of a simple chronological explanatory narrative. The aim (as I understand it) is to prevent his record of events from becoming the record and therefore a memorial (a bad thing in Argenti’s terms because it would suit the elite by providing an end to history) rather than an articulation of the meaning of memory (a good thing because it constantly reminds the elite of their history/culpability). The essence of dance is that it says this without words so it is important (from Argenti’s theoretical-political perspective)
that the subject of the book remains unspoken – which is obviously a challenge for a writer. The beauty of dance from Argenti's point of view is that it speaks the unspoken (which is why it holds such fascination for advocates of non-representational theory). People in Oku do not talk about the legacy of slavery so research methods that rely on talk-data are of no use in supporting his claim. Interpretations of dance fill the gap. But the danger of building an argument on the absence of spoken evidence is that it is very difficult for Argenti to be wrong or rather to be shown to be wrong. In many cases of ethnography readers rely on the interpretation of the ethnographer, but in this instance it becomes more than usually clear that there is little scope for challenging the interpretation.

Third, this is a densely conceptual work that draws on a very wide range of social theory (Freud, Bhabha, Derrida, Lyotard etc.), and despite Argenti’s lyrical and passionate prose style, the conceptual subtleties and virtuoso vocabulary make it a read that requires plenty of time, sustained concentration and a good dictionary. The protestant missionaries from Basel, the first missionaries to reach the Grassfields, would no doubt reassure us that the labour of tackling this text is integral to reaping the many rich rewards it offers. For those of us with less theological inclinations it is the combination of original insights, theoretical ambition and empirical detail that make this such an enthralling, if demanding, text.

This book interrogates the current orthodoxy ‘that corruption is an anathema to development’, which is the central tenet of the recent anti-corruption campaigns of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other unilateral donors (pp. 7–8). The edited volume is an assemblage of critical examinations of the anti-corruption campaigns, in various locales and sectors. It is enriched by contributions from academic fields including geography, development studies, political science, economics, international relations and law – with yet other contributions from practitioners. This breadth is also echoed in the spread of geographical locations examined, which range from Nigeria, the Philippines, Georgia to Nicaragua and others. Given this wide scope it is not surprising that the book emphasises the plurality of anti-corruption experiences, and argues that the effects of the anti-corruption campaigns need to be understood within the political and cultural context in which they are implemented (p. 17). The book highlights inconsistencies between the local experience of the anti-corruption campaigns and the IFIs’ technocratic universalised interpretation of the issue and criticises the application of the same brand of prescriptions ‘from Nigeria to Bulgaria’ (p. 28).

However, the argument is not one for localism. The importance of the international context in which the anti-corruption campaigns arose – even as their effects are felt variously – emerges throughout the volume. Ivanov argues that the origins of the anti-corruption campaigns lie ‘in the interests of the US government, multinational companies and multilateral donors’ (p. 29). In a similar vein, the geo-politics which govern the IFIs’ unequal application of anti-corruption policies is central to Brown, Cloke and Rocha’s analysis of anti-corruption in Nicaragua (pp. 182–201). Moreover, in her chapter on corruption in the Philippines, Co argues that the legacy of colonisation and international inequalities are key to the production of Pilipino corruption (p. 123). Bracking’s
own chapter offers the most in-depth analysis of the international in the book. Her chapter situates the anti-corruption campaigns within international power relations and explores the contradictions that these relations produce in development finance. She highlights how discourses of corruption ‘fix its meanings spatially, with coordinates within related ideas of race, space and nationality’ and so act to structure the international (p. 252).

Central to all the arguments in the book, both those that explore global power relations and local politics, is the relations between corruption and development. Hall-Mathews’ examination of President Mutharika of Malawi’s anti-corruption campaign, for example, reveals that the equation of anti-corruption measures and development allowed him to ‘claim to be pro-development by the fact of making arrests per se’ (p. 82). Moreover, many of the activities of Mutharika’s anti-corruption drive were arguably only targeted at undermining his political opponents. Anti-corruption measures in Malawi thus distracted and detracted from development priorities, rather than furthering them. Hall-Mathew’s conclusion is that corruption is only one issue for development and not necessarily the most significant one (p. 98). The role of the anti-corruption campaign in Malawi in obscuring Mutharika’s political goals is comprehended within the volume as only one example of how the foregrounding of corruption acts to obfuscate. This conceals not only political machinations, but also global inequalities and even the failures of the IMF and World Bank policies (p. 31). This chimerical nature of the anti-corruption campaigns, the book contends, also acts to obscure the gaps between the global and local discourses and Northern states’ culpability for corruption (pp. 28, 303).

The book achieves the objective stated by Bracking, namely to ‘critically review policy and practice in the field of corruption and anti-corruption’ (p. 17). The plurality of the chapters, all of which stand alone, is a great strength of the book and individual chapters may be of great interest to area specialists or, as in the case of Alolo’s work on gender and corruption in Ghana, to scholars with particular research foci. The conclusions of the book and a number of the chapters build on this critical review to problematise the orthodox conception of the relations between corruption and development. The pervasiveness of this orthodoxy in development thinking makes this book a significant critical contribution.
to perform what Robert Wade (1997) has called the “Gramsci effect” (p. 27). Thus, central to the analysis are questions such as: how does the World Bank convince others to accept, and at times enthusiastically embrace, its policies and practices? How does the Bank respond to major challenges to its orthodoxy? How does it manufacture moral and intellectual leadership within the development industry? (p. 27). While not all contributors adhere to the Gramscian tradition, there is certainly a strong current throughout the book that aims to deconstruct and challenge the Bank’s hegemonic notions of development. The Gramscian conception of hegemony provides a crucial lens through which to view the Bank’s discourse and practice, and adds theoretical rigour to the volume.

Moore has re-published several classic texts on the World Bank for this volume (e.g. Robert Wade’s 1996 article in New Left Review on the ‘East Asian miracle’), some in their original form, others moderately or substantially revised for this book. These influential pieces are combined with several original chapters for the book addressing more contemporary issues, and written by ‘new entrants taking the field of what could be labelled “World Bank studies” into uncharted territory’ (p. viii). The book covers an impressive range of topics, including the Bank’s discourses around social capital, sustainable development, participation/ownership, good governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, Moore ends with a provocative chapter written by Patrick Bond calling for the abolition of the Bank, which is based on various positions and perspectives from radical ‘civil society’ formations. The book’s 16 chapters provide an excellent source of information – in one place – for those interested in accessing critical approaches to studying the Bank.

Despite the successful project accomplished by Moore, at least two critical points need to be mentioned regarding the volume. First, and most importantly, the book lacks feminist analysis of the World Bank. In light of the devastating, and disproportionate, consequences of Structural Adjustment for women in the ‘developing’ world, at least one or two chapters written from a feminist perspective would have helped to provide a more complete critique. Feminist critiques of the Bank have constituted some of the most articulate, sophisticated and consistent attempts by scholars and activists to challenge its neoliberal orthodoxy. Moreover, based on the editor’s statement that ‘...it is time to gather together the last decade and a half’s radical analytical assessments of the world’s most visible development institution’ (p. viii), the absence of a feminist critique appears to be a glaring, and potentially debilitating, omission.

Secondly, Moore is highly dismissive in his own chapters of the post-structural theoretical position on several of the issues under question. Although disagreeing on a theoretical and practical level with others is healthy and productive in many ways, Moore does so in a manner that does not truly engage with this perspective. He mentions poststructuralism very briefly, painting a crude caricature of its approach, only to tear down the straw man in due course. If a critique of post-structuralism is to be presented, then it is only appropriate that a more substantial and rigorous engagement with this perspective be elaborated.

Notwithstanding the criticisms raised above, this volume serves as a valuable resource for students, scholars, and activists who are interested in understanding the rhetorical shifts of the Bank during the past 15 years, and potential strategies for struggling against the current hegemony of the Bank.
Immigration from Africa to Europe is a historical phenomenon with important socio-economic and political implications for both continents. Although during the colonial period some level of human movement from the colonies to Europe was allowed, decolonisation brought this type of immigration to an end. Since then, any type of migration has been increasingly politicised in the European political arena. The politicisation of migration was also reflected in the international relations of the EU, particularly with Africa. As can be seen in both the Cotonou Agreement (2000) and the European Neighbourhood Policy with North African countries (2003), the management of immigration constitutes the hot spot of the politics of Euro-African relations. 

This engaging collection includes significantly diverse perspectives from scholars of economics, political science and international relations to practitioners who are currently working for EU-level agencies, including Frontex. The book is structured in two parts, with the first focusing on the contemporary political and economic situations in different regions of Africa and how these have become push factors for individuals. The second part focuses on EU-level responses from the Eurocrats to the legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. In this sense, *Africa and Fortress Europe* is a subtle collection which analyses the Euro-African relations in the context of immigration from both African and European perspectives. The general argument of the book is that the immigration problem should be tackled by African and European actors by focusing on an infamous dictum, “African solutions to African problems”.

The book discusses important issues. The analysis by Kohnert is the most comprehensive chapter, examining the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. It focuses on both socio-political and economic reasons for migration by questioning the rising xenophobia in the Maghreb countries towards immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (p. 42) and European attempts to convert North Africa into a buffer zone with ‘reception centres’ (p. 45). Both are attention-grabbing points that highlight how much European policies have determining and constitutive effects on Africa in the context of immigration. Unfortunately, not all contributors’ analyses are conducted in this particular context, as some studies only briefly mention immigration towards the end of their investigations.

Another criticism of the book is that it does not take the opportunity to connect a political-security analysis to the economic analysis. This separation results in a type of analysis, exemplified by Exenberger’s chapter, that examines the issue from an economic perspective which assumes the existence of ‘rational’ and ‘profit-maximising’ immigrants. This examination disregards the economic conditions under which individuals are forced to migrate. It is questionable to what extent migration in and from Africa is about a rational economic choice, if it is about ‘a choice’ at all. In addition, this type of analysis risks legitimising the rhetoric in Europe that African immigrants are coming to ‘take our jobs away’. Unfortunately, the Hendricks’ chapter on human security in Africa does not adequately address this issue and fails to fully illustrate the economic dimension of political crises.

While the chapters are well constructed, the explanatory framework is not sufficiently

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grounded theoretically. Two points are striking. First, the concept of ‘Fortress Europe’ is not evaluated. None of the contributors, except the Frontex Director, Laitinen, questions the concept. The historically constructed nature of politics should have been brought into the discussion to explain why Europe has become a ‘fortress’ to African immigrants, and why it is not a fortress to, say, Eastern European or North American immigrants. This might be also related to the concept of ‘Islamophobia’, which is repeatedly mentioned, but never developed. No chapter attempts to analyse or problematise this potentially important concept.

These underdeveloped issues leave question marks, one of which concerns the concept of ‘threat’. In the concluding chapter, Gebrewold suggests that readers differentiate between ‘perceived’ and ‘real’ threats (p. 173). This approach is understandable in a literature where immigration cannot be thought of without ‘securitisation’, which is the ‘common sense’ theory of immigration at present. However, if the name of the first part of the book is ‘Threats from Africa’ and if, throughout the chapters, the authors analyse different ‘threats’, it is essential for an editor to give a coherent account of ‘threat’. Many questions might have been asked: Are the threats ‘real’ or ‘perceived’? Perceived by whom? Real for whom? Are ‘perceived’ threats not ‘real’?

The last weak point of the book is its state-centrism. In almost all of the chapters, civil society movements in Africa are neglected in favour of inter-governmental organisations. It is another question why NGOs do not appear as alternative political agencies in Africa where both governmental and inter-governmental structures have suffered from various deficiencies. Therefore, the general argument of the book, ‘African solutions to African problems’, should be strengthened.

To conclude, *Africa and Fortress Europe* is a significant starting point, albeit with shortcomings, for understanding Euro-African relations in the context of immigration. Given the fact that both the crises in Africa and European responses to immigration, such as Frontex, have become ‘real’ security threats for those Africans who are caught in between human traffickers and European border patrols, this is a pressing political issue.
accomplish what she and her husband, Orton Chirwa, believed in.

In the first four sections Vera brings to light how the transition from colonial government to independence created the dictatorial regime through the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi’s first President. Through power struggles and in an effort to legitimise his position, Banda is shown to have developed a mentality of viewing himself as unquestionable, tolerating no critique. This attitude led to the cabinet crisis of 1964, due to policy differences between the leader, some of the ministers, as well as prominent figures such as Vera and Orton Chirwa. Through these political persecutions, the self-rule that many fought for became their worst nightmare. The three sections that follow narrate a story of her family in exile and how she established her career and became the first woman lawyer in southern Africa. It also highlights their passion in politics as a couple wherever they went and how their children suffered and faced many challenges during these struggles of political power. After almost two decades in exile, the couple were abducted back to Malawi, convicted on the grounds of planning to topple Banda’s Government, and sentenced to death through a traditional court. Despite the death sentence, torture, unjust treatment and long period of separation from her husband and children, Vera maintained her will to live.

Back in society in 1993, after over a decade of imprisonment and unfortunately not with her husband who died in 1992, she actively dedicated herself to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights in Malawi. Her account shows how, through leading the transition to a democratic government, Bakili Muluzi fell into the same trap of the desire to cling to power by seeking to extend his terms of presidency and thereby threatening to take Malawi back into the political system that he and numerous others fought so hard to abolish. Vera’s book highlights the important challenges that face young democracies like Malawi. She notes the negative effects of a weak economy and poorly designed and implemented economic and social programmes on the advancement of democracy, and how the worsening conditions turned people to review the old days of the one party regime as better in meeting their needs. The argument is that the masses are still sceptical that democracy has managed to meet their needs as many had hoped for and were promised at the dawn of the era. As such, the temptation to view the old days as glorious is real for some people. In the new democratic era led by Muluzi, corruption has increased considerably while levels of discipline and people’s personal security has declined, making some Malawians uneasy about the new political set up. Vera concludes by highlighting how the political system in Malawi is democratic, but the leaders are not and how this threatens the full development of democracy in the country.

The core of the story is the life of Vera herself. It shows the two sides of Vera: a family person who cares deeply for her family, and a tough and resilient person who suffered and persevered despite political persecutions in all three political eras of Malawi. This remarkable story shows the inhumane treatment that she has suffered, while revealing her strength to stand up and fight for what she believed was right for Malawi and Malawians. Most startling is her ability to forgive those that made her suffer when she could seek justice. Furthermore, after 12 years in prison, Vera refused lucrative offers both abroad and at home as she still wanted to see her dreams come true by working to improve human rights, and making sure that she was in a position to be able to criticize leaders if they were not doing a good job.

However, in 2004 she expressed her interests to stand for the presidency. Here, unfortunately, there are not many details
regarding her change of ambitions from a freedom fighter to a presidential candidate. We are left with no clues as to how she planned to run the country and at the same time provide the much-needed critique to keep the presidency in check. In addition, we do not have much detail on how she cooperated with other opposition leaders in the period leading to the general elections of 2004 and the role she played after she dropped out of the contest for the top seat. It would have been good to have these details in order to appreciate how she envisioned her political future as a presidential figure and how different she would have been from the other leaders. The story being a personal one, it is perhaps understandable that the concepts of human rights and democracy are discussed as taken for granted concepts. For an academic audience, a more critical evaluation of these concepts could have opened up some fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, this is indeed an insightful account of the life of a fearless fighter, as well as of the political transformation and history of Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.


Rufus Norris’s production of Wole Soyinka’s Death and the King’s Horseman at the National Theatre was an arresting piece of theatre that demanded a second viewing simply because there was so much to feed the eye. The statue-filled stage that meets you on your entry into the Olivier Theatre immediately sets the tone for this journey into Yoruba existence and philosophy where the spirit world is an integral part of a very active belief system.

The setting is Oyo, Nigeria, 1943. Iyaloja, the leader of the market women’s stately entrance to ‘ignite’ the opening of this production, played with so much power and grace by Claire Benedict, situates our story in Abeokuta Market, the arena that serves as the ‘playground’ for the protagonist of this story. Elesin Oba, played by the imposing Nonso Anozie, is the King’s Horseman, who has a duty to accompany his dead Lord, the Alafin of Oyo, into the afterlife by committing ritual suicide. It is a duty that demands the ultimate sacrifice from the individual for the benefit of the community, a community that comes alive and inhabits the stage with song and dance, led by the Praise Singer (Giles Terera). The relationship between Elesin and his Praise Singer, articulated through highly poetic and proverbial language and supported by the women’s adoration of their ‘Horseman’ through flirtatious singing and dancing through the market place, keeps the audience engaged throughout the first half. This preparation for the journey into the world of the ancestors takes on a more earthly reality, quite removed from the ritual, when Elesin spots a maiden in whom he wants to plant his seed on this his last day on this earth. Act One closes with the arrangement of both a wedding and a funeral.

Act Two opens in the colonialist quarter, where Simon Pilkings, the British colonial officer, hears of the ritual suicide and decides to intervene by holding Elesin in custody, causing him to fail to perform this ritual which can only be done at a ‘specific time ordained by the cycle of the moon, so there is one night that he can do it and one night alone’. Meanwhile Olunde (Kobna Holbrook Smith), the son of Elesin who has returned from his studies in Britain to bury his father because he is aware of the implications of the traditional custom, is confounded when he becomes aware of the catastrophe

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about to occur and sacrifices himself in a bid to secure the spiritual well being of his people.

Norris’s bold choice to use an all black cast which resulted in the ‘whiting up’ of black actors to play the white colonialists released the humour within this text, for which utmost credit must go to Jenny Jules and Lucian Msamati, for their portrayal of these catalytic characters. Drawing from a Caribbean, African and British experience of white colonialists, these performers displayed the integrity of the colonialists, without caricaturing them, which would have reduced the work to a clash of cultures, which the writer warns against. Rather, this choice allows the production to complicate the reading of these characters, because of the glaring fact the words are being spoken by a black person with a white painted face. The multi-layered implications of this choice served as a constant reminder of whose story was being presented. This controversial choice offers a different perspective to this story, which is told, in effect, by the people it actually happened to. Norris’s subtle introduction of this idea came in the form of the whole cast of 31 taking the stage, in preparation of a story, where members of the ‘community’ are ‘made up’ to play specific characters within the tale. Essentially, signposts were provided which resulted in a big payoff when the Pilkings are revealed in Act Two. But ultimately, what Norris has done with this production is to provide a rare opportunity for the host culture of the West to see themselves as viewed by the ‘other’.

Visually, this production was a feast for the eyes. The first half was an unapologetic thrust into the ‘exotic’, particularly for a standard white National Theatre audience. The many songs and dances and the lyrical nature of the heightened conversation between Elesin and his Praise Singer with its expected pomp and pageantry exceeded my stereotypical expectations. Norris’s execution of this act was for me very measured and served the story rather than playing to the gallery, which could have been an easy choice.

What I have described as ‘the eye of the outsider’ was what stood out in this production. Coming to this production as an outsider in terms of heritage was perhaps a blessing in disguise, as it afforded the director the opportunity to learn and transfer that knowledge to an audience who are largely ignorant of Yoruba culture. The big tree in the centre of the market which then transforms into a skyline of bundles, the ingenious inhabited furniture, the constant cycle of movement on stage, sometimes barely noticeable, were manifestations of the essence of the spirit life of the Yoruba, not consciously written into the script. With the help of his designer Katrina Lindsay and choreographer Javier De Frutos, the gap was bridged between the two cultures, with Peter Badejo, the associate director/consultant as a much-valued guide. The storytelling form was a natural choice, which aided in the created world of the ensemble telling their story and evolving the environment themselves, literally. A thought-provoking, energised and daring production, which left me wanting more.
As developmental realities, policy and research all stumble unproductively along well worn and long contested tramlines, any intellectual venture that tries to do things differently is to be welcomed. This collection of essays, brought together by Onyekachi Wambu with the title *Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa*, certainly offers a fresh approach. It consists of a variety of contributions looking at issues of leadership, and not just political leadership, from a variety of perspectives: the historical, from the top down, from the bottom up, from the present to the future, from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. The book’s declared aim is to promote an open dialogue, located in the personal experience of the authors, ‘under the talking tree’, which aims to move us on from the fixed positions and embedded conflicts of the past. As such it should not be blamed for avoiding, for the most part, the type of explicit political comment that can strangle dialogue at birth. Nor should it be blamed, from an academic perspective, for not offering a comprehensive conceptualisation and definition of leadership. Given the current interest in ‘leadership’ that would be interesting but, again, might close the door on the dialogue the book aims to promote.

However, the book stands as a deliberate collection of essays around a theme and, as such, some concerns can be expressed about notions of leadership that are or are not addressed within its pages. One concerns the conceptualisation of ‘leadership’ as a function in and of itself. As Ali Mazrui usefully explains, there are many possible types and characteristics of leadership, which individual leaders may mix and match in the way they think may serve them best. However, both he and the book neglect to explore the representative function of leadership. In all but the most extreme circumstances, leaders are in fact representing some existing social and political forces, however unrepresentative these may be of a general population. It is surely through an exploration of the multiple facets of this representation that the relationship of the governing and the governed and the accountability of leaders – both stated concerns of the book – can be enhanced.

A second concern relates to who the leaders are to be. Several contributions talk, without additional reflection, of ‘emerging leaders’ and the book, published by a think-tank of the British Council, is related to a wider British Council project aimed at ‘networking and supporting the next generation of African leaders’. Who are these people? Are they simply bright young things with lots of energy and ideas? In which case, fine, but surely they should be supported in whatever direction they most want to serve the further development of their societies? Or are they people who define themselves as simply wanting to become leaders? If the latter, there are surely significant political issues relating to their selection, not least their class. Competence might also be an issue. Experience of real work in the societies they aimed to change was fundamental.
to the development of two great African leaders, Amilcar Cabral and Samora Machel, whose stories are once again not recognised in a collection largely emanating from Anglophone Africa. Yet it was Cabral who not only railed against the ‘ignorance of the historical reality which these movements [liberation movements in general] aspire to transform’ (Cabral 1980, p. 122), but based the strategy of his own country’s fight for freedom on the intimate knowledge of the whole country gained when, as an agricultural engineer, he had conducted an agricultural census of the country.

Questions about the precise combination of themes and contributions overall – were there no trade unionists or even retired generals willing to reflect on the issues raised? – should in no way detract from the individual contributions, all of which in some way shed new light or stimulate further thought on the issues they address. Some, such as a reflection on the leadership of women at the grassroots in the fight against AIDS by Martha Chinouya, or an insider’s/outsider’s look at the changing configurations of a Nigerian village by Onyeachi Wambu, are essentially case studies. Others such as ‘Time for Change’ by Ndidi Nwuneli, ‘Creating the Business Leaders of Tomorrow’ by Taddy Blecher and ‘2017: Empowering and Engendering the Future’ by Susan and Juliet Kiguli offer vignettes of what might or could be different. Eva Dadrian, Wangui wa Goro and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza address respectively the roles of journalism, translation and intellectual engagement, each fundamentally important to the integrity of the political and social environment in which any leadership can take place.

I am not myself sure how well all these contributions relate to ‘leadership’ either as I understand it or as the issue is framed in the many pertinent questions raised in the introduction. However, this probably does not matter. They certainly relate to identities and personal roles in processes of potential change in Africa and they offer many lessons and food for thought that might not have emerged through a more focused approach. Perhaps this is the difference between a conversation and a debate, and the reason the producers of the book chose the former route.

Reference


Researchers have been going through the tangled forms of wars in developing countries with a finer comb than that of large-N statistical studies. At their best, such studies combine research methods, engage in fieldwork and/or archival research, and test their shapely models with a refreshing clarity and honesty. It has become easier to appreciate that there are varieties of violent conflict and of rationalism. Inside Rebellion is very much in this vein.

Why do some insurgent groups seem committed to abuse and atrocity, while others appear to pursue a kinder rebellion? In Peru, why was one branch of a
rebellion so much more unrestrained in its violence than another? In answering the question, Weinstein shapes a hypothesis and a way of testing it from a host of influences. These include organisational sociology, new institutionalist economics, the largely gloomy ‘resource curse’ literature, and a concern with asymmetric information. But the book does not trot out the banalities of some of the sillier economics of conflict literature and, while it takes the opportunity for rebellion seriously, it does not presume that everyone is motivated exclusively by material gain. Rather, the main argument turns on how rebels deal with a series of organisational challenges that have been given too little attention in the literature: recruitment, control, governance, the use of violence and the need to demonstrate resilience. Through ‘thick description’, interviews and quantitative data, Weinstein explores the cases of the NRA in Uganda, Renamo in Mozambique, and the variation within Peru between the main Sendero Luminoso group and its regional committee in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Any aspiring rebel management has to mobilise resources to tackle these tasks. There are, Weinstein tells us, two types of resource endowment that help: economic endowments and social endowments. This distinction combines with another, between high and low commitment recruits, or between investors in and consumers of rebellion. Economic endowments are simpler to mobilise. Where rebels lack access to resource rents or external aid, they have to get embroiled in the slow and awkward business of cultivating ties of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity with local populations. Inconvenient as this may be, it primes rebels to respect non-combatants: organisation will be more centralised and disciplined, and civilian abuses are unlikely to escalate into a pattern of atrocity. If, however, rebels have access to economic endowments, they use them. This makes it easier to recruit sufficient soldiers and to mount a military challenge to governments. But it means rebel leaders will lead a jumble of high and low commitment recruits – thanks to selective material benefits – without knowing enough about which are which.

Initial endowments affect internal organisation and rebel behaviour. Most dramatically, Weinstein argues that endowments determine atrocity. If Jack Hirshleifer, a pioneer of neo-classical economic theories of violent conflict, suggested that thanks to low opportunity costs the poor had a comparative advantage in violence, Weinstein provides a factor endowment theory of atrocity: the model is Hecksher-Ohlin to Hirshleifer’s Ricardo. Thus, chapter six explains patterns of violence across the case study insurgencies. In rebellions with high economic endowments, low commitment rebels (consumers) go on the rampage, looting, raping, slicing at and shooting civilians. Management has to put up with this to maintain the labour force of rebellion so the abuses go unpunished. Rebels get a bad reputation and civilians avoid them: they become more difficult to control. This encourages further abuse and the pattern is set. In resource-poor insurgencies this behaviour is both less likely – because of a higher share of investors among recruits – and when it does happen more likely to be punished – because of a tighter organisation relying more on relations with non-combatants.

Inside Rebellion is brilliantly done – clear, tightly argued, in good command of its cases, and nicely attuned, at the end, to possibilities for further research and analytical probing and to the relevance of the argument for international policy. Some of the most interesting passages are those that engage with the question of what happens – for example, to the FARC in Colombia or to UNITA in Angola – when endowments change; and those that briefly point out the implications of the book’s argument for the value of naming and shaming strategies or for international criminal courts.
Students and researchers will benefit greatly from this book, which will enrich scholarly and policy debates. A number of questions are likely to be raised as a result. The explanation of violence and atrocity, like so many studies, leaps from organisational rationality to the observation of outcomes: it leaves the reader none the wiser about why even low-commitment recruits or consumer-rebels are so vicious. Because of anti-civilian ideologies? Or because of a ‘culture of violence’? Or something else? It is not clear how the model would illuminate, for example, the violence of the Spanish Civil War. Could the savagery of General Queipo de Llana, the cruelty of Franco himself and his early mentor, the beserk General Millán-Astray, or the violence of Lorca’s killers in Granada really be explained by the fact that the Germans and Italians came to the Nationalists’ aid financially while European democracies dithered behind a veil of non-interference? How do we explain the way these rebel leaders and followers were both investors and consumers? How can Republican communist and anarchist viciousness be explained? There are plenty of more recent examples, in which the violence of rebel groups is at least partly a function not of low-commitment rebels poorly controlled by central leaders but of the violence of leaders, their ideologies, and their treatment of lowly recruits.

There are also other ways of exploring the organisational sociology of insurgency, including the Durkheimian ‘grid-group’ matrix allowing for different combinations of institutional lock-in (rules) and institutional bonding, explored by Fithen and Richards in No Peace No War. The book does not help think through the way access to resource rent may help insurgent groups to invest in cultivating social resources of local legitimacy, for in Afghanistan, Angola and elsewhere economic and social resources have been complements rather than only substitutes.

Nor does the book really engage with the origins of insurgency. Is it always the case that prospective rebel entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market and then calculate which resources they can draw on to organise rebellions, rather than rebellion emerging from protracted social processes, in which violent uprising may be a contested option among a number? Might rebel behaviour be linked to the political economy of areas where it emerges? This might involve complex variations in how labour is mobilised or land allocated, and how these are regulated by institutions of local power. Finally, the richest way to explore the arguments of this book further might be through a different case selection, where there might be more intriguing combinations of economic resources and social ties, where atrocity and legitimacy have both been present, and where, perhaps as with the RUF in Sierra Leone, it was perhaps not so much the resource curse of diamonds that explained atrocity as the ‘endowment’ or history of fiercely felt social experiences of relational abuse and exclusion among many young people.


By the time that this review is published most people with a serious interest in the Cameroon Grassfields should already have a copy of Nicolas Argenti’s new and innovative monograph on their shelves. This relatively small upland area in the West and Northwest Provinces of Cameroon has always attracted considerable academic attention because of its rich material culture and complex political
Yet books on the Grassfields of this quality and substance are still rare, so this text will quickly take its place alongside the works by Jean-Pierre Warnier and Miriam Goheen and the edited volume by Iain Fowler and David Zeitlyn as absolutely compulsory reading for anyone interested in the area. In many ways this book is a much more exacting read than those volumes, but it repays the effort.

Although this is an ethnography that draws its authority from the intensity of Argenti’s specific fieldwork in the small polity of Oku and his subtle interpretations of the origin myths (chapter 2), witchcraft beliefs (chapter 3) masks, dances and dance associations (chapters 4 to 8) there, it develops a series of extremely bold arguments, which will provoke a much wider audience than just those with a concern for the Grassfields or Cameroon. Argenti’s canvas is ambitious: the book engages any reader interested in questions of the social category ‘youth’, of violence and its legacies, of historicity and memory and of the interpretation of dance. Indeed, given how much of the empirical material in the book is concerned with an analysis of dances, masks and dance associations in Oku it was odd that there is no mention of dance in the book’s subtitle. Argenti’s aim is ‘to analyze from an anthropological standpoint the ways in which the past continues to inform social relations between youth and elites in the present’ (p. 34). Chief amongst these is the way that the legacy of slavery remains important.

Amidst the smug self-congratulations of the 2007 anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade it is good to be reminded of the anarchic violence and genocidal brutality in the ‘human hunting grounds’ that were at the start of the slave commodity chain. The Grassfields were one such place. Central to the book’s argument is the claim that the social consequences of the West African slave trade in the hinterlands where slaves were captured remain relevant today and govern the relationship between youth and elites. If at times this argument seems a little over-determined it is forgivable given that the other explanations for the contemporary antagonism of this social relationship are over-familiar to the point of being hackneyed. If Argenti overstates his case it is perhaps because it is such a distinctive claim.

The book is undoubtedly a significant and substantial contribution to a number of current debates, but (for a number of reasons) it is not an easy read. First, the story it tells and the argument it develops is a profoundly depressing one. From slavery to colonial forced labour to venal post-colonial state, the ‘youth’ of Oku have endured three centuries of systematic exploitation and rank cruelty. Argenti is clinical in his denunciation of all of these forms of domination and his condemnation of the small group of ‘elites’ (who perpetually stand opposite the ‘youth’ and enjoy the benefits that are the concomitant consequence of their suffering) leaves little space for imagining a future rapprochement – although some ideas do emerge in the final chapter. Argenti never romanticises the reaction of ‘youth’ to oppression or talks of resistance, rather he draws on a vocabulary of ‘ambiguity’ and ‘mimesis’ to articulate what the youth can do through dance in response to their powerlessness.

Second, it is not an easy read because Argenti’s arguments about historicity and memory require that it must not be an easy read. There is a theoretically justified determination to resist the emergence of a simple chronological explanatory narrative. The aim (as I understand it) is to prevent his record of events from becoming *the record* and therefore a memorial (a bad thing in Argenti’s terms because it would suit the elite by providing an end to history) rather than an articulation of the meaning of memory (a good thing because it constantly reminds the elite of *their* history/culpability). The essence of dance is that it says this without words so it is important (from Argenti’s theoretical-political perspective)
that the subject of the book remains unspoken – which is obviously a challenge for a writer. The beauty of dance from Argenti’s point of view is that it speaks the unspoken (which is why it holds such fascination for advocates of non-representational theory). People in Oku do not talk about the legacy of slavery so research methods that rely on talk-data are of no use in supporting his claim. Interpretations of dance fill the gap. But the danger of building an argument on the absence of spoken evidence is that it is very difficult for Argenti to be wrong or rather to be shown to be wrong. In many cases of ethnography readers rely on the interpretation of the ethnographer, but in this instance it becomes more than usually clear that there is little scope for challenging the interpretation.

Third, this is a densely conceptual work that draws on a very wide range of social theory (Freud, Bhabha, Derrida, Lyotard etc.), and despite Argenti’s lyrical and passionate prose style, the conceptual subtleties and virtuoso vocabulary make it a read that requires plenty of time, sustained concentration and a good dictionary. The protestant missionaries from Basel, the first missionaries to reach the Grassfields, would no doubt reassure us that the labour of tackling this text is integral to reaping the many rich rewards it offers. For those of us with less theological inclinations it is the combination of original insights, theoretical ambition and empirical detail that make this such an enthralling, if demanding, text.

This book interrogates the current orthodoxy ‘that corruption is an anathema to development’, which is the central tenet of the recent anti-corruption campaigns of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other unilateral donors (pp. 7–8). The edited volume is an assemblage of critical examinations of the anti-corruption campaigns, in various locales and sectors. It is enriched by contributions from academic fields including geography, development studies, political science, economics, international relations and law – with yet other contributions from practitioners. This breadth is also echoed in the spread of geographical locations examined, which range from Nigeria, the Philippines, Georgia to Nicaragua and others. Given this wide scope it is not surprising that the book emphasises the plurality of anti-corruption experiences, and argues that the effects of the anti-corruption campaigns need to be understood within the political and cultural context in which they are implemented (p. 17). The book highlights inconsistencies between the local experience of the anti-corruption campaigns and the IFIs’ technocratic universalised interpretation of the issue and criticises the application of the same brand of prescriptions ‘from Nigeria to Bulgaria’ (p. 28).

However, the argument is not one for localism. The importance of the international context in which the anti-corruption campaigns arose – even as their effects are felt variously – emerges throughout the volume. Ivanov argues that the origins of the anti-corruption campaigns lie “in the interests of the US government, multinational companies and multilateral donors” (p. 29). In a similar vein, the geo-politics which govern the IFIs’ unequal application of anti-corruption policies is central to Brown, Cloke and Rocha’s analysis of anti-corruption in Nicaragua (pp. 182–201). Moreover, in her chapter on corruption in the Philippines, Co argues that the legacy of colonisation and international inequalities are key to the production of Pilipino corruption (p. 123). Bracking’s
own chapter offers the most in-depth analysis of the international in the book. Her chapter situates the anti-corruption campaigns within international power relations and explores the contradictions that these relations produce in development finance. She highlights how discourses of corruption ‘fix its meanings spatially, with coordinates within related ideas of race, space and nationality’ and so act to structure the international (p. 252).

Central to all the arguments in the book, both those that explore global power relations and local politics, is the relations between corruption and development. Hall-Mathews’ examination of President Mutharika of Malawi’s anti-corruption campaign, for example, reveals that the equation of anti-corruption measures and development allowed him to ‘claim to be pro-development by the fact of making arrests per se’ (p. 82). Moreover, many of the activities of Mutharika’s anti-corruption drive were arguably only targeted at undermining his political opponents. Anti-corruption measures in Malawi thus distracted and detracted from development priorities, rather than furthering them. Hall-Mathews’ conclusion is that corruption is only one issue for development and not necessarily the most significant one (p. 98). The role of the anti-corruption campaign in Malawi in obscuring Mutharika’s political goals is comprehended within the volume as only one example of how the foregrounding of corruption acts to obfuscate. This conceals not only political machinations, but also global inequalities and even the failures of the IMF and World Bank policies (p. 31). This chimerical nature of the anti-corruption campaigns, the book contends, also acts to obscure the gaps between the global and local discourses and Northern states’ culpability for corruption (pp. 28, 303).

The book achieves the objective stated by Bracking, namely to ‘critically review policy and practice in the field of corruption and anti-corruption’ (p. 17). The plurality of the chapters, all of which stand alone, is a great strength of the book and individual chapters may be of great interest to area specialists or, as in the case of Alolo’s work on gender and corruption in Ghana, to scholars with particular research foci. The conclusions of the book and a number of the chapters build on this critical review to problematise the orthodox conception of the relations between corruption and development. The pervasiveness of this orthodoxy in development thinking makes this book a significant critical contribution.
to perform what Robert Wade (1997) has called the “Gramsci effect” (p. 27). Thus, central to the analysis are questions such as: how does the World Bank convince others to accept, and at times enthusiastically embrace, its policies and practices? How does the Bank respond to major challenges to its orthodoxy? How does it manufacture moral and intellectual leadership within the development industry? (p. 27). While not all contributors adhere to the Gramscian tradition, there is certainly a strong current throughout the book that aims to deconstruct and challenge the Bank’s hegemonic notions of development. The Gramscian conception of hegemony provides a crucial lens through which to view the Bank’s discourse and practice, and adds theoretical rigour to the volume.

Moore has re-published several classic texts on the World Bank for this volume (e.g. Robert Wade’s 1996 article in New Left Review on the ‘East Asian miracle’), some in their original form, others moderately or substantially revised for this book. These influential pieces are combined with several original chapters for the book addressing more contemporary issues, and written by ‘new entrants taking the field of what could be labelled “World Bank studies” into uncharted territory’ (p. viii). The book covers an impressive range of topics, including the Bank’s discourses around social capital, sustainable development, participation/ownership, good governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, Moore ends with a provocative chapter written by Patrick Bond calling for the abolition of the Bank, which is based on various positions and perspectives from radical ‘civil society’ formations. The book’s 16 chapters provide an excellent source of information – in one place – for those interested in accessing critical approaches to studying the Bank.

Despite the successful project accomplished by Moore, at least two critical points need to be mentioned regarding the volume. First, and most importantly, the book lacks feminist analysis of the World Bank. In light of the devastating, and disproportionate, consequences of Structural Adjustment for women in the ‘developing’ world, at least one or two chapters written from a feminist perspective would have helped to provide a more complete critique. Feminist critiques of the Bank have constituted some of the most articulate, sophisticated and consistent attempts by scholars and activists to challenge its neoliberal orthodoxy. Moreover, based on the editor’s statement that “…it is time to gather together the last decade and a half’s radical analytical assessments of the world’s most visible development institution’ (p. viii), the absence of a feminist critique appears to be a glaring, and potentially debilitating, omission.

Secondly, Moore is highly dismissive in his own chapters of the post-structural theoretical position on several of the issues under question. Although disagreeing on a theoretical and practical level with others is healthy and productive in many ways, Moore does so in a manner that does not truly engage with this perspective. He mentions post-structuralism very briefly, painting a crude caricature of its approach, only to tear down the straw man in due course. If a critique of post-structuralism is to be presented, then it is only appropriate that a more substantial and rigorous engagement with this perspective be elaborated.

Notwithstanding the criticisms raised above, this volume serves as a valuable resource for students, scholars, and activists who are interested in understanding the rhetorical shifts of the Bank during the past 15 years, and potential strategies for struggling against the current hegemony of the Bank.
Immigration from Africa to Europe is a historical phenomenon with important socio-economic and political implications for both continents. Although during the colonial period some level of human movement from the colonies to Europe was allowed, decolonisation brought this type of immigration to an end. Since then, any type of migration has been increasingly politicised in the European political arena. The politicisation of migration was also reflected in the international relations of the EU, particularly with Africa. As can be seen in both the Cotonou Agreement (2000) and the European Neighbourhood Policy with North African countries (2003), the management of immigration constitutes the hot spot of the politics of Euro-African relations. Africa and Fortress Europe aims to study this relationship in context of immigration, thus contributing to the Euro-African literature on relations by bringing the immigration dynamic into the discussion.

This engaging collection includes significantly diverse perspectives from scholars of economics, political science and international relations to practitioners who are currently working for EU-level agencies, including Frontex. The book is structured in two parts, with the first focusing on the contemporary political and economic situations in different regions of Africa and how these have become push factors for individuals. The second part focuses on EU-level responses from the Eurocrats to the legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. In this sense, Africa and Fortress Europe is a subtle collection which analyses the Euro-African relations in the context of immigration from both African and European perspectives. The general argument of the book is that the immigration problem should be tackled by African and European actors by focusing on an infamous dictum, "African solutions to African problems".

The book discusses important issues. The analysis by Kohnert is the most comprehensive chapter, examining the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. It focuses on both socio-political and economic reasons for migration by questioning the rising xenophobia in the Maghreb countries towards immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (p. 42) and European attempts to convert North Africa into a buffer zone with 'reception centres' (p. 45). Both are attention-grabbing points that highlight how much European policies have determining and constitutive effects on Africa in the context of immigration. Unfortunately, not all contributors’ analyses are conducted in this particular context, as some studies only briefly mention immigration towards the end of their investigations.

Another criticism of the book is that it does not take the opportunity to connect a political-security analysis to the economic analysis. This separation results in a type of analysis, exemplified by Exenberger’s chapter, that examines the issue from an economic perspective which assumes the existence of ‘rational’ and ‘profit-maximising’ immigrants. This examination disregards the economic conditions under which individuals are forced to migrate. It is questionable to what extent migration in and from Africa is about a rational economic choice, if it is about ‘a choice’ at all. In addition, this type of analysis risks legitimising the rhetoric in Europe that African immigrants are coming to ‘take our jobs away’. Unfortunately, the Hendricks’ chapter on human security in Africa does not adequately address this issue and fails to fully illustrate the economic dimension of political crises.

While the chapters are well constructed, the explanatory framework is not sufficiently
grounded theoretically. Two points are striking. First, the concept of ‘Fortress Europe’ is not evaluated. None of the contributors, except the Frontex Director, Laitinen, questions the concept. The historically constructed nature of politics should have been brought into the discussion to explain why Europe has become a ‘fortress’ to African immigrants, and why it is not a fortress to, say, Eastern European or North American immigrants. This might be also related to the concept of ‘Islamophobia’, which is repeatedly mentioned, but never developed. No chapter attempts to analyse or problematise this potentially important concept.

These underdeveloped issues leave question marks, one of which concerns the concept of ‘threat’. In the concluding chapter, Gebrewold suggests that readers differentiate between ‘perceived’ and ‘real’ threats (p. 173). This approach is understandable in a literature where immigration cannot be thought of without ‘securitisation’, which is the ‘common sense’ theory of immigration at present. However, if the name of the first part of the book is ‘Threats from Africa’ and if, throughout the chapters, the authors analyse different ‘threats’, it is essential for an editor to give a coherent account of ‘threat’. Many questions might have been asked: Are the threats ‘real’ or ‘perceived’? Perceived by whom? Real for whom? Are ‘perceived’ threats not ‘real’?

The last weak point of the book is its state-centrism. In almost all of the chapters, civil society movements in Africa are neglected in favour of inter-governmental organisations. It is another question why NGOs do not appear as alternative political agencies in Africa where both governmental and inter-governmental structures have suffered from various deficiencies. Therefore, the general argument of the book, ‘African solutions to African problems’, should be strengthened.

To conclude, Africa and Fortress Europe is a significant starting point, albeit with shortcomings, for understanding Euro-African relations in the context of immigration. Given the fact that both the crises in Africa and European responses to immigration, such as Frontex, have become ‘real’ security threats for those Africans who are caught in between human traffickers and European border patrols, this is a pressing political issue.


Vera Chirwa’s remarkable book takes the reader to deep insights into political struggles and the meaning of freedom in Malawi. While it is a personal account demonstrating her selflessness, perseverance and hope in bringing freedom and justice to Malawi, the story reveals an important political history of the country. The story brings to light the struggles that Malawian political fighters encountered in their quest to bring freedom and justice to the country, from the fight against colonialism, federation and racism during the colonial administration to the fight against the dictatorial one party regime, under which many political opponents were subjected to inhumane treatment through unfair trials, long periods of detention without trial and in some cases unexplained deaths. The story also highlights the harsh realities and sacrifices that Vera, as a woman, a mother and a wife, had to go through in order to achieve her ambitions and
accomplish what she and her husband, Orton Chirwa, believed in.

In the first four sections Vera brings to light how the transition from colonial government to independence created the dictatorial regime through the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi’s first President. Through power struggles and in an effort to legitimise his position, Banda is shown to have developed a mentality of viewing himself as unquestionable, tolerating no critique. This attitude led to the cabinet crisis of 1964, due to policy differences between the leader, some of the ministers, as well as prominent figures such as Vera and Orton Chirwa. Through these political persecutions, the self-rule that many fought for became their worst nightmare. The three sections that follow narrate a story of her family in exile and how she established her career and became the first woman lawyer in southern Africa. It also highlights their passion in politics as a couple wherever they went and how their children suffered and faced many challenges during these struggles of political power. After almost two decades in exile, the couple were abducted back to Malawi, convicted on the grounds of planning to topple Banda’s Government, and sentenced to death through a traditional court. Despite the death sentence, torture, unjust treatment and long period of separation from her husband and children, Vera maintained her will to live.

Back in society in 1993, after over a decade of imprisonment and unfortunately not with her husband who died in 1992, she actively dedicated herself to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights in Malawi. Her account shows how, through leading the transition to a democratic government, Bakili Muluzi fell into the same trap of the desire to cling to power by seeking to extend his terms of presidency and thereby threatening to take Malawi back into the political system that he and numerous others fought so hard to abolish. Vera’s book highlights the important challenges that face young democracies like Malawi. She notes the negative effects of a weak economy and poorly designed and implemented economic and social programmes on the advancement of democracy, and how the worsening conditions turned people to review the old days of the one party regime as better in meeting their needs. The argument is that the masses are still sceptical that democracy has managed to meet their needs as many had hoped for and were promised at the dawn of the era. As such, the temptation to view the old days as glorious is real for some people. In the new democratic era led by Muluzi, corruption has increased considerably while levels of discipline and people’s personal security has declined, making some Malawians uneasy about the new political set up. Vera concludes by highlighting how the political system in Malawi is democratic, but the leaders are not and how this threatens the full development of democracy in the country.

The core of the story is the life of Vera herself. It shows the two sides of Vera: a family person who cares deeply for her family, and a tough and resilient person who suffered and persevered despite political persecutions in all three political eras of Malawi. This remarkable story shows the inhumane treatment that she has suffered, while revealing her strength to stand up and fight for what she believed was right for Malawi and Malawians. Most startling is her ability to forgive those that made her suffer when she could seek justice. Furthermore, after 12 years in prison, Vera refused lucrative offers both abroad and at home as she still wanted to see her dreams come true by working to improve human rights, and making sure that she was in a position to be able to criticize leaders if they were not doing a good job.

However, in 2004 she expressed her interests to stand for the presidency. Here, unfortunately, there are not many details
regarding her change of ambitions from a freedom fighter to a presidential candidate. We are left with no clues as to how she planned to run the country and at the same time provide the much-needed critique to keep the presidency in check. In addition, we do not have much detail on how she cooperated with other opposition leaders in the period leading to the general elections of 2004 and the role she played after she dropped out of the contest for the top seat. It would have been good to have these details in order to appreciate how she envisioned her political future as a presidential figure and how different she would have been from the other leaders. The story being a personal one, it is perhaps understandable that the concepts of human rights and democracy are discussed as taken for granted concepts. For an academic audience, a more critical evaluation of these concepts could have opened up some fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, this is indeed an insightful account of the life of a fearless fighter, as well as of the political transformation and history of Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.


Rufus Norris’s production of Wole Soyinka’s Death and the King’s Horseman at the National Theatre was an arresting piece of theatre that demanded a second viewing simply because there was so much to feed the eye. The statue-filled stage that meets you on your entry into the Olivier Theatre immediately sets the tone for this journey into Yoruba existence and philosophy where the spirit world is an integral part of a very active belief system.

The setting is Oyo, Nigeria, 1943. Iyalọja, the leader of the market women's statey entrance to ‘ignite’ the opening of this production, played with so much power and grace by Claire Benedict, situates our story in Abeokuta Market, the arena that serves as the ‘playground’ for the protagonist of this story. Elesin Oba, played by the imposing Nonso Anozie, is the King’s Horseman, who has a duty to accompany his dead Lord, the Alafin of Oyo, into the afterlife by committing ritual suicide. It is a duty that demands the ultimate sacrifice from the individual for the benefit of the community, a community that comes alive and inhabits the stage with song and dance, led by the Praise Singer (Giles Terera). The relationship between Elesin and his Praise Singer, articulated through highly poetic and proverbial language and supported by the women’s adoration of their ‘Horseman’ through flirtatious singing and dancing through the market place, keeps the audience engaged throughout the first half. This preparation for the journey into the world of the ancestors takes on a more earthly reality, quite removed from the ritual, when Elesin spots a maiden in whom he wants to plant his seed on this his last day on this earth. Act One closes with the arrangement of both a wedding and a funeral.

Act Two opens in the colonialist quarter, where Simon Pilkings, the British colonial officer, hears of the ritual suicide and decides to intervene by holding Elesin in custody, causing him to fail to perform this ritual which can only be done at a ‘specific time ordained by the cycle of the moon, so there is one night that he can do it and one night alone’. Meanwhile Olunde (Kobna Holbrook Smith), the son of Elesin who has returned from his studies in Britain to bury his father because he is aware of the implications of the traditional custom, is confounded when he becomes aware of the catastrophe.
about to occur and sacrifices himself in a bid to secure the spiritual well being of his people.

Norris’s bold choice to use an all black cast which resulted in the ‘whiting up’ of black actors to play the white colonialists released the humour within this text, for which utmost credit must go to Jenny Jules and Lucian Msamati, for their portrayal of these catalytic characters. Drawing from a Caribbean, African and British experience of white colonialists, these performers displayed the integrity of the colonialists, without caricaturing them, which would have reduced the work to a clash of cultures, which the writer warns against. Rather, this choice allows the production to complicate the reading of these characters, because of the glaring fact the words are being spoken by a black person with a white painted face. The multi-layered implications of this choice served as a constant reminder of whose story was being presented. This controversial choice offers a different perspective to this story, which is told, in effect, by the people it actually happened to. Norris’s subtle introduction of this idea came in the form of the whole cast of 31 taking the stage, in preparation of a story, where members of the ‘community’ are ‘made up’ to play specific characters within the tale. Essentially, signposts were provided which resulted in a big payoff when the Pilkings are revealed in Act Two. But ultimately, what Norris has done with this production is to provide a rare opportunity for the host culture of the West to see themselves as viewed by the ‘other’.

Visually, this production was a feast for the eyes. The first half was an unapologetic thrust into the ‘exotic’, particularly for a standard white National Theatre audience. The many songs and dances and the lyrical nature of the heightened conversation between Elesin and his Praise Singer with its expected pomp and pageantry exceeded my stereotypical expectations. Norris’s execution of this act was for me very measured and served the story rather than playing to the gallery, which could have been an easy choice.

What I have described as ‘the eye of the outsider’ was what stood out in this production. Coming to this production as an outsider in terms of heritage was perhaps a blessing in disguise, as it afforded the director the opportunity to learn and transfer that knowledge to an audience who are largely ignorant of Yoruba culture. The big tree in the centre of the market which then transforms into a skyline of bundles, the ingenious inhabited furniture, the constant cycle of movement on stage, sometimes barely noticeable, were manifestations of the essence of the spirit life of the Yoruba, not consciously written into the script. With the help of his designer Katrina Lindsay and choreographer Javier De Frutos, the gap was bridged between the two cultures, with Peter Badejo, the associate director/consultant as a much-valued guide. The storytelling form was a natural choice, which aided in the created world of the ensemble telling their story and evolving the environment themselves, literally. A thought-provoking, energised and daring production, which left me wanting more.
As developmental realities, policy and research all stumble unproductively along well worn and long contested tramlines, any intellectual venture that tries to do things differently is to be welcomed. This collection of essays, brought together by Onyekachi Wambu with the title Under the Tree of Talking: Leadership for Change in Africa, certainly offers a fresh approach. It consists of a variety of contributions looking at issues of leadership, and not just political leadership, from a variety of perspectives: the historical, from the top down, from the bottom up, from the present to the future, from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. The book’s declared aim is to promote an open dialogue, located in the personal experience of the authors, ‘under the talking tree’, which aims to move us on from the fixed positions and embedded conflicts of the past. As such it should not be blamed for avoiding, for the most part, the type of explicit political comment that can strangle dialogue at birth. Nor should it be blamed, from an academic perspective, for not offering a comprehensive conceptualisation and definition of leadership. Given the current interest in ‘leadership’ that would be interesting but, again, might close the door on the dialogue the book aims to promote.

However, the book stands as a deliberate collection of essays around a theme and, as such, some concerns can be expressed about notions of leadership that are or are not addressed within its pages. One concerns the conceptualisation of ‘leadership’ as a function in and of itself. As Ali Mazrui usefully explains, there are many possible types and characteristics of leadership, which individual leaders may mix and match in the way they think may serve them best. However, both he and the book neglect to explore the representative function of leadership. In all but the most extreme circumstances, leaders are in fact representing some existing social and political forces, however unrepresentative these may be of a general population. It is surely through an exploration of the multiple facets of this representation that the relationship of the governing and the governed and the accountability of leaders – both stated concerns of the book – can be enhanced.

A second concern relates to who the leaders are to be. Several contributions talk, without additional reflection, of ‘emerging leaders’ and the book, published by a think-tank of the British Council, is related to a wider British Council project aimed at ‘networking and supporting the next generation of African leaders’. Who are these people? Are they simply bright young things with lots of energy and ideas? In which case, fine, but surely they should be supported in whatever direction they most want to serve the further development of their societies? Or are they people who define themselves as simply wanting to become leaders? If the latter, there are surely significant political issues relating to their selection, not least their class. Competence might also be an issue. Experience of real work in the societies they aimed to change was fundamental...
to the development of two great African leaders, Amílcar Cabral and Samora Machel, whose stories are once again not recognised in a collection largely emanating from Anglophone Africa. Yet it was Cabral who not only railed against the ‘ignorance of the historical reality which these movements [liberation movements in general] aspire to transform’ (Cabral 1980, p. 122), but based the strategy of his own country’s fight for freedom on the intimate knowledge of the whole country gained when, as an agricultural engineer, he had conducted an agricultural census of the country.

Questions about the precise combination of themes and contributions overall – were there no trade unionists or even retired generals willing to reflect on the issues raised? – should in no way detract from the individual contributions, all of which in some way shed new light or stimulate further thought on the issues they address. Some, such as a reflection on the leadership of women at the grassroots in the fight against AIDS by Martha Chinouya, or an insider’s/outsider’s look at the changing configurations of a Nigerian village by Onyeachi Wambu, are essentially case studies. Others such as ‘Time for Change’ by Ndidi Nwuneli, ‘Creating the Business Leaders of Tomorrow’ by Taddy Blecher and ‘2017: Empowering and Engendering the Future’ by Susan and Juliet Kiguli offer vignettes of what might or could be different. Eva Dadrian, Wangüi wa Goro and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza address respectively the roles of journalism, translation and intellectual engagement, each fundamentally important to the integrity of the political and social environment in which any leadership can take place.

I am not myself sure how well all these contributions relate to ‘leadership’ either as I understand it or as the issue is framed in the many pertinent questions raised in the introduction. However, this probably does not matter. They certainly relate to identities and personal roles in processes of potential change in Africa and they offer many lessons and food for thought that might not have emerged through a more focused approach. Perhaps this is the difference between a conversation and a debate, and the reason the producers of the book chose the former route.

Reference


Researchers have been going through the tangled forms of wars in developing countries with a finer comb than that of large-N statistical studies. At their best, such studies combine research methods, engage in fieldwork and/or archival research, and test their shapely models with a refreshing clarity and honesty. It has become easier to appreciate that there are varieties of violent conflict and of rationalism. Inside Rebellion is very much in this vein.

Why do some insurgent groups seem committed to abuse and atrocity, while others appear to pursue a kinder rebellion? In Peru, why was one branch of a
rebellion so much more unrestrained in its violence than another? In answering the question, Weinstein shapes a hypothesis and a way of testing it from a host of influences. These include organisational sociology, new institutionalist economics, the largely gloomy ‘resource curse’ literature, and a concern with asymmetric information. But the book does not trot out the banalities of some of the sillier economics of conflict literature and, while it takes the opportunity for rebellion seriously, it does not presume that everyone is motivated exclusively by material gain. Rather, the main argument turns on how rebels deal with a series of organisational challenges that have been given too little attention in the literature: recruitment, control, governance, the use of violence and the need to demonstrate resilience. Through ‘thick description’, interviews and quantitative data, Weinstein explores the cases of the NRA in Uganda, Renamo in Mozambique, and the variation within Peru between the main Sendero Luminoso group and its regional committee in the Upper Huallaga Valley.

Any aspiring rebel management has to mobilise resources to tackle these tasks. There are, Weinstein tells us, two types of resource endowment that help: economic endowments and social endowments. This distinction combines with another, between high and low commitment recruits, or between investors in and consumers of rebellion. Economic endowments are simpler to mobilise. Where rebels lack access to resource rents or external aid, they have to get embroiled in the slow and awkward business of cultivating ties of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity with local populations. Inconvenient as this may be, it primes rebels to respect non-combatants: organisation will be more centralised and disciplined, and civilian abuses are unlikely to escalate into a pattern of atrocity. If, however, rebels have access to economic endowments, they use them. This makes it easier to recruit sufficient soldiers and to mount a military challenge to governments. But it means rebel leaders will lead a jumble of high and low commitment recruits – thanks to selective material benefits – without knowing enough about which are which.

Initial endowments affect internal organisation and rebel behaviour. Most dramatically, Weinstein argues that endowments determine atrocity. If Jack Hirshleifer, a pioneer of neo-classical economic theories of violent conflict, suggested that thanks to low opportunity costs the poor had a comparative advantage in violence, Weinstein provides a factor endowment theory of atrocity: the model is Hecksher-Ohlin to Hirshleifer’s Ricardo. Thus, chapter six explains patterns of violence across the case study insurgencies. In rebellions with high economic endowments, low commitment rebels (consumers) go on the rampage, looting, raping, slicing at and shooting civilians. Management has to put up with this to maintain the labour force of rebellion so the abuses go unpunished. Rebels get a bad reputation and civilians avoid them: they become more difficult to control. This encourages further abuse and the pattern is set. In resource-poor insurgencies this behaviour is both less likely – because of a higher share of investors among recruits – and when it does happen more likely to be punished – because of a tighter organisation relying more on relations with non-combatants.

*Inside Rebellion* is brilliantly done – clear, tightly argued, in good command of its cases, and nicely attuned, at the end, to possibilities for further research and analytical probing and to the relevance of the argument for international policy. Some of the most interesting passages are those that engage with the question of what happens – for example, to the FARC in Colombia or to UNITA in Angola – when endowments change; and those that briefly point out the implications of the book’s argument for the value of naming and shaming strategies or for international criminal courts.
Students and researchers will benefit greatly from this book, which will enrich scholarly and policy debates. A number of questions are likely to be raised as a result. The explanation of violence and atrocity, like so many studies, leaps from organisational rationality to the observation of outcomes: it leaves the reader none the wiser about why even low-commitment recruits or consumer-rebels are so vicious. Because of anti-civilian ideologies? Or because of a ‘culture of violence’? Or something else? It is not clear how the model would illuminate, for example, the violence of the Spanish Civil War. Could the savagery of General Queipo de Llana, the cruelty of Franco himself and his early mentor, the beserk General Millán-Astray, or the violence of Lorca’s killers in Granada really be explained by the fact that the Germans and Italians came to the Nationalists’ aid financially while European democracies dithered behind a veil of non-interference? How do we explain the way these rebel leaders and followers were both investors and consumers? How can Republican communist and anarchist viciousness be explained? There are plenty of more recent examples, in which the violence of rebel groups is at least partly a function not of low-commitment rebels poorly controlled by central leaders but of the violence of leaders, their ideologies, and their treatment of lowly recruits.

There are also other ways of exploring the organisational sociology of insurgency, including the Durkheimian ‘grid-group’ matrix allowing for different combinations of institutional lock-in (rules) and institutional bonding, explored by Fithen and Richards in No Peace No War. The book does not help think through the way access to resource rent may help insurgent groups to invest in cultivating social resources of local legitimacy, for in Afghanistan, Angola and elsewhere economic and social resources have been complements rather than only substitutes.

Nor does the book really engage with the origins of insurgency. Is it always the case that prospective rebel entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market and then calculate which resources they can draw on to organise rebellions, rather than rebellion emerging from protracted social processes, in which violent uprising may be a contested option among a number? Might rebel behaviour be linked to the political economy of areas where it emerges? This might involve complex variations in how labour is mobilised or land allocated, and how these are regulated by institutions of local power. Finally, the richest way to explore the arguments of this book further might be through a different case selection, where there might be more intriguing combinations of economic resources and social ties, where atrocity and legitimacy have both been present, and where, perhaps as with the RUF in Sierra Leone, it was perhaps not so much the resource curse of diamonds that explained atrocity as the ‘endowment’ or history of fiercely felt social experiences of relational abuse and exclusion among many young people.


By the time that this review is published most people with a serious interest in the Cameroon Grassfields should already have a copy of Nicolas Argenti’s new and innovative monograph on their shelves. This relatively small upland area in the West and Northwest Provinces of Cameroon has always attracted considerable academic attention because of its rich material culture and complex political
history. Yet books on the Grassfields of this quality and substance are still rare, so this text will quickly take its place alongside the works by Jean-Pierre Warnier and Miriam Goheen and the edited volume by Iain Fowler and David Zeitlyn as absolutely compulsory reading for anyone interested in the area. In many ways this book is a much more exacting read than those volumes, but it repays the effort.

Although this is an ethnography that draws its authority from the intensity of Argenti’s specific fieldwork in the small polity of Oku and his subtle interpretations of the origin myths (chapter 2), witchcraft beliefs (chapter 3) masks, dances and dance associations (chapters 4 to 8) there, it develops a series of extremely bold arguments, which will provoke a much wider audience than just those with a concern for the Grassfields or Cameroon. Argenti’s canvas is ambitious: the book engages any reader interested in questions of the social category ‘youth’, of violence and its legacies, of historicity and memory and of the interpretation of dance. Indeed, given how much of the empirical material in the book is concerned with an analysis of dances, masks and dance associations in Oku it was odd that there is no mention of dance in the book’s subtitle. Argenti’s aim is ‘to analyze from an anthropological standpoint the ways in which the past continues to inform social relations between youth and elites in the present’ (p. 34). Chief amongst these is the way that the legacy of slavery remains important.

Second, it is not an easy read because Argenti’s arguments about historicity and memory require that it must not be an easy read. There is a theoretically justified determination to resist the emergence of a simple chronological explanatory narrative. The aim (as I understand it) is to prevent his record of events from becoming the record and therefore a memorial (a bad thing in Argenti’s terms because it would suit the elite by providing an end to history) rather than an articulation of the meaning of memory (a good thing because it constantly reminds the elite of their history/ culpability). The essence of dance is that it says this without words so it is important (from Argenti’s theoretical-political perspective)
that the subject of the book remains unspoken – which is obviously a challenge for a writer. The beauty of dance from Argenti’s point of view is that it speaks the unspoken (which is why it holds such fascination for advocates of non-representational theory). People in Oku do not talk about the legacy of slavery so research methods that rely on talk-data are of no use in supporting his claim. Interpretations of dance fill the gap. But the danger of building an argument on the absence of spoken evidence is that it is very difficult for Argenti to be wrong or rather to be shown to be wrong. In many cases of ethnography readers rely on the interpretation of the ethnographer, but in this instance it becomes more than usually clear that there is little scope for challenging the interpretation.

Third, this is a densely conceptual work that draws on a very wide range of social theory (Freud, Bhabha, Derrida, Lyotard etc.), and despite Argenti’s lyrical and passionate prose style, the conceptual subtleties and virtuoso vocabulary make it a read that requires plenty of time, sustained concentration and a good dictionary. The protestant missionaries from Basel, the first missionaries to reach the Grassfields, would no doubt reassure us that the labour of tackling this text is integral to reaping the many rich rewards it offers. For those of us with less theological inclinations it is the combination of original insights, theoretical ambition and empirical detail that make this such an enthralling, if demanding, text.

This book interrogates the current orthodoxy ‘that corruption is an anathema to development’, which is the central tenet of the recent anti-corruption campaigns of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other unilateral donors (pp. 7–8). The edited volume is an assemblage of critical examinations of the anti-corruption campaigns, in various locales and sectors. It is enriched by contributions from academic fields including geography, development studies, political science, economics, international relations and law – with yet other contributions from practitioners. This breadth is also echoed in the spread of geographical locations examined, which range from Nigeria, the Philippines, Georgia to Nicaragua and others. Given this wide scope it is not surprising that the book emphasises the plurality of anti-corruption experiences, and argues that the effects of the anti-corruption campaigns need to be understood within the political and cultural context in which they are implemented (p. 17). The book highlights inconsistencies between the local experience of the anti-corruption campaigns and the IFIs’ technocratic universalised interpretation of the issue and criticises the application of the same brand of prescriptions ‘from Nigeria to Bulgaria’ (p. 28).

However, the argument is not one for localism. The importance of the international context in which the anti-corruption campaigns arose – even as their effects are felt variously – emerges throughout the volume. Ivanov argues that the origins of the anti-corruption campaigns lie ‘in the interests of the US government, multinational companies and multilateral donors’ (p. 29). In a similar vein, the geo-politics which govern the IFIs’ unequal application of anti-corruption policies is central to Brown, Cloke and Rocha’s analysis of anti-corruption in Nicaragua (pp. 182–201). Moreover, in her chapter on corruption in the Philippines, Co argues that the legacy of colonisation and international inequalities are key to the production of Pilipino corruption (p. 123). Bracking’s
own chapter offers the most in-depth analysis of the international in the book. Her chapter situates the anti-corruption campaigns within international power relations and explores the contradictions that these relations produce in development finance. She highlights how discourses of corruption ‘fix its meanings spatially, with coordinates within related ideas of race, space and nationality’ and so act to structure the international (p. 252).

Central to all the arguments in the book, both those that explore global power relations and local politics, is the relations between corruption and development. Hall-Mathews’ examination of President Mutharika of Malawi’s anti-corruption campaign, for example, reveals that the equation of anti-corruption measures and development allowed him to ‘claim to be pro-development by the fact of making arrests per se’ (p. 82). Moreover, many of the activities of Mutharika’s anti-corruption drive were arguably only targeted at undermining his political opponents. Anti-corruption measures in Malawi thus distracted and detracted from development priorities, rather than furthering them. Hall-Mathew’s conclusion is that corruption is only one issue for development and not necessarily the most significant one (p. 98). The role of the anti-corruption campaign in Malawi in obscuring Mutharika’s political goals is comprehended within the volume as only one example of how the foregrounding of corruption acts to obfuscate. This conceals not only political machinations, but also global inequalities and even the failures of the IMF and World Bank policies (p. 31). This chimerical nature of the anti-corruption campaigns, the book contends, also acts to obscure the gaps between the global and local discourses and Northern states’ culpability for corruption (pp. 28, 303).

The book achieves the objective stated by Bracking, namely to ‘critically review policy and practice in the field of corruption and anti-corruption’ (p. 17). The plurality of the chapters, all of which stand alone, is a great strength of the book and individual chapters may be of great interest to area specialists or, as in the case of Alolo’s work on gender and corruption in Ghana, to scholars with particular research foci. The conclusions of the book and a number of the chapters build on this critical review to problematise the orthodox conception of the relations between corruption and development. The pervasiveness of this orthodoxy in development thinking makes this book a significant critical contribution.


This collection is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the ongoing critical analysis of the World Bank’s activities during the past 15 years. David Moore presents a thoughtful and accessible edited volume that covers a broad range of topics related to the Bank’s neoliberal hegemonic project. Following the Bank’s discursive twists and turns throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the various chapters challenge the organisation’s attempts to persuade the outside world that a kinder, gentler approach to development has been adopted after the failure of Structural Adjustment.

The book begins by Moore establishing the theoretical framework guiding the volume. His Gramscian understanding of hegemony and counter-hegemony provide the inspiration for compiling the chapters, and Moore claims that the book ‘...is about how the World Bank attempts
to perform what Robert Wade (1997) has called the “Gramsci effect” (p. 27). Thus, central to the analysis are questions such as: how does the World Bank convince others to accept, and at times enthusiastically embrace, its policies and practices? How does the Bank respond to major challenges to its orthodoxy? How does it manufacture moral and intellectual leadership within the development industry? (p. 27). While not all contributors adhere to the Gramscian tradition, there is certainly a strong current throughout the book that aims to deconstruct and challenge the Bank’s hegemonic notions of development. The Gramscian conception of hegemony provides a crucial lens through which to view the Bank’s discourse and practice, and adds theoretical rigour to the volume.

Moore has re-published several classic texts on the World Bank for this volume (e.g. Robert Wade’s 1996 article in *New Left Review* on the ‘East Asian miracle’), some in their original form, others moderately or substantially revised for this book. These influential pieces are combined with several original chapters for the book addressing more contemporary issues, and written by ‘new entrants taking the field of what could be labelled “World Bank studies” into uncharted territory’ (p. viii). The book covers an impressive range of topics, including the Bank’s discourses around social capital, sustainable development, participation/ownership, good governance and post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, Moore ends with a provocative chapter written by Patrick Bond calling for the abolition of the Bank, which is based on various positions and perspectives from radical ‘civil society’ formations. The book’s 16 chapters provide an excellent source of information – in one place – for those interested in accessing critical approaches to studying the Bank.

Despite the successful project accomplished by Moore, at least two critical points need to be mentioned regarding the volume. First, and most importantly, the book lacks feminist analysis of the World Bank. In light of the devastating, and disproportionate, consequences of Structural Adjustment for women in the ‘developing’ world, at least one or two chapters written from a feminist perspective would have helped to provide a more complete critique. Feminist critiques of the Bank have constituted some of the most articulate, sophisticated and consistent attempts by scholars and activists to challenge its neoliberal orthodoxy. Moreover, based on the editor’s statement that ‘...it is time to gather together the last decade and a half’s radical analytical assessments of the world’s most visible development institution’ (p. viii), the absence of a feminist critique appears to be a glaring, and potentially debilitating, omission.

Secondly, Moore is highly dismissive in his own chapters of the post-structural theoretical position on several of the issues under question. Although disagreeing on a theoretical and practical level with others is healthy and productive in many ways, Moore does so in a manner that does not truly engage with this perspective. He mentions post-structuralism very briefly, painting a crude caricature of its approach, only to tear down the straw man in due course. If a critique of post-structuralism is to be presented, then it is only appropriate that a more substantial and rigorous engagement with this perspective be elaborated.

Notwithstanding the criticisms raised above, this volume serves as a valuable resource for students, scholars, and activists who are interested in understanding the rhetorical shifts of the Bank during the past 15 years, and potential strategies for struggling against the current hegemony of the Bank.
Immigration from Africa to Europe is a historical phenomenon with important socio-economic and political implications for both continents. Although during the colonial period some level of human movement from the colonies to Europe was allowed, decolonisation brought this type of immigration to an end. Since then, any type of migration has been increasingly politicised in the European political arena. The politicisation of migration was also reflected in the international relations of the EU, particularly with Africa. As can be seen in both the Cotonou Agreement (2000) and the European Neighbourhood Policy with North African countries (2003), the management of immigration constitutes the hot spot of the politics of Euro-African relations. Africa and Fortress Europe aims to study this relationship in context of immigration, thus contributing to the Euro-African literature on relations by bringing the immigration dynamic into the discussion.

This engaging collection includes significantly diverse perspectives from scholars of economics, political science and international relations to practitioners who are currently working for EU-level agencies, including Frontex. The book is structured in two parts, with the first focusing on the contemporary political and economic situations in different regions of Africa and how these have become push factors for individuals. The second part focuses on EU-level responses from the Eurocrats to the legal and illegal immigration from Africa to Europe. In this sense, Africa and Fortress Europe is a subtle collection which analyses the Euro-African relations in the context of immigration from both African and European perspectives. The general argument of the book is that the immigration problem should be tackled by African and European actors by focusing on an infamous dictum, “African solutions to African problems”.

The book discusses important issues. The analysis by Kohnert is the most comprehensive chapter, examining the dynamics of migration from Africa to Europe. It focuses on both socio-political and economic reasons for migration by questioning the rising xenophobia in the Maghreb countries towards immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (p. 42) and European attempts to convert North Africa into a buffer zone with ‘reception centres’ (p. 45). Both are attention-grabbing points that highlight how much European policies have determining and constitutive effects on Africa in the context of immigration. Unfortunately, not all contributors’ analyses are conducted in this particular context, as some studies only briefly mention immigration towards the end of their investigations.

Another criticism of the book is that it does not take the opportunity to connect a political-security analysis to the economic analysis. This separation results in a type of analysis, exemplified by Exenberger’s chapter, that examines the issue from an economic perspective which assumes the existence of ‘rational’ and ‘profit-maximising’ immigrants. This examination disregards the economic conditions under which individuals are forced to migrate. It is questionable to what extent migration in and from Africa is about a rational economic choice, if it is about ‘a choice’ at all. In addition, this type of analysis risks legitimising the rhetoric in Europe that African immigrants are coming to ‘take our jobs away’. Unfortunately, the Hendricks’ chapter on human security in Africa does not adequately address this issue and fails to fully illustrate the economic dimension of political crises.

While the chapters are well constructed, the explanatory framework is not sufficiently
grounded theoretically. Two points are striking. First, the concept of ‘Fortress Europe’ is not evaluated. None of the contributors, except the Frontex Director, Laitinen, questions the concept. The historically constructed nature of politics should have been brought into the discussion to explain why Europe has become a ‘fortress’ to African immigrants, and why it is not a fortress to, say, Eastern European or North American immigrants. This might be also related to the concept of ‘Islamophobia’, which is repeatedly mentioned, but never developed. No chapter attempts to analyse or problematise this potentially important concept.

These underdeveloped issues leave question marks, one of which concerns the concept of ‘threat’. In the concluding chapter, Gebrewold suggests that readers differentiate between ‘perceived’ and ‘real’ threats (p. 173). This approach is understandable in a literature where immigration cannot be thought of without ‘securitisation’, which is the ‘common sense’ theory of immigration at present. However, if the name of the first part of the book is ‘Threats from Africa’ and if, throughout the chapters, the authors analyse different ‘threats’, it is essential for an editor to give a coherent account of ‘threat’. Many questions might have been asked: Are the threats ‘real’ or ‘perceived’? Perceived by whom? Real for whom? Are ‘perceived’ threats not ‘real’?

The last weak point of the book is its state-centrism. In almost all of the chapters, civil society movements in Africa are neglected in favour of inter-governmental organisations. It is another question why NGOs do not appear as alternative political agencies in Africa where both governmental and inter-governmental structures have suffered from various deficiencies. Therefore, the general argument of the book, ‘African solutions to African problems’, should be strengthened.

To conclude, *Africa and Fortress Europe* is a significant starting point, albeit with shortcomings, for understanding Euro-African relations in the context of immigration. Given the fact that both the crises in Africa and European responses to immigration, such as Frontex, have become ‘real’ security threats for those Africans who are caught in between human traffickers and European border patrols, this is a pressing political issue.


Vera Chirwa’s remarkable book takes the reader to deep insights into political struggles and the meaning of freedom in Malawi. While it is a personal account demonstrating her selflessness, perseverance and hope in bringing freedom and justice to Malawi, the story reveals an important political history of the country. The story brings to light the struggles that Malawian political fighters encountered in their quest to bring freedom and justice to the country, from the fight against colonialism, federation and racism during the colonial administration to the fight against the dictatorial one party regime, under which many political opponents were subjected to inhumane treatment through unfair trials, long periods of detention without trial and in some cases unexplained deaths. The story also highlights the harsh realities and sacrifices that Vera, as a woman, a mother and a wife, had to go through in order to achieve her ambitions and
accomplish what she and her husband, Orton Chirwa, believed in.

In the first four sections Vera brings to light how the transition from colonial government to independence created the dictatorial regime through the leadership of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi’s first President. Through power struggles and in an effort to legitimise his position, Banda is shown to have developed a mentality of viewing himself as unquestionable, tolerating no critique. This attitude led to the cabinet crisis of 1964, due to policy differences between the leader, some of the ministers, as well as prominent figures such as Vera and Orton Chirwa. Through these political persecutions, the self-rule that many fought for became their worst nightmare. The three sections that follow narrate a story of her family in exile and how she established her career and became the first woman lawyer in southern Africa. It also highlights their passion in politics as a couple wherever they went and how their children suffered and faced many challenges during these struggles of political power. After almost two decades in exile, the couple were abducted back to Malawi, convicted on the grounds of planning to topple Banda’s Government, and sentenced to death through a traditional court. Despite the death sentence, torture, unjust treatment and long period of separation from her husband and children, Vera maintained her will to live.

Back in society in 1993, after over a decade of imprisonment and unfortunately not with her husband who died in 1992, she actively dedicated herself to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights in Malawi. Her account shows how, through leading the transition to a democratic government, Bakili Muluzi fell into the same trap of the desire to cling to power by seeking to extend his terms of presidency and thereby threatening to take Malawi back into the political system that he and numerous others fought so hard to abolish. Vera’s book highlights the important challenges that face young democracies like Malawi. She notes the negative effects of a weak economy and poorly designed and implemented economic and social programmes on the advancement of democracy, and how the worsening conditions turned people to review the old days of the one party regime as better in meeting their needs. The argument is that the masses are still sceptical that democracy has managed to meet their needs as many had hoped for and were promised at the dawn of the era. As such, the temptation to view the old days as glorious is real for some people. In the new democratic era led by Muluzi, corruption has increased considerably while levels of discipline and people’s personal security has declined, making some Malawians uneasy about the new political set up.

Vera concludes by highlighting how the political system in Malawi is democratic, but the leaders are not and how this threatens the full development of democracy in the country.

The core of the story is the life of Vera herself. It shows the two sides of Vera: a family person who cares deeply for her family, and a tough and resilient person who suffered and persevered despite political persecutions in all three political eras of Malawi. This remarkable story shows the inhumane treatment that she has suffered, while revealing her strength to stand up and fight for what she believed was right for Malawi and Malawians. Most startling is her ability to forgive those that made her suffer when she could seek justice. Furthermore, after 12 years in prison, Vera refused lucrative offers both abroad and at home as she still wanted to see her dreams come true by working to improve human rights, and making sure that she was in a position to be able to criticize leaders if they were not doing a good job.

However, in 2004 she expressed her interests to stand for the presidency. Here, unfortunately, there are not many details
regarding her change of ambitions from a freedom fighter to a presidential candidate. We are left with no clues as to how she planned to run the country and at the same time provide the much-needed critique to keep the presidency in check. In addition, we do not have much detail on how she cooperated with other opposition leaders in the period leading to the general elections of 2004 and the role she played after she dropped out of the contest for the top seat. It would have been good to have these details in order to appreciate how she envisioned her political future as a presidential figure and how different she would have been from the other leaders. The story being a personal one, it is perhaps understandable that the concepts of human rights and democracy are discussed as taken for granted concepts. For an academic audience, a more critical evaluation of these concepts could have opened up some fruitful discussions. Nevertheless, this is indeed an insightful account of the life of a fearless fighter, as well as of the political transformation and history of Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.


Rufus Norris’s production of Wole Soyinka’s Death and the King’s Horseman at the National Theatre was an arresting piece of theatre that demanded a second viewing simply because there was so much to feed the eye. The statue-filled stage that meets you on your entry into the Olivier Theatre immediately sets the tone for this journey into Yoruba existence and philosophy where the spirit world is an integral part of a very active belief system.

The setting is Oyo, Nigeria, 1943. Iyaloja, the leader of the market women’s stately entrance to ‘ignite’ the opening of this production, played with so much power and grace by Claire Benedict, situates our story in Abeokuta Market, the arena that serves as the ‘playground’ for the protagonist of this story. Elesin Oba, played by the imposing Nonso Anozie, is the King’s Horseman, who has a duty to accompany his dead Lord, the Alafin of Oyo, into the afterlife by committing ritual suicide. It is a duty that demands the ultimate sacrifice from the individual for the benefit of the community, a community that comes alive and inhabits the stage with song and dance, led by the Praise Singer (Giles Terera). The relationship between Elesin and his Praise Singer, articulated through highly poetic and proverbial language and supported by the women’s adoration of their ‘Horseman’ through flirtatious singing and dancing through the market place, keeps the audience engaged throughout the first half. This preparation for the journey into the world of the ancestors takes on a more earthly reality, quite removed from the ritual, when Elesin spots a maiden in whom he wants to plant his seed on this his last day on this earth. Act One closes with the arrangement of both a wedding and a funeral.

Act Two opens in the colonialist quarter, where Simon Pilkings, the British colonial officer, hears of the ritual suicide and decides to intervene by holding Elesin in custody, causing him to fail to perform this ritual which can only be done at a ‘specific time ordained by the cycle of the moon, so there is one night that he can do it and one night alone’. Meanwhile Olunde (Kobna Holbrook Smith), the son of Elesin who has returned from his studies in Britain to bury his father because he is aware of the implications of the traditional custom, is confounded when he becomes aware of the catastrophe
about to occur and sacrifices himself in a bid to secure the spiritual well being of his people.

Norris’s bold choice to use an all black cast which resulted in the ‘whiting up’ of black actors to play the white colonialists released the humour within this text, for which utmost credit must go to Jenny Jules and Lucian Msamati, for their portrayal of these catalytic characters. Drawing from a Caribbean, African and British experience of white colonialists, these performers displayed the integrity of the colonialists, without caricaturing them, which would have reduced the work to a clash of cultures, which the writer warns against. Rather, this choice allows the production to complicate the reading of these characters, because of the glaring fact the words are being spoken by a black person with a white painted face. The multi-layered implications of this choice served as a constant reminder of whose story was being presented. This controversial choice offers a different perspective to this story, which is told, in effect, by the people it actually happened to. Norris’s subtle introduction of this idea came in the form of the whole cast of 31 taking the stage, in preparation of a story, where members of the ‘community’ are ‘made up’ to play specific characters within the tale. Essentially, signposts were provided which resulted in a big payoff when the Pilkings are revealed in Act Two. But ultimately, what Norris has done with this production is to provide a rare opportunity for the host culture of the West to see themselves as viewed by the ‘other’.

Visually, this production was a feast for the eyes. The first half was an unapologetic thrust into the ‘exotic’, particularly for a standard white National Theatre audience. The many songs and dances and the lyrical nature of the heightened conversation between Elesin and his Praise Singer with its expected pomp and pageantry exceeded my stereotypical expectations. Norris’s execution of this act was for me very measured and served the story rather than playing to the gallery, which could have been an easy choice.

What I have described as ‘the eye of the outsider’ was what stood out in this production. Coming to this production as an outsider in terms of heritage was perhaps a blessing in disguise, as it afforded the director the opportunity to learn and transfer that knowledge to an audience who are largely ignorant of Yoruba culture. The big tree in the centre of the market which then transforms into a skyline of bundles, the ingenious inhabited furniture, the constant cycle of movement on stage, sometimes barely noticeable, were manifestations of the essence of the spirit life of the Yoruba, not consciously written into the script. With the help of his designer Katrina Lindsay and choreographer Javier De Frutos, the gap was bridged between the two cultures, with Peter Badejo, the associate director/consultant as a much-valued guide. The storytelling form was a natural choice, which aided in the created world of the ensemble telling their story and evolving the environment themselves, literally. A thought-provoking, energised and daring production, which left me wanting more.
Women’s Organisations Seeking Gender Justice in the Sudan 1964–1985

Asma Mohamed Abdel Halim

The Sudan had a multiple legal system governing various aspects of its people’s lives, however Shar‘ia has been applied consistently to family law. Shar‘ia, Muslim’s interpretation of religious norms expressed in the Qura‘n and Sunna, differed according to the time and place of application. This article compares two women’s groups, the Sudanese Women’s Union and the Republican Sisters, discussing the factors that shaped their methods and conceptualisation of their quest to seek gender justice without losing religious legitimacy. The Republican Sisters proved that a reinterpretation of Islamic norms can be advocated by a religious group, and not just by secular ones. The political and social climate had, and continues to have, a significant effect on the laws and the ways women react to their suppression in the name of religion.

Introduction

This article compares the attempts of two Sudanese women’s groups to challenge ‘the Shar‘ia rules’ that governed women’s status in the Sudan during the period 1964–1985, in pursuit of gender justice. ‘Shar‘ia’ is used to mean the interpretations of the main four schools that were developed by Muslim scholars during the seventh to ninth century period.1 The first group is a non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Sudanese Women’s Union (the Women’s Union) established in 1952, and the other is the Republican Sisters who are followers of al-fikra al-jumhouriyya (alfikra – the interpretation of Islamic norms by the late Muslim thinker, Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha), which was started by Taha himself (Ustadh Mahmoud) in 1945. While the organisational structure and approaches of the two groups differ greatly, they remain the only two groups that actively challenged the application of discriminatory versions of Shar‘ia to women in the Sudan during the period 1964–85.

Both the application of various interpretations of Shar‘ia and the organised women’s movements started in the predominantly Muslim central Sudan. The Women’s Union and the Republican Sisters were both born within and alongside male political and/ or religious movements that resisted the Anglo-Egyptian colonisation. Their public activities put them at odds with the military dictatorships that reigned after independence in 1956; some of their leaders and membership suffered sham trials and periods of imprisonment. The Republican Sisters suffered the execution of their leader Ustadh Mahmoud. Both groups saw in the Personal Status Law, qanun al-ahwal al-shakhshiyya, derived from particular readings of Shar‘ia, an obstacle to achieving the human rights of women. Both groups remained active among women in one way or
another, despite dissolution of their organisations and persecution of their membership. Most importantly, both groups remained free of foreign funding, which was suspected of imposing conditions and weakening people’s reception of funded NGOs’ activism.

The different interpretations of *Shar’ia* that have been adopted as law have served as a vehicle of oppression of the Sudanese people, especially women, throughout the last two centuries. Such oppression is possible because religious laws are the domain of the religious establishments and have proven to be easily manipulated to avoid the jurisdiction of international conventions to which Sudan is a party, being formally obliged to repeal laws that contradict those conventions. In the words of Ann Elizabeth Mayer:

> the latent tensions between Islamic and international law become, at least ostensibly, the cause of conflict – but there may be other reasons for rejecting international law. An official policy of repudiating international human rights standards in order to follow Shar’ia law may not necessarily be dictated by the religious piety of the persons who wield power, but may be a convenient pretext for denying freedoms that the government wishes to curtail for reasons of self-interest. (Mayer 1990, p. 136)

**Historical Background**

1 January 1956 was declared Independence Day, making the Sudan the first sub-Saharan country to gain its independence. A short-lived democratic era lasted until November 1958 when a military coup led by Ibrahim Abboud took over. No major changes in the laws were effected during this democratic period. Abboud’s military regime of 1958 lasted until October 1964, when a popular uprising forced it to resign. Another democratic era was ushered in following the October 1964 uprising and lasted until May 1969, when another military coup lead by Ga’afar Nimieri overthrew the democratic government once more. Major legal changes took place in the last three years of Nimieri’s dictatorship, which was ended in 1985 by a popular uprising.

The Islamisation of all laws that took place unexpectedly in September 1983 yielded what came to be known as the ‘September laws’, which ended the plural legal system. Osman (1985, p. 134) summed up the situation: ‘The conflict between *Shar’ia* and other rules has been resolved in favour of the former. One can safely state now that under these laws, *Shar’ia* rules are supreme’. Islamisation during the different eras was clearly a political move intended to exploit Muslim sentiments and minimise political opposition. It played on the passions of the Muslim majority that wanted to cement its supremacy and plant the seed for an Islamic nationalism. One of the dire results of such application was the execution of Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha. Yet, due to the various regimes’ extremely harsh interpretation and application of the codes, Muslim Sudanese were not reluctant to revolt against those regimes, despite promises of supremacy of their religion. A popular uprising ended Nimieri’s military dictatorship in April 1985. The current government, the third military coup in the country, that took over in June 1989, led by the Islamists, has taken the same path of using *Shar’ia* to oppress, and so far has been able to suppress resistance through various ways and means.

**Women’s Legal Rights**

The respective constitutions (1956, 1973 and 1985) adopted during different political eras that ruled the Sudan from 1964 to 1985 stipulated equality of the sexes.
However, women’s rights have always been the target of a version of *Shar’ia* chosen by the successive governments to subordinate them. Subordination of women as a first step to domination of all social aspects is a known phenomenon during periods of stagnation or instability. Until 1991, when the current Personal Status Law for Muslims Act was enacted, family courts known as *Shar’ia* courts depended on precedents and judicial circulars issued by the Grand Qadi, who presided over *Shar’ia* courts. Accordingly, the judiciary was the legislator and adjudicator of that law. The absence of statutory law in this area had its advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage was the ease with which a rule might be changed. A circular issued by the Grand Qadi was all it took to change the law, which was mainly a law derived from precedents and interpretation of other judicial circulars. Another advantage, which was at the same time a disadvantage, was the ability of judges to select from a wide pool of scholarly opinions in the absence of a circular that ruled a certain issue. Such liberal choice may affect women’s rights positively or negatively. Resistance to these laws took various shapes and strengths in the past 60 years. Women’s education and their political affiliations were major factors in shaping their resistance.

### A history of Resistance

#### The Women’s Union

The Women’s Union evolved out of the various women’s organisations that sprang up in the 1940s when the Sudan was an Anglo-Egyptian colony. The formation of these women’s associations coincided with the emergence of the nationalist movement in the Sudan, specifically the formation of the Graduates Congress, a nationalist association of graduate men who organised to call for the independence of the Sudan from the Anglo-Egyptian authority. Before that, women participated individually in the short-lived uprisings against the colonisers. Nafisa Ahmed Al-Amin, one of the pioneers in the Women’s Union, and Ahmed Abdel Magied, an active researcher of women’s issues, stated that:

> [The] abortion of 1924 revolution was followed by a period of political stagnation until the formation of the Graduates Congress in 1938. Again, women were not allowed membership in the Congress because of indigenous traditions and misconceptions arising from selfish religious teachings that prohibited women’s participation in public activities. In spite of these obstacles, women were able to play a relatively more active role than the one played in 1924. In 1938, the Congress was supported by groups of educated working women, namely teachers, nurses, and midwives. In addition to this, a few housewives also participated in women’s activities. (Al-Amin and Magied 2001, p. 4)

The colonial powers and the traditional family relations were not supportive of women’s participation in public activities. The Women’s Union was allowed to function only as social and cultural organisation that served women in the domestic space. However, the main objectives of the Women’s Union were the emancipation of women and elevation of their status through education; combating harmful traditional practices; starting childcare centres and opening night schools to teach literacy and sewing; raising awareness among women about the Sudan and the rest of the world; and participation in charities and defending women’s right to work and to equal pay (Ahmed 1996, Mahmoud 2002).

The Women’s Union was not at all reluctant to use its objective of ‘emancipation of women’ to press for political participation. In 1953, the Women’s Union pressed for political rights and gained restricted rights when the right to vote was extended to
educated women only (Awadalla 2003, p. 93). The Women’s Union magazine, Sawt Al-Mara’a (Women’s Voice), was a major political forum. Suad Ibrahim Ahmed tells us that ‘What was officially a women’s magazine turned into one of the most effective weapons in the struggle for democracy in addition to the advocacy of women’s rights’ (Ahmed 1996). Despite its obvious involvement in politics, the Women’s Union continued to maintain its social and cultural face and distanced itself from political affiliation with political parties.

However, the Women’s Union had a strong relationship with the Sudanese Communist Party, founded in 1946, since it was the first Sudanese party to allow women in its membership. The progressive attitude of the communists attracted educated women; that attraction did not sit well with the colonialists, who exchanged memorandums on the seriousness of this attraction (Mahmoud 2008). Many considered the Women’s Union to be part of the communist party by virtue of the dual membership of some of its leaders in both entities. Yet, its leaders, especially Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, insisted that it was independent. This close relationship did not hamper the recruitment of women. Homemakers in particular were attracted to the small economic enterprises introduced by the Women’s Union. The political parties were not offering women membership or any services comparable to those of the Women’s Union.

The closeness of educated women to the nationalist movement and, later on, the political parties caused the first split in the Women’s Union. Not surprisingly, political Islam was the main divisive issue. The first fall-out happened one year after the formation of the Women’s Union, when the two members affiliated with the Islamic movement sided with their parties and stood against women’s political participation as advocated by the Women’s Union. Their resignation did not bring about an organised group till October 1964, when they formed the Patriotic Women’s Front, which did not meet the same success as the Women’s Union (El-Affendi 1991, pp. 96–98). The secular leaders continued with the Women’s Union activism, albeit cautiously and with restraint so as not to cause a backlash and set their work back with accusations of wanting to destroy the social fabric. The political activities of the Women’s Union left its members vulnerable to harassment and jail by the consecutive military governments that ruled the Sudan after independence.

Moreover, the long dictatorial Nimieri era (1969–1985) co-opted some of the leading figures in the Women’s Union to form its own official women’s organisation. The state-created entity, Union of Sudanese Women (Itihad Nis’a Assudan), enjoyed state resources and support, while the Women’s Union was banned and driven underground. The president of the republic handed out some of the long withheld rights, for example he appointed a number of women judges and the first woman minister, in order to overshadow the successes of the Women’s Union. As discussed below, granting women’s rights could be used to enhance the government’s image. Such hand-outs did not bring about women’s support to the official Union of Sudanese Women, despite the fact that it attracted a short-lived support of many women to the ruling regime itself. Such lack of interest in an entity created by a government that enjoyed a short-lived support of women is a clear indication that the entity was a sham. Nimieri’s self-serving attempts to grant women equal rights ended in 1983 when he joined forces with the Islamists and legislated a version of Shar‘ia into laws that came to be known as the ‘September laws’. Women’s status as second-class citizens was expressed in the September laws. Once more, Shar‘ia application dealt women’s rights a serious blow. The Women’s Union continued to work underground
and to be more concerned with the general political situation rather than being restricted to just women’s rights. Their focus – family law or Ahwal shakhsiyya – remained the same, and no changes were introduced as part of the September laws, already based on Shar‘ia.

The period 1983–1985 was a time of upheaval and major breaches of legal and human rights. The iron hand of the military government came down on all civil society organisations. The struggle for women’s rights took a back seat, and women joined the protests over starvation in western Sudan, the war in the South and the humiliation through the September laws. Sawt almara‘a – Women’s Voice – continued to address the political situation in general and the injustice that befell the Sudanese people as a result of the harsh application of Shar‘ia laws and the total absence of the rule of law. Zeinab El Bakri attributes the weakness of the Women’s Union to the heavy-handed oppression of the military government and the actions of the Women’s Union itself. She states that the Women’s Union did not increase its membership and limited its underground work to those who were affiliated with the Communist party or trusted not to work against the party. She further states that ‘the defunct military regime’s restriction on political action and organisation had already forcibly removed a whole generation of women from the realm of politics’ (El Bakri 1997, p. 204).

The Republican Sisters

Ustadh Mahmoud and others constituted the Republican Party in 1945. Following a short term of imprisonment for his political activities against the colonial power, and long terms of seclusion afterwards, he started to teach and publish his new Islamic vision, the Second Message of Islam, based on finding the core of Islamic norms in the Qur’anic texts revealed in Mecca, and differentiating them from those revealed in Medina. Equality of the sexes was a major issue in the hermeneutics of Ustadh Mahmoud (see An-Na‘im 1996, pp. 3–5).

By the 1970s, the word ‘party’ was dropped, and the organisation became known as the Republican Brothers. The Republican Sisters emerged as a women’s group in 1967 within the Republican Brothers movement, about three years after the October popular uprising of 1964 against the first military regime in the Sudan. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed scores of women joining al-fikra, some individually, and others through male family members who joined the Republicans. The Republican Sisters were active and powerful in propagating al-fikra to the extent that their presence had to be recognised. The Republican Brothers held a meeting to discuss a name change that would include women:

At one point, the group debated changing its name to reflect its female membership and the real nature of the organization. They finally decided to keep the old name because it was already well established and known to the public as a religious intellectual movement of both men and women. (Taha, p. 5)

A.M. Taha, the elder of two daughters of Ustadh Mahmoud, who recently recounted the history of the Republican Sisters, recounted the same version above (Taha 2006). There was no indication of whether any of the Republican Sisters were part of the final decision. The Republican Sisters emerged as a women’s group which resembled the Women’s Union, in that they were supported by an all-male organisation. One Sudanese scholar was of the opinion that the Republicans were unable to shed the
masculine patriarchal discourse, despite their insistence on the equality of the sexes (Bola 1996, p. 25).

The Republican Sisters had, and still have, the unprecedented opportunity to join the brothers in all the public religious and political activities, not as supporters, but as of right. They were not just making demands for equal rights for women, but were propagating a message that included those rights. After the October 1964 uprising, the Republican Sisters, including the daughters of Ustadh Mahmoud and those of his closest followers, travelled to attend his lectures and presentations in major cities. Ustadh Mahmoud urged the Republican Sisters to participate in the book-selling campaign and the discussion circles (arkan al-niqashi) that the Republicans were famous for holding at universities and market areas. Their presence at and participation in those debate corners was a peculiar scene that was unfamiliar to the Muslim northern Sudanese people; the streets were not a space to be occupied by women’s activities, whether religiously identified or not. The Brothers were afraid that the Republican Sisters would be abused; however, Ustadh Mahmoud decided that it was time for women to challenge the social attitude towards women’s intellectual participation (Taha 2006). Abdelwahab El-Affendi, an Islamist, best articulated the social attitude toward women’s religiosity at the time. He stated that religion was regarded

as an affair for men only. Religious observance among any but very old women was thought to interfere with the proper role and image of the woman, probably because the exigencies of religious observance were disruptive of male authority. Older women, who share and sometimes override male authority in the household, could get away with it, but for younger women the expectations were different and religiosity was derided and rejected as unbecoming. Modern Islamic activism was doubly disruptive, since it was a defiance of tradition and traditional religion simultaneously; it was a defiance that did not have the same aura of progress which Westernizing behaviour enjoyed. (El-Affendi 1991, p. 175)

Paradoxically, this social attitude eased the pressure on women activists to some degree. Women were not taken seriously and their effect on society was discounted.

The Republican Sisters were a feminine presence that took the streets of the Tri-city capital of Sudan by surprise and threatened its masculine face. The fear of the Second Message of Islam was doubled by having female da‘iyyat (callers to the cause). Asma Taha described herself during her first experience in the public arena as being fearful and having no confidence in herself. She expressed her reluctance then to join the public activities. Yet she and the Republican Sisters found strength in the face of that social scene in the very religion that was supposed to render them unworthy of spreading its word. A spiritual and a deep religious belief aided them in shedding any reluctance to engage in debates at the debate corners or sell books on the streets; they bravely took the physical and verbal abuse on the streets and at the universities. The Republicans’ da‘awa (call) targeted society at large, and they worked hard at turning heads towards this new philosophy, which was not restricted to their members. These efforts yielded a group of people referred to by the Republicans as ‘friends of the Republican Thought’. This group mainly comprised people who were not interested in the theology, but greatly interested in the human rights and secular parts of it. Many people were kept from reading Republican Thought by the traditional Shar‘ia scholars, who twisted the words of Ustadh Mahmoud and intimidated people by accusations of apostasy. Use of the Internet to publish alfikra and the discussion boards have been a great medium for the Republicans to propagate their ideas. Internationally renowned scholars such as Dr Abdullahi
An-Na’im now have a chance to communicate women’s rights as explained in *alfikra* to the world at large.

Ustadh Mahmoud continued to encourage the Republican Sisters’ participation because of the educational value of that participation. Asma Taha stated that ‘public exposure, with all its dangers, was part of the education of the *da’iyya*, who needed to experience humility and self-discipline that was necessary for shaping his/her behaviour and strengthening his/her endurance and moral stances’. The verbal abuse coming mainly from Islamists and those who were influenced by the propaganda against *alfikra* was in the form of calling them *mutlooqat*, meaning promiscuous and without guardians, a clear indication that they had crossed the gender barrier and ventured into men’s space.

The Brothers took a more proactive role in advancing the Republican Sisters’ struggle for their rights than did the nationalists with the Women’s Union, by being present at their public speeches and by selling their publications. In the years ahead, the Republican Sisters would suffer official abuse through long terms of imprisonment and humiliating interrogation by the Security Bureau as part of the campaign against the Republican Brothers that culminated in the execution of Ustadh Mahmoud in January 1985. The family of Ustadh Mahmoud would lose the only property he owned, a house in a third-class neighbourhood in Omdurman, that was a sanctuary for the Republican Sisters when the court ordered its confiscation. The house was later returned to the family after the Constitutional Court in 1986 struck out the judgment against Ustadh Mahmoud as unconstitutional.13

**Attitudes of the Women’s Union and the Republican Sisters Toward *Shar’ia***

The Women’s Union grew with the nationalist movement and its philosophy was and still is a secular one. It had never claimed to have any theological basis nor claim adoption of any feminist theories or critique. It had been a place for activism to agitate for certain women’s rights. As such, its campaigns to change *Shar’ia* rules did not venture beyond the traditional interpretations. The Women’s Union members did not attempt to enter the realm of interpretation. The world of religious interpretation has not been the safest or easiest for women to enter. Religious conservatives treated women’s claim to their human rights as a move by lustful women seeking to Westernise life in Muslim societies. Under such pressure that threatened the struggle for women’s rights, the Women’s Union tried to define women’s roles in the shadow of the dominant male, and simply explored the traditional schools for rules that might ease the restrictions on women.14

The Women’s Union membership saw that flexibility in religious interpretation had, generally, only been used to accommodate the needs of men, not women. Women’s status as reserve workers illustrated this. Rules denying or restricting women’s right to work were only stretched or changed when men deemed it necessary to keep an industry alive. In the textile factories women were given good employment terms, flexible hours and transportation with little or no objection by religious conservatives. Such inclusion of women in work outside the home aided the demands of the Women’s Union for equal pay and pension, and provided them with ammunition to bar any regression or usurpation of working women’s rights. The women who joined the paid workforce found a strong ally in the Women’s Union, especially in supporting their rights at the workplace.
Both the Women’s Union and the Republican Sisters thought that developing new scholarship regarding the interpretation of Islamic rules was a necessary step for the advancement of women. Although both groups articulated women’s rights from within Islam, the Women’s Union, as stated above, did not venture outside the existing interpretations of Shari‘a and sought religious legitimacy for its arguments in the existing Shari‘a institutions, be they personal status courts or opinions of traditional scholars. It did not tackle Shari‘a as a body of law, enforced by Sudanese courts, that needed to be changed in toto.

The Women’s Union apparently found it safe to argue that the opinions of the major Islamic schools were equally Islamic, and that as such it was acceptable to substitute one for the other without losing religious legitimacy. This approach ignored the fact that the principles underlying the various traditional interpretations were the same, despite the fact that certain rules might differ. Shari‘a subordinated women to men, and invoked men’s guardianship and trusteeship of women. The Women’s Union was, to some extent, content with the modern discourse that cited the condition of women before Islam, to support the arguments that it was not Shari‘a but traditions that restricted the rights of women. The Women’s Union also sought to separate religious norms from traditional practices, sometimes to the detriment of women, as in the case of elimination of dowry – this is discussed within a religious framework, but also social practice dictates the particulars discussed below. The Women’s Union put a restriction on its ‘emancipation of women’ by adopting a discourse that sought authenticity in the existing cultural and religious views.

The Republican Sisters’ discourse was rooted in theological thought; they treated their claim for equality as a religious right that was well established in the Second Message of Islam. It may be argued that they were just followers of a certain ideology. However, the Republican Sisters were not just doing what the Brothers were doing. It was clear that they used their newly acquired knowledge to address immediate needs of women. In 1973 they issued a booklet under their own name titled Adwa‘a ala Shari‘at al-ahwal ashakhsiyya (Focus on Personal Status Shari‘a). This publication differed from other alfikra publications in that it addressed the immediate need of women to be aware of what was available at the time to ease the oppression of the applied norms.

The Republican Sisters, joined by the Brothers, were the ones who took the unprecedented step of challenging the unconstitutionality of discriminatory laws, including the Evidence Act and the Civil Procedure Act, 1983, in the Constitutional Court during Nimieri’s dictatorship. Article 17 (1) and (12) of the 1973 Permanent Constitution, which guaranteed equality of all people before the law and equality of all citizens in duties, rights, and employment opportunities without discrimination on the basis of place of birth, race, colour, sex, religion or political stand, was disregarded when Shari‘a law was applied in 1983. For example, the Evidence Act of 1983 rendered the testimony of one woman inadmissible in a court of law. According to that Act, the testimony of two women would be equal to that of one man in proceedings other than trials for hudud crimes. The testimony of any number of women was, and still is, inadmissible in trials for hudud crimes. This was the first time in the history of the Sudan that women named their rights ‘constitutional’ and sought to declare discriminatory laws unconstitutional; however, they were hindered by a procedural rule requiring litigants to be personally aggrieved by the particular law challenged.

The Women’s Union revived its activities and joined democratic life in April 1985 after the popular uprising that toppled Nimieri’s Government. However, it did not engage
in any constitutional cases to reclaim women’s rights usurped in 1983. This was a marked difference between the Women’s Union and the Republican Sisters. While the latter took legal steps to challenge women’s subordination, the Women’s Union preferred changing the law through political entities and means.

Alfikra clearly considered classical interpretations that yielded Shar’ia as incompatible with human rights and the rights of women. The Republican Sisters believed that a new Shar’ia developed through reinterpretation of Islamic norms in a manner consistent with equality for women was significant.17 A new interpretation that depended on the original verses of the Qur’an would not only help women seeking equal rights strictly within the Islamic tradition, but would also decrease resistance to the use of international human rights norms. International human rights standards would have a greater chance of being accepted if they reflected cultural norms (An-Na‘im 1996). This new Shar’ia was to be extracted from a new interpretation of the original texts of Islam, the Qur’an and Sunna. Major amongst the ideals of the new interpretation was the equality of men and women, and Muslims and non-Muslims.18

The article will now turn to some of the issues that were tackled by the Women’s Union and the Republican Sisters to illustrate their actions against certain Shar’ia-based laws that affected women’s rights. These issues are marriage and divorce, traditional practices and the dress code.

## Marriage and Divorce

The main sources of personal status law in the Sudan, prior to the codification of the 1991 Personal Status Law for Muslims Act, were precedents and the Judicial Circulars issued by the Grand Qadi, who presided over Shar’ia courts. Therefore, the judiciary was the legislator and adjudicator of that law. The Republican Sisters and the Women’s Union did the bulk of their work before 1991. Almost all Sudanese Muslims are followers of the Maliki school, however the Turco-Egyptian rule opted to follow the Hanafi school. The main task of the Judicial Circulars was to replace some Hanafi rules with Maliki ones to fit the Sudanese traditions. The Women’s Union targeted the state as the site that articulated and enforced restrictions on women’s rights, and as a result it sought to change Shar’ia rules regarding marriage and divorce, through protesting about various parts of the law and demanding change by the government. Their main targets in marriage and divorce were rules governing consent and obedience.

According to Hanafi scholars a woman may contract her own marriage. Both the Maliki School and Sudanese traditions deprived women of this right. The Judicial Circulars that existed before 1960 amended this aspect of the Hanafi rules and imposed guardianship on women. The early circulars took away any power of the woman to contract her marriage. Osman (1985, p. 134) noted the interesting legal situation that the marriage contract in the Sudanese law was actually a contract between two men, the guardian and the husband, which is still the case in the Sudan.

Circular No. 35, issued on 22 March 1933, further stipulated that a wali might force his ward into marriage as long as she was under 33 years of age, except if she was divorced from a previous marriage. On 28 May 28 1960, the Women’s Union was able to effect some change. The Women’s Union advocacy for immediate change had been spurred on by a number of suicides by women being forced into marriage,
and society and the Shar’ia courts became inclined to change the rules (ibid.). Consent of women to marriage became mandatory:

A number of important developments in the law, reflecting basic changes, occurred during this period after independence, with mounting pressure from the Sudanese Women’s Union and growing public sentiment against compulsory marriage (as sanctioned in Circular No. 35): the Grand Qadi in 1960, Sheikh Mahjoub Osman, reinstalled the Hanafi legal principle that the consent of the bride-to-be is at all times an essential feature of the marriage contract, moreover the consent must be expressly stated (Hillawi and Fluehr-Loban 1983).

The Women’s Union did not engage itself in a showdown with the religious establishment; it did not therefore pursue a religious discussion of the important issue of guardianship that usurped women’s agency to control their lives. The Women’s Union and Sudanese women in general lacked the religious and legal expertise that might allow them to engage in the interpretation of religious tenets. They relied upon the state and its religious institutions as the legitimate source of change. The Women’s Union did not dwell on the religious interpretation, nor did they call for a debate on it. They considered it a matter of political will to change the law.

The Women’s Union’s attack on traditions that breached women’s rights stopped short of lending public support to the women who sought to annul marriages to which they had not consented. Nor was there public support by the Women’s Union for the few ‘adhl cases instituted by women suing their guardians who refused to marry them to the men of their choice.19 The Qur’an prohibits guardians from preventing women from marrying. The rule against ‘adhl is supposed to limit abuse of authority by the guardian, however it is not a rule that operates automatically, and a woman has to sue in order to operate the rule.

The effect of guardianship in marriage is evident in the suitability of the husband (kafa’a). According to the traditional schools of Shar’ia, a man must be of equal or higher social, economic and religious status than his future wife. Taken in a historical context, the seventh century norms that put women under total control of men had to provide such rules to prevent the abuse of women. Judging the husband’s kafa’a was the guardian’s prerogative, as women were not allowed to mingle publicly with men and might not know important things about men’s reputation and social or financial status. Yet, this rule is still in force without any reference to its historical roots. A woman can only challenge her guardian’s decision regarding kafa’a through a court case. A guardian may invoke lack of kafa’a of the husband-to-be as a defence in an ‘adhl suit instituted by his ward. Only a handful of ‘adhl cases were instituted by women challenging the refusal of their guardians to conclude their marriage contracts. All ‘adhl cases were won by women at the Court of Appeal or Supreme Court level. Some of these cases took place when the Women’s Union was active, yet there were no public campaigns by the Women’s Union to challenge guardianship over women. It was worth a challenge because resort to court did not automatically grant the woman the right to marry the man of her choice; she had to prove suitability in court. Suing a guardian, who might be a father, brother or uncle, was a scandalous behaviour that many guardians feared; to avoid such a scandal, guardians chose to conclude marriage contracts of their wards, even though they did not approve of the husband, and resort to the social punishment of banishing their wards from the family. Banishment from the family had dire social consequences for women that
discouraged many from protesting their guardians’ actions, and obviously discouraged the Women’s Union from a serious public protest against guardianship rules. Moreover, despite the fact that the court may order the marriage of a woman against her guardian’s will, the principle of guardianship remains; the woman just moves from the guardianship of the nearest kin to that of the judge: the judge will himself become the woman’s guardian or appoint someone else, preferably a willing family member or distant relative, to act as the woman’s guardian and conclude the marriage.

Another important issue for the Women’s Union was the dowry (mahr) in the marriage contract. Mahr is paid or promised by the husband at the conclusion of the contract in return for the wife’s conjugal services. It is essential for the validity of the contract. Traditionally mahr turned into an extravagant practice among all classes, especially in urban areas. Many young men were not able to comply with the requests of the brides’ families. The Women’s Union started to campaign against the vast amounts demanded by families and called for the least amount required for the validity of the contract. However, the Women’s Union did not advocate any change of the wife’s duty in consideration of her waiving her right to mahr. It also ignored the fact that the mahr, especially the deferred amount of it, served as a financial security for the wife in case of divorce. Not only that, but they pressed for its elimination without any change in the duties of the wife. Therefore, women would give up their mahr for nothing. The contractual duties of the wife would remain the same, including the duty to obey.

The intention of the Women’s Union was to secure marriage for women and reduce what came to be known as the ‘marriage crisis’. The costly weddings, high mahr and illiteracy were blamed for that crisis and for a new occurrence in the social scene, namely educated men opting to marry foreign women. Sudanese men marrying non-Sudanese wives (al-zawaj bil-ajnabiyyat) was discussed by the Women’s Union as an undesirable social phenomenon. In its awareness campaign for women, the Women’s Union advocated the change of extravagant spending at weddings and resorted to the Islamic notion that marriage is a cordial peaceful relationship, not a sale contract of the woman. In addition, they advocated education of Sudanese girls, as it was thought that educated men were seeking educated women, and therefore education of girls would be an incentive for men to marry locally.

One issue that took precedence over all others in the rules regarding marriage and divorce was the obedience rule (ta’aa). According to some traditional interpretations of Shar’ia rules, a woman who consents to marriage should receive her mahr and all her housing, clothing and food needs from the husband. In consideration of those rights, she is obliged to fulfill her matrimonial duties. In addition, she is to stay at home to satisfy her husband’s sexual needs. Since this is the only service for which she contracts, she is not under obligation to perform any household services. Imam Malik went as far as saying that if she belongs to the upper class, she may even refuse to breast-feed her children, and that it is the husband’s duty to hire another woman for that purpose. If a woman disobeys her husband, according to the Qur’an an arbitration panel comprising two persons, one from the husband’s and one from the wife’s family, may settle differences between the spouses. The Personal Status Law ignored this Qur’anic ruling, and the courts entertained divorce petitions before implementing this rule.
A husband may petition the court to order a wife who leaves to return to the matrimonial home, but only once. If she leaves again, she may be deemed disobedient (nashiz) and relinquishes her rights as a wife. A woman may also be ruled nashiz if she refuses to return during her waiting period (idda) of three menstrual cycles after divorce.20 A marriage does not automatically end by the man pronouncing divorce; idda is said to be a ‘constructive’ marriage period. During this three-month period, the husband has the option of having his wife ‘returned’, regardless of her consent. The right to reclaim a divorced wife (raja’a) within a period of three months is exclusively a husband’s, and the wife should comply.

The Sudanese Shar’ia courts adopted a rule, imported from Egypt, that allowed the use of police to forcibly return a woman to the matrimonial home, which became known as bait at-ta’a (literally the house of obedience). Despite the fact that use of police force to keep a marriage together is not part of Shar’ia, the Shar’ia judges claimed that the forcible return was applied to help women who adhered to societal decency rules and shied away from expressing desire to go with their husbands against the wishes of the parents. Yet the rule was used liberally and against all women whose husbands would sue for obedience. Consequently, women were left at the mercy of abusive husbands who had the right to confine them to the home and force them to live in failed marriages.

The Women’s Union was successful in rallying both men and women against the use of police to return disobedient women. Their campaigns in 1968 resulted in having the judiciary issue a circular that repealed the forcible return of women to the matrimonial home. However the institution of bait al-ta’a and the principle of obedience remains to this date, and Shar’ia courts continue to issue judgments of obedience, but do not use police force to execute the judgment. Perhaps content with this success of eliminating use of police force, the Women’s Union did not fully address the principle underlying the issues of obedience, guardianship, payment of mahr and their effect on the ‘emancipation of women’. Consequently, issues such as the husband’s right to bring about his wife’s obedience through beating remained a thorny issue, circumvented only by the traditional practice that ostracised wife-beaters, or was explained away by the muftis who set up rules for how a beating should be done. Zeinab El-Bakri noted that the Women’s Union ‘saw the family as the most important institution in society. That it was also a focus of women’s oppression was ignored’ (El Bakri 1997).

The Republican Sisters took a different path in resisting the prevailing Shar’ia rules of marriage. They started from the premise that the family was the site for women’s subordination, and that it was the disdainful social attitude towards women’s biological and familial roles that subordinated them when they ventured outside the home. Therefore, unless women enjoyed equality and respect for their gender roles, there was little hope that they would be respected in the public sphere.

The Republican Brothers issued their first publication, Tatweer Shar’iat al-Ahwal al-shakhshiyya (Advancement of Personal Status Law) in 1971. It was based on the exegesis of the Second Message of Islam. The introduction to the Second Message of Islam explains that:

The Second Message of Islam lifts women to an equal status with men in all fields. But the field in which the effect of this advancement of women is paramount is the field of marriage laws. Here the Second Message of Islam redefines marriage, on the legal plane, as a contact between two equal partners, entered upon by their own free will, with equal rights for both partners for
equivalent duties, and dissolved, should the need arise, by agreement between them. Spelled
out, this means that there is no longer any guardian who signs the marriage contract on
behalf of the bride. Instead, the bride signs for herself. Also the right of divorce will be
equally shared by the couple and can be used by either in a specified manner which involves
the mediation of two arbiters, one representing the husband and the other representing
the wife. In this way any effort to shore up the marriage relation about to break will not be
spared, and at the same time the private affairs of the couple will not be disclosed before
a large audience which is not the case now when divorce takes place before a court.
(The Republican Brothers 1976)

In 1973 The Republican Sisters followed with a booklet titled Adwa’a ala Shar’iat al-
Ahwal al-shakhsiyya (Focus on Personal Status Law). This was a significant publication,
in that it was a direct sensitisation of women to seek change within the existing Shar’ia
rules. They gave a precise account of what rights were available to women in the existing
rules of Shar’ia, and of how women could easily argue those rights on both a reli-
gious and a legal basis. The challenge for the Republican Sisters was to live up to their
convictions without being overruled by the law of the land. In the words of An-Na’im:

The group’s practice in relation to contracting marriage is illustrative of the members’ deter-
mination to implement their theory in light of prevailing social customs. Besides submitting to
the most restrictive historical formulation, Shar’ia, the marriage practices of the northern and
central Sudan conformed to several restrictive legal and social norms. (An-Na’im 1996, p. 6)

While voicing their opinion that another message was found in the Qur’an that should replace
the existing non-egalitarian first message, the Republican Sisters did not wait for the state to
issue new rules. Their most clever move was how they delved into the existing personal status
law to render rules of guardianship and obedience obsolete. (the Republican Sisters 1973,
pp. 1–12)

First, the Republican Sisters called for the return to the Hanafi School, as it was the
school chosen in Judicial Circulars to govern the Personal Status Law. Marriage
would still be a contract between non-equals, but at least women would be able to
enter into it of their own accord. They promoted and practised simple wedding cele-
brations that would eliminate extravagant spending, and focused on the couple’s
future life. All the Republican Sisters who got married took agency by signing
contracts that included conditions that were not available in the official one-page
contract. These contracts were appended to the official version of contract signed by
the ‘guardians’ and the husbands or their agents. The Republicans believed that no
guardianship should be practised over women; however, they wanted to avoid the
difficulties of having marriage contracts declared illegal. It was clear to them that
their practices could not substitute for the law.

Second, they revived an old rule in Shar’ia and Sudanese law that had fallen into
disuse because women were either discouraged from using it or did not know
about it, namely tafweed. Tafweed is a condition in the marriage contract that delegates
to the wife the right to divorce herself from the husband, without, of course, affecting
the right of the husband to divorce his wife. In all interpretations, divorce or talaq is a
fundamental right of the husband. Tafweed is a delegation of that right to the wife to
divorce herself from the husband incorporated as a condition of the marriage contract.
The Republican Sisters not only insisted on having a tafweed, but they turned it into a
basic right for women by having it as a mandatory condition in the marriage contract.
As such it became the men’s problem to avoid tafweed and gave women leverage in
strengthening their position in the family and with husbands. The Republican Sisters who were already married when they joined the Republican Brothers insisted on amending their existing contracts by writing a *tafweed* condition into them.\textsuperscript{21} *Tafweed* rendered the whole principle of obedience unnecessary, as a woman might negotiate her way out of *ta’ā* institution by owning the right to divorce herself. In fact, *tafweed* brought a sense of equality into the matrimonial home. However, divorce was rare among the Republicans, as the Republican Sisters proved to be more interested in working out differences than resorting to the use of *tafweed* to break up the marriage.

Third, the *tafweed* condition was coupled with another forgotten rule, arbitration (*tahkim*). The Qur’an expressly ordered arbitration between the couple before divorce (Qur’an 4:35). According to the law, a husband may divorce his wife at will any time, for any reason, or for that matter for no reason. In addition, the law did not mandate arbitration before a woman resorted to court. The Republican Brothers wanted the law to make arbitration mandatory before a man could divorce his wife. Implementation of this rule aimed to put an end to the long bitter court disputes that were known to leave women in limbo for a number of years. It would also restrict the husband’s unfettered right to divorce his wife. At least the marriage would have a chance of survival when the arbiters intervened. The right to divorce at will would be eliminated by the mediation process of the arbiters. *Tafweed* and arbitration would actually strengthen the family by bringing some equality into the institution of marriage.

Fourth, they kept the principle of *mahr* in the marriage contract, as did the Women’s Union. However, unlike the Women’s Union, they argued that reduction of *mahr* should be translated into ‘dignity for women’ (the Republican Sisters 1971, p. 4). The Republican Sisters saw the reduction of *mahr* as a step in an evolution that would remove it as a valid condition in the marriage contract, while *tafweed* became a basic right in it. The Women’s Union did not suggest a legal change to compensate women for their *mahr* waiver. The Republican Sisters foresaw a total disappearance of consideration moving from any party in the marriage except for the commitment to one another.

**Conclusion**

Sudanese women have been actively pursuing their rights under all types of political situations. The Republican Sisters and the Women’s Union suffered governmental persecution and social opposition because they called for change in *Shar‘īa* rules. The Women’s Union succeeded in rallying women around certain issues and voiced feminist stands. However, the word ‘feminism’ is still a negative word among the Women’s Union leadership, yet the way they pursued women’s rights in the Sudan was typical of what Obioma Nnaemeka termed ‘nego-feminism’. Nnaemeka defined this old wave of feminism that has been in existence for centuries in Africa as follows:

\begin{quote}
First, nego-feminism is the feminism of negotiation; second, nego-feminism stands for ‘no ego’ feminism. In the foundation of shared values in many African cultures are the principles of negotiation, give and take, compromise, and balance. Here, negotiation has the double meaning of ‘give and take/exchange’ and ‘cope with successfully/go around’. African feminism (or feminism as I have seen it practised in Africa) challenges through negotiations and compromise. It knows when, where, and how to detonate patriarchal land mines; it also
\end{quote}
knows when, where, and how to go around patriarchal land mines. In other words, it knows when, where, and how to negotiate with or negotiate around patriarchy in different contexts.
(Nnaemeka 2003, pp. 358–385)

The Women’s Union proved that it knew when, where and how to negotiate with and around the patriarchal Shar’ia institutions in the Sudan, whether they were governmental religious entities or political ones advocating Shar’ia as a source of law or as a base for an Islamic state. This had certainly brought about benefits that, however limited, became a source of empowerment to Sudanese women. To its detriment, the Women’s Union refused to frame the issues in a feminist theoretical framework. The issues were carefully identified and selected, but without a framework to support and define them. The Women’s Union preferred to fight Shar’ia proponents on their (i.e. the proponents’) terms. The result was a partial change of some of the rules, while leaving the principle underlying the rules intact, a case in point being the changing of the ta’aa rule, where they succeeded in stopping the forcible return of wives to bait alta’aa, but failed in eliminating the principle of ta’aa. In fairness to the Union, even today the principle remains in the Personal Status Law, despite continued resistance and calls from women for its abolition.

The Republican Sisters tackled Shar’ia rules from a well-defined theological base that had its own Islamic arguments, and was not seeking the approval of any school of jurisprudence. They chose a framework of human rights. They started from the premise that Islam had recognised women as human beings of full capacity, and that their rights should be recognised accordingly. Therefore, a mere facelift of the existing Shar’ia that consists of norms that governed people’s lives in the seventh and eighth centuries was incapable of securing women’s rights in the long run. Their approach was simple, albeit based on a complicated philosophy, as they insisted on removing guardianship of women and of non-Muslim men. They asserted that no arguments could be made for emancipation while women remained wards of men throughout their lives. A person worthy of his/her rights had to be free from the authority of others that rendered him/her a minor incapable of making decisions.

The Republican Sisters practised nego-feminism too when they argued rights according to the Constitution. They were aided by a cardinal rule in alfikra, which was how to balance two apparently contradictory stands. One of these was to apply a carefully measured dose of change so as not to cause total rejection of an idea, similar to the Women Union’s tactic; another was not to make religion mirror societal restrictions. They understood that religion did not mirror society, and that new interpretations had always in one way or another upset the established patriarchal cultural norms. Despite this, when they demanded constitutional equality, their arguments were branded un-Islamic.

The Republican Sisters thought that the state had a stake in the subordination of women; they therefore pursued a strategy that would limit the state’s intervention in the family. They thought that the principle of equality of the spouses should be enlisted to eliminate the state’s ability to legislate laws that favoured men over women. Accordingly, they always coupled their theological thought with practical measures such as the initiation of lawsuits and public opposition based on their understanding of Islam. The latter mode of opposition ended with the execution of Ustadh Mahmoud in 1985, when he rallied the people to oppose Nimieri’s Shar’ia laws.
While the Women’s Union negotiated women’s way out of restrictive traditions, which were applied as religion, they mostly stayed within the parameters of the old patriarchal discourse while trying to temper it; the Republican Sisters refuted and rejected the traditional Muslims’ use of *Shar’ia* to maintain guardianship over women’s rights. The Islamists set Muslim women apart from other women in the rest of the world and warned them against ‘Westernisation’. For that purpose, the Islamists assigned themselves the role of leadership.

Islamists must lead the renaissance of women from the swamps of traditionalism and deliver them from the hands of Westernised misguided groups who would love to exploit their predicament. After all, religion requires them to give guidance to humanity and save people from inherited deviations and novel aberrations. (El-Affendi, 1991, p. 175)

The Republican Sisters responded to the various Islamists’ accusations of Westernisation by clearly stating that Muslim women’s demand of their human rights had nothing to do with ‘Western ideas’. They invoked the *Qur’an* and *Sunna* as the source of human rights for women.

Both the Women’s Union and the Republican Sisters are now banned in the Sudan. Some of their members have established a presence in the new women’s organisations scattered around the world, contributing to public debates and supporting activism inside the Sudan. Those who survived the political situation and remained in the Sudan continue their organised intervention and make use of the Internet as a medium to join forces with their counterparts outside the country. The legacy of both the Union and the Sisters is the important scholarship, such as writing the history of the women’s movement in the Sudan and the reports about women’s rights and comments on existing laws. Producing such writings is not new, but using all mediums to publish these writing is more active than ever.

However, the new generations of women are reluctant to join the Women’s Union ranks. Fatima Babiker attributed their reluctance to the insistence of the Women’s Union on keeping an old, rigid constitution. At least two of the first leaders of the Women’s Union are now involved in feminist and gender studies at some universities. Ahfad University for Women has recently established a women’s studies department. Some of the ‘old guard’, the initiators of the Women’s Union, Nafisa Ahmed Al-Amin and Hajja Kashif, are part of the department.

The Republican Sisters stopped their public campaigns in 1985 after the execution of Ustadh Mahmoud, however all the Republican men and women continue to conduct their marriages and divorces as they did before. Their movement is witnessing a slow revival using the small margin of liberty allowed in the country. They are also participating in conferences and panels held inside Sudan and abroad. The annual commemoration of 18 January has been an opportunity for the Sisters to speak at universities and other institutions about their belief in women’s human rights and the possibility of achieving these rights from within Islam. The recent Internet discussion boards initiated by Sudanese abroad are giving unprecedented attention to debating the religious discourse of *alfikra*.

The Women’s Union and the Republican Sisters continue to be an important source of inspiration for Sudanese women. In their different ways, they mobilised for a reinterpreted Islam. The secular background of the Women’s Union did not blind it to the importance of religion in women’s lives. Their resistance employed what they
saw as emancipation in *Shar‘ia* to tackle patriarchal injustices, especially as perpetrated by the state. The Republican Sisters adopted *alfikra* with all its ideas in order to depart from *Shar‘ia* to build an egalitarian future for women. They also dug into *Shar‘ia* to find rules ignored by the state and the Islamist scholars, in order to aid women in their present daily life. The two groups achieved different degrees of success.

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Endnotes

1. The word *Shar‘ia* is used in different contexts: *Shar‘ia* as an Arabic word means a path, a way of living. Anyone’s lifestyle is his or her *Shar‘ia*. In Islam it is used in the context of the divine path indoctrinated by the *Qur’an* and the prophet’s directions and behaviour, therefore *Shar‘ia* Mohamed is the path that Allah mandated and Mohamed followed. As scholars embarked on interpretations of the *Qur’an* and *Sunna* and engendered Islamic jurisprudence, their treaties have come to be known as *Shar‘ia*. This article uses the word *Shar‘ia* to indicate laws based on the interpretations of Islamic texts by scholars during the eighth and ninth centuries.

2. The ideas of Ustadh Mahmoud Mohamed Taha that led to his execution are detailed later in the discussion of the formation of the Republican Sisters.

3. See H. Abuzaid, *Dawa‘ir Al-khawf: qira‘a fi khitab al-mara‘a*, (*al-markaz al-thaqafi al-Arabi*, Beirut 1999, pp. 89–94). Abuzaid asks the question: why does the status of women become a pressing issue when the social life is characterised by stagnation and backwardness? His answer to this question is that the social fabric of a developing society starts to crack with the decline and deterioration of all aspects of life in that society. The weakest link in the social fabric is women, and that is why their status surfaces as the first sign of social life falling apart.

4. Family or personal status courts for Muslims are known as *Shar‘ia* courts, historically the only courts that applied *Shar‘ia* law. They exist alongside civil courts that deal with civil transactions. These courts used to have judges specialising in all family matters from marriage to inheritance, however during the Nimieri era this specialisation was removed to eliminate the discrimination in wages and other benefits between civil court judges and *Shar‘ia* judges: the latter were paid less.

5. The nurses’ and teachers’ associations saw the light between 1948 and 1949. The women in all these associations came to a consensus that for women to play an effective political role they had to have a strong unified entity. In 1952, the same women who started the smaller associations launched the Women’s Union. They succeeded in recruiting educated women to the membership of the Women’s Union. The nucleus was the few educated women in the capital city who formed the Cultural Association of Girls in 1946. See N.A. Al-Amin and F.B. Mahmoud.

6. The Women’s Union won the United Nations Award in 1998 for its literacy campaigns among women in the Sudan.

7. See also S.I. Ahmed, where she indicates how this partial suffrage right excluded many of the women who were in the workforce, such as nurses and midwives who were trained to do their jobs without being literate, e.g. they were trained to tell the difference between drugs by smell, colour and shape.

8. F.A. Ibrahim, President of the Women’s Union for the past 35 years, confirmed to me in a personal communication the same information that she had been repeating in all her public speeches and media interviews, i.e. that she was adamant about keeping the communist party out of the Women’s Union. In addition, S.I. Ahmed called the association between the Women’s Union and the communist party a ‘false allegation’. F.B. Mahmoud flatly rejected allegations by S. Hale and H. al-Ahmadi that the Women’s Union was affiliated with the communist party (Mahmoud 2008).
9. T. Umbabi and S. Alfatih resigned from the Women’s Union. F. Talib, who was also affiliated with the Islamist movement, remained, as she believed in what the Women’s Union was advocating.

10. El-Affendi discussed the failure of the women’s organisation initiated by Al-Ikhwan Al-Muslimeen in the Sudan. A discussion of the Islamist women’s organisation is not included in this article because it is a comparison between the two organisations mentioned at the beginning of the article.

11. The Second Message was explained in the following statement: ‘Indeed, on this division of Qur’anic texts, into Meccan and Medinese, is based the most radical statement in the history of Islamic thought, namely, that Islam as revealed in the Qur’an is not one but two messages, the first and second, which are respectively based on the Medinese and the Meccan texts’. The above-mentioned situation resulting from the adherence of the Prophet, in his ‘private’ life, to the Meccan texts, on the one hand, and the use of the Medinese texts as the basis for all social, political and economic legislation on the other, meant that two quite different levels of Islam, a level adhered to by the Prophet and another adhered to by the nation at large, were then coexistent. The former level was, indubitably, far more humane and advanced than the latter. That level based on the Meccan texts and exemplified by the Prophet’s life represents what we have called the Second Message of Islam.

12. The capital of Sudan comprises three cities located at the juncture of the Blue and White Niles: Khartoum, the seat of the executive branch of government, Omdurman, the city chosen by al-Mahdi as a capital now housing the legislative body (the National Council), and Khartoum North.

13. Supreme Court, Constitutional Circle/Case No./2/1406.

14. For a valuable criticism of how the 14 centuries of masculine domination of interpretation rendered the belief ‘that men have better insight and knowledge of what is right for women’, see Wadud 2004, pp. 317–336.

15. The major four schools are those of Imams Abu Hanifa, Malik, Alshafie and Ahmed Ibn Hanbal.

16. Hudud crimes include zina (fornication), qadhf (false accusation of zina), theft, riddah (apostasy), hiraba (highway robbery) and drinking or dealing in alcoholic drinks. These hudud were introduced by Nimieri’s September laws of 1983.

17. Ustadh Mahmoud and his followers used the word Shar’ia in different contexts. Literally Shar’ia is a path; generally, Shar’ia means the exegesis of the seventh and eighth century; in another context, it means a body of law. Accordingly, the Republican Brothers’ publications use Shar’ia in all these contexts.

18. For the main thesis of Ustadh Mahmoud regarding the evolution of Islamic law, see The Second Message of Islam.

19. Literally, adhl means to incapacitate, but in its legal context it means an unreasonable act by the guardian that prevents his ward’s marriage.

20. There are two types of idda or waiting period: the first is after divorce and extends for three menstrual cycles (if the woman turns out to be pregnant then that period is extended until she gives birth). The second idda is after the death of the husband, and is four lunar months and ten days. This period is said to be when the foetus becomes alive, and is needed so the woman can ascertain whether she is pregnant, in which case her idda would also extend until she gives birth.

21. The Sudanese law allows the husband to delegate the power to divorce to the wife without any mention of when that delegation should happen. Some Shar’ia scholars mandate that it takes place at the time of contract. However, waiving a certain right that is written in the contract is allowed, e.g. the wife waiving her right to the deferred mahr. A man may waive his right after the contract is concluded if he chooses to.
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The Student Movement in Nigeria: Antinomies and Transformation

Sylvester Odion-Akhaine

There was a time when the student movement in Nigeria was the worry of the post-colonial ruling class. Indeed, there was a claim that in the mid-1980s the only radical group in Nigeria worthy of occupying a place on the shelves of the State Department of the United States of America was the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), because that body was consistently anti-imperialist. Imagine those heydays of the student movement; there would have been a nationwide solidarity protest in support of the people of Palestine in the face of the violence recently carried out by the Israelis in Gaza. That it did not take place underlines the parlous state of the student movement in Nigeria. The student movement appears to have lost its ideological direction since the first half of the last decade of the last century. Prior to this dip in consciousness, students had clear visions of society, including how it should be organised, with global bipolarity providing socialism as an alternative vision to capitalist civilisation. The latter aspires to build a society in which the means of production/wealth are in the hands of a few and the logic of production premised on maximisation of profit. By contrast, socialism aspires to build a society in which people are the alpha and omega of production and development. However, the collapse of state socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has in some ways affected the élan of proselytisation of socialism and the welfarist third way which it inspired in some countries. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the material conditions that inform and impel many to socialism have not changed. Capitalism has continued to cause havoc on a global scale, under the euphemism of globalisation. Ever prone to cycles of crisis, there is a prevalent global economic downturn, and discourses are beginning to incline towards financial socialism and statist intervention in the advanced capitalist countries as a solution to the current crisis of capitalism, the ‘credit crunch’. By contrast, in peripheries such as Nigeria, destructive deflationary policies and privatisation of the state parastatals are the hallmark of IFIs’ solution to the crisis of peripheral capitalism, a policy that has not only destroyed the nascent industrial sector, but has rendered the periphery more dependent on the centre. In short, the hypocrisy is complete.

Conceptual Clarification

The contemporary world is one in which anything goes; some call it post-modernism. In this de-centred world, concepts have lost their meanings in the mildew of an imposed master narrative. The world civil society has come to approximate a medley of societal groups: non-government organisations; social movements, old and new; quasi non-governmental organisations and international non-governmental organisations. In this hazy and windy environment, it takes a great deal of effort to follow the conceptual path. Therefore, an attempt is made here to clarify what movement, social movement and student movement mean. We do not intend to waste precious time in grappling with what NGOs are today in developing countries. Suffice to say...
that they are merely tools of development agencies inspired by the Bretton Woods institutions to deconstruct traditional social movements and mainstream neoliberal market values in societies under their superintendence (Shivji 1989). ‘Movement’ could refer to a group of people with a common ideology and could also refer to corresponding actions and activities of such to realise their objectives. Hence most movements are social because of the goals that they promote to influence/change society. Therefore, for us, social movement refers to a group of people who are involved in social struggles for the radical transformation of society, by challenging for state hegemony. Can it be said that this is true of student movements? Paradoxically, the answer is both yes and no. Student movements that are concerned solely with superficial one-off welfare issues cannot be categorised as social movement. Student movements that seek to interrogate the structure of society and its relationship with the organisation of education truly qualify as social movements. Can the Nigerian student movement be so qualified? This will become clearer as an attempt is made to give a brief history of it.

Overview of Nigerian Student Movement

The origin of Nigerian student movement can be traced to the West Africa Students’ Union (WASU) formed in England by people such as Ladipo Solanke and his associates in 1925, all of whom were influenced by the Pan-African Movement led by W.E. Dubois, as well as the communist movement (Agbodeka 1965). They were not only concerned about the welfare of African students in England at the time, but were also involved in the struggles of self-determination of their countries from colonial rule. The subsequent creation of the University College in Ibadan and Yaba College of Technology in 1948 together with the colleges and grammar schools provided what might be called an indigenous platform for intervention in the social-economic and political dynamics of Nigeria.

The students of these institutions did not restrict themselves to in-campus struggles, but with the country still under colonial domination, they were deeply concerned with issues of national emancipation, and in 1956 organised themselves under the platform of the National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS) under the leadership of Emmanuel Obe as its first president. Their patriotism found expression when, after the country’s independence in 1960, the young country was secretly yoked to the erstwhile colonial master, Britain, in a defence pact with the aim of preventing communist infiltration into post-independence Nigeria. The clauses of the pact were quite obnoxious and invested negative sovereignty in the young government. Section five of that pact exempted visiting forces’ (meaning British)

... passports and visa regulations and immigration control or inspection on entering or leaving the territory of that contracting party. They shall also be exempted from regulations on the registration and control of aliens, but shall be considered as acquiring any right to permanent residence or domicile in the territory of that contracting party.  

Beyond these, section 8 also exempted service vehicles that were exclusively in the service of a visiting force from registration, taxation and compulsory third party insurance, among others. But Nigerian students read the script quite correctly, and were ready to mobilise against this move. The University of Ibadan, led by Dapo Falase, Abayomi Ferreira, and the NUNS, led by Osita Okeke, Dan Abasi-Ekong and D.V.C Obi among others, descended on the members of parliament. A combination of students’ actions and the activities of the opposition party, the Action Group (AG), consequently
compelled the Balewa Government to repudiate the pact in January 1962.

Subsequently, Nigerian students were to play an increasingly progressive role in society, with NUNS serving as a veritable platform for them. They combined local welfare issues with the larger political economy. For example, the agitation against the appointment of Mrs Apampa as Matron of Independence Hall at the University of Ibadan led to the death of Kunle Adepoju in 1971. The students of the University of Nigeria on their own protested against the introduction of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme in 1973. However, a pan-Nigerian students’ action known as ‘Ali Must Go’ in the student movement history in Nigeria took place in 1978. At the time of this incident, Nigeria was under military dictatorship, headed by General Olusegun Obasanjo, and his Federal Commissioner for Education was Colonel Ahmadu Ali (after whom the protest was named). The revenue from the oil boom of the early 1970s had begun to diminish in the late 1970s due to an oil glut, and as a result affected the country’s economy adversely. The Obasanjo regime thought that the best way to deal with the financial crisis was through cost recovery and the removal of subsidies for fees and accommodation. The students resisted the move and were met with a corresponding state repression. This marked the beginning of a dark period in the history of the student movement in Nigeria, as a number of students from the University of Lagos and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, were shot dead by security forces. Consequently the authorities proscribed NUNS, and the Justice Usman Mohammed Commission of Inquiry was set up ostensibly to unravel ‘the immediate and remote causes’ of the protest.

By 1980, the NUNS had fully metamorphosed into NANS and adopted a charter in 1982, which captured its anti-imperialist essence; by locating the perennial crisis in the education sector within the neocolonial nature of the Nigerian economy, the 1982 Charter provided a major source of inspiration in the anti-imperialist struggle of the Nigerian student movement.

In 1989, there was another bloody nationwide protest against the ruthless implementation of the IMF – and World Bank-inspired Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which destroyed the national economy in general and the nascent industrial sector in particular, through massive devaluation of the national currency and liberalisation of the economy, as well as privatisation of national assets. The protest shook the foundation of the ultra reactionary regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. The students challenged the regime’s transition to civil rule programme which they saw as a ruse meant to perpetuate military rule. They pursued with vigour the Academic Reform Campaign (ACAREF) adopted in April 1991 at the University of Ilorin, by issuing an ultimatum to the Federal Military Government to declare a state of emergency in education, prompting a nationwide world press conference on the part of the latter to alert the nation to the impending violence by students. The regime was embattled, and by May 1992 the students struck again in nationwide protests, dubbed ‘economic protest’, which the military leadership had described as an equivalent of a military coup d’état.

In the decade of the 1980s, the student movement in its unwavering ideological commitment had forged a historical alliance with the Nigerian labour movement, including the Academic Staff Union of Universities. The student movement, as has been noted, was essentially anti-imperialist in outlook. This was reflected in the positions it took on major global issues. For example, under the administration of George Bush Senior, it condemned the infamous Television José Martí which was being beamed directly to Cuba without the consent of the Cuban authorities. The NANS called on
the Nigerian students nationwide to urge the Nigerian Government to intensify economic links with Cuba, demanding an end to US aggression against Cuba; demanding categorical condemnation of the US from the Nigerian Government; and writing protest letters to UNESCO, UN and the US Government making a case for Cuba. It is important to note that a number of these students went as volunteers to Nicaragua and Angola when these countries were besieged by US-sponsored counter-revolutionary insurgencies, and many shared rooms with South African exiles and organised Youth Solidarity on Southern Africa in Nigeria (YUSSAN) in virtually all the university campuses in the country. Such was the height of the movement’s internationalism.

What was remarkable about the decade of the 1980s was the strong ideological content of the student movement. It was underpinned by the Marxist–Leninist ideological leaning at the core of the movement, which ensured its hegemony among the social forces in the educational sector. That core organisation was called the Patriotic Youth Movement of Nigeria (PYMN), and central to its formation was the late Comrade Ola Oni. As Rahaman Onike rightly observed:

This student body propagated and spread the ideology of Marxism on the Nigerian campuses. In the course of struggle, the students’ activists enjoyed the support of radical intellectuals in the labour movement and in academia.

The movement was ideologically puritanical, to the point that it attracted criticisms from sections of the membership who subsequently called for a review of the NANS Constitution, which was seen as archaic. As observed in a protest leaflet, NANS was ‘so ideologically based that you would think that all Nigerian students are Marxist oriented’.

By the second half of the 1990s, on the left, political fatigue had set in and the leadership of the Nigerian student movement was hijacked by reactionary and pro-establishment forces. The movement entered a phase of organisational slumber from which it is yet to recover. It is perhaps an appreciation of the depth of this crisis in the student movement that past leadership of the movement and those who expect continuity in the radical tradition of the student movement look forward in general to the transformation of the contradictions that have bedevilled the movement. In what follows, there is a look at these contradictions.

The Antinomies

Progress vs. reaction

Students themselves, by virtue of their fluid class position as ‘declassed’ elements of society, have oscillated between prospects of embourgeoisification and that of aligning with the oppressed segment of society, the veritable damnés de la terre. It is in this ideological context that we can best situate the struggle between progressive and conservative students. The progressives demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of the students and that of the larger society. The school authorities, especially in the tertiary institutions, envisage relationship with the students and their leadership in loco parentis. Therefore, they could ‘go the extra mile’ to ensure that the leadership of the student unions is occupied by moderates or ‘good boys’. Where they are unable to do this, they suspend union activities and impose caretaker committees on the students made up of their quislings. This explains why caretaker committees are part of the crisis in the tertiary institutions in the country.

State interventions

It is a truism that the Nigerian state and its lackeys have always been concerned about the militancy of the student movement. Two views have come from the government circle in the last two
decades. One is that students are often incited by the more radical segment of society, such as the academic staff union of universities (ASUU) and the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), which are perceived as dens of communists and anti-establishment elements. The second view is that it is a ‘minority section’ of the students that seeks to upset academic peace. The Babangida regime’s antidote was to tame radical lecturers so that the ‘doves’ that are left would keep the students busy. In this regard, anti-student elements/groups were encouraged in the campuses and they operated with a great deal of impunity. They went by various names such as Peace Movement, vigilantes, Man O’War, and cults/gangs. These anti-social hordes went after progressive student union leaders, some of whom were maimed. For example, Former NANS President Emmanuel Ezeazu and his colleagues were brutalised. Ezeazu specifically had his sight impaired from an incident in the hands of vigilantes from the University of Nigeria. Throughout the early 1990s, cult killings flourished in the nation’s university campuses. For example, two students were killed at the University of Ibadan in 1992; another at Nnamdi Azikiwe University in the same year; and in the following year one was killed at the University of Jos. At the University of Lagos, Mr Omoyele Sowore, President of the Students’ Union, was injected with a poisonous substance by cult groups in March 1994. As one commentator rightly observed, ‘Prevalence of secret cultism in reality constitutes a threat to active unionism on campus’ (Onike 2009). This period marked the decline in the dynamism of student movement in Nigeria. This period might be qualified as the triumph of reaction. Today, factions of the student movement are enthusiastic in their quest to give awards to decadent state actors that in reality have little value. It can be said that once the issue of social identity and goals are emasculated in the student movement, it is impossible to refer to it as one.

**Propects of Transformation**

So far, an attempt has been made to capture the contradictions that have characterised the student movement in Nigeria to date. As Karl Marx, the millennium thinker, once said, philosophers have interpreted the world, and the task is to change it. To rebuild the student movement in Nigeria and restore it to its vibrancy of the 1960s and 1980s, attention can be directed to three major areas: curricula overhaul, ‘vanguardism’ and backward integration.

**Curricula overhaul**

The NANS in its 1982 charter of demand identified the neocolonial curricula as part of the fundamental crisis in education. However, this has far-reaching implications for rebuilding the student movement in the country. Truly, neocolonial curricula transmit ‘semi-transitive consciousness’ (Freire 2005, pp. 13–14), which according to Paulo Freire limits the sphere of perception, and the one so endowed is ‘impermeable to challenges situated outside the sphere of biological necessity’. Therefore, what is desirable is a curriculum that provides the basis for critical ‘transitive consciousness’ noted for in-depth appreciation of problems and social conditions. Without it, there will be no pull towards social resurgence, which often coalesces in social movement.

**Vanguardism**

In revolutionary terms, vanguardism is a political strategy whereby a movement is given its form and content by a core of the most advanced, ensuring its ideological coherence. Today, to rebuild the student movement, it is thought that mentoring is inevitable. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequent neoliberal ascendancy has depleted the ranks of advanced cadres to constitute a critical core for rebuilding the student movement in Nigeria. In the 1980s, the PYMN dug the trenches where we were engaged in a ‘war of position’ with other social forces.
in the society and had emerged at the end of it being ideologically hegemonic, a reality that sustained the movement. To begin the task of rebuilding the movement, a vanguard of advanced cadres committed to the goal of reconstruction is inevitable.

**Backward integration**

In the early 1990s, there was an evident depletion of the ranks of student activists in Nigeria. They were an endangered species. Therefore, reproduction of cadres who would sustain the radical tradition of the student movement became a major problem. One dimension of this question which came up for discussion at one of the NANS Senate sessions at the Lagos State University was the idea that activists who had already graduated from the tertiary institutions could go back and begin a postgraduate programme, which would provide a corresponding opportunity for rebuilding new ideological cells. A second viewpoint was the need to employ cadres who had graduated from the universities as full-time cadres to help rebuild the student movement. In summary, it was about taking control of the sources of supply in ways that were analogous to backward integration (a variant of vertical integration in economics), a situation whereby a firm takes over control of its inputs or supplies. We do not think that these thoughts are old-fashioned; on the contrary, they need to be animated and set off if the noble tradition of the student movement in Nigeria is to be salvaged.

**Conclusion**

An attempt has been made to examine the state of the student movement in Nigeria, its contradictions and possibilities of transformation. The student movement in post-independence Nigeria has had a vibrant tradition of being committed to the total independence of Nigeria, a fact which counterposed it to the neocolonial state, leading to challenges and confrontations, resulting in repression from both the ideological and oppressive state apparatuses. State intervention has been through the deployment of authoritarian tactics in the form of official high-handedness of university vice-chancellors, creation of paramilitary groups and the support of cultists. The sum total of these activities affected the core values of the student movement and provided a basis for the ascension of reaction. Nevertheless, to transform these ruptures it is suggested that curricula transformation is desirable; a vanguard organisation is important as well as backward integration. It is believed that the sooner these suggestions are put into action, the better it will be for the student movement in Nigeria. As the bourgeois scholar Huntington once opined, the truly revolutionary society is the one that has the capacity for change (Huntington 1968). The change we envision is progressive change where the wellbeing of man and woman will become the subject of development.

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**Endnotes**


3. This quote is taken from an undated post-1992/93 NANS convention protest leaflet titled, ‘For the Sake of Fundamental Human Rights and Democracy’.

**References**


Anglo-Nigeria Defence Pact. (1960), Sections 5 and 8 of the Articles.
Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) is a feminist organisation which aims to strengthen the building of a transformative feminist movement in Tanzania, Africa and worldwide. The organisation’s vision is of a transformed Tanzanian society characterised by gender equality, equity, empowered women and social justice. For 15 years TGNP has been at the forefront in the struggle for gender equality objectives and women’s empowerment in Tanzania. With its vision and mission, TGNP has crafted its identity on the transformative feminist conceptual framework and ideology that challenges patriarchy, neoliberalism and other intersecting forms of oppression and unequal power relations.

TGNP has been involved in a long time reflection on its theory and practice of feminism, and its practical contribution to building the transformative feminist movement. One of the first products of this reflection was ‘Notes on Transformative Feminism in Tanzania’ (2006) which forms the main content of this article. ‘Notes’ was the background document for the annual retreat of TGNP members and staff, ‘Making Transformative Feminism Real’ (25 March 2006), and later was popularised in Kiswahili and used to guide training sessions for members, staff and partners.

Of special significance are the members of the Feminist Activist Coalition, Femact, comprising some 40 non-governmental organisations committed to women’s rights/feminism and/or human rights. Another key network are the members of the weekly Gender and Development Seminar Series, GDSS, comprising 80 or
more leaders and members of grassroots groups in Dar es Salaam and neighbouring regions. We believe that these grassroots groups and organisations provide the core of the transformative feminist movement, together with intermediary gender networks and the many other grassroots women/feminist activists and groups that organise themselves today in Tanzania.

The original ‘Notes’ drew on earlier debate and dialogue concerning how to ground locally, which culminated in a major joint reflection process in 2004 involving district level gender networks with whom we work in 13 different locations of Tanzania. We felt growing unease at the degree to which the scarce human and other resources of the organisation were devoted to high level policy engagement (gender responsive budgeting, gender mainstreaming), compared to working closely ‘on the ground’ with grassroots women/feminist activists as part of a genuine grassroots-based movement for change, which is the founding philosophy and goal of TGNP in the first place. All of these activities were part of a major campaign, ‘return resources to the people’, which began in the early 2000s and focused on HIV and AIDS, gender and resources. The campaign had adopted a variety of strategies, including ‘in-your-face’ street marches and public rallies with strong grassroots participation, as well as media campaigns, working with networks and organisations of people living with HIV and AIDS who increasingly took the lead for specific events, and engagement with policy and budgets. Yet it was our own voices that were heard most often in public debates, rather than those of grassroots women – we were falling into the trap of speaking ‘on behalf’ rather than facilitating grassroots women to organise and speak on their own behalf.

This forced us to question ourselves, and others, about how we position ourselves vis-à-vis the most significant struggles taking place in our society, and to critically analyse different feminist theories/practices/ideologies in the light of these struggles. Throughout these reflections on our theory and practice of feminism, we were guided by asking ourselves: ‘what are we against?’ and ‘what are we for?’ We also asked, ‘who are we?’ and ‘who are we with?’

There are many different types of feminisms that have emerged in Tanzania, and worldwide, in the context of women’s struggles against oppression and exploitation as women/girls and for emancipation and freedom. Although each of these has its own history and position, they have many things in common. The most important commonality is that all feminisms challenge male domination/supremacy/privilege and discrimination against girls/women in some way, and they seek to improve the situation of girls/women.

At any one moment, one individual or organisation may embody elements of several different feminisms. However, these may be in opposition to each other and lead to confusion. Therefore, it is important to clarify exactly where we stand with respect to feminism, because of the different and, in some cases, opposing trajectories which emanate from the different positions which each one takes on key issues. This is especially important in Africa today, given the growing power of major donor agencies to determine policy directions of both governments and civil society organisations, including women’s and feminist organisations.

At the same time, we proudly assert our position as transformative feminists in the face of those who reject feminism as diversionary, secondary or of no consequence, and others who fear the backlash from men and women who uphold male supremacy and patriarchy.

The next section examines the feminist theories/approaches which are most
prominent in Tanzania and the region today, from the point of view of the position taken by TGNP, which is transformative feminism. This analysis is situated within the context of corporate-led globalisation, the growing power of ‘Western’ governments and neoliberalism ideology in Africa today, and the current global financial and economic crisis that has illustrated the inherent weaknesses and contradictions within the global capitalist system.

Different Feminisms

The position taken in this article is that ‘transformative feminism’ is the cutting edge of all revolutionary conceptions and social movements, because it links struggles against all major forms of oppression, discrimination and exploitation. Transformative feminism struggles against:

- all forms of male domination/supremacy (often referred to as ‘patriarchy’);
- class exploitation on the basis of capitalism, the dominant economic structure today;
- imperial domination and growing supremacy of the G7 countries (often referred to as corporate globalisation);
- oppression on the basis of race/ethnic differences;
- homophobia and all other efforts to deny women’s (and men’s) rights to own their bodies and define their gender identity and sexuality;
- fundamentalisms and traditionalism;
- all forms of discrimination based on demographic, ethnic and physical ‘otherness’.

Transformative feminism has not developed in a vacuum, and has its roots in other forms of feminism. At the same time, clarity of what it is and stands for has partly been derived from recognition of differences in outlook, ideology, as well as position. We examine the most important trends in feminism today, making bold generalisations about each one, while recognising that none are homogeneous in reality.

Transformative feminism is very different from ‘radical feminism’, which identifies men to be the main enemy, and concentrates on struggles against patriarchy. Radical feminists envision a world without men, where women are in control of all aspects of society and life. It tends to essentialise women as all sharing certain attributes which are different from those of men. For radical feminists, women are, by nature, nurturing, artistic, cooperative, non-competitive, non-hierarchical and peaceful.

Radical feminism rightly challenges us to deconstruct ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ and to explore how these gender identities – and others – have been constructed. We need to do more analysis of the impact of the macho identity, for example, on state militarism, competitive sports, the destructive discourse of academia, and domestic violence against women and children. Relevant strategies of action are needed to combat the macho identity in all its manifestations, along with the ‘dependent feminine’ identity which many women/girls employ.

However, a major problem with radical feminism is its assumption that all women are the same, thus ignoring the way in which different classes/groups of women oppress/exploit others. By emphasising ‘natural’ differences between women and men, essentialism adopts the mirror image of patriarchal beliefs in biological differences between women and men, and overlooks the role of society (including patriarchy) in constructing gender differences. It does not ask why and how, for example, (some) women have been socialised to be nurturing, cooperative and peaceful, and ignores the many women who are, in fact, competitive, individualistic, bossy and violent (and, vice versa, what about gentle, nurturing men?).
Another problem is the failure to recognise the way in which other social relations and structures support and strengthen male supremacy – all of these social structures need to be abolished in order to do away with male domination.

‘Liberal feminism’ identifies gender inequality as the main problem, and seeks to promote women’s equality with men in all spheres of life. This is the dominant form of feminism in Tanzania today, and informs most programmes of gender equity and gender mainstreaming in government and among donors, and among many NGOs as well. The main focus is on promoting equality by advancing women to be on a par with men within existing structures, e.g. in education, in employment, in politics etc. Policies and ideologies such as ‘Women in Development’, or WID, are typical of this approach.

The problem with this approach is that it takes the status quo as given, which would mean that other forms of oppression and exploitation would persist, thereby dividing and exploiting some women by other women, and men. For example, liberal feminism demands that women entrepreneurs have access to bank loans on the same terms as men, as one form of women’s economic empowerment. This means in practice that a few women will benefit from credit programmes, along with a few men, while excluding the majority of both women and men. Transformative feminism might call for alternative strategies of financing which benefit all classes/genders equally – only possible with alternative forms of finance institutions, not the present private commercial banking institutions.

Related to liberal feminism is what is often referred to as ‘Western feminism’ by critics who are usually based in Third World, post-colonial and transformative feminism. Western feminists (whether situated in Africa, another region in the South or in the North) is the term used for a certain type of liberal feminism whose gaze is focused on ‘other’ women in the Third World/Africa – or in the village/rural areas – from the vantage point of a woman/observer who assumes herself to be liberated. As with radical feminism, there is a tendency to homogenise all African women as being the same, thus robbing women of their individualism, dynamism and uniqueness. Many Africanist feminists have promoted colonising and totalising generalisations about ‘rural African women’ as being powerless, helpless, propertyless, voiceless – the essential victim.

Because Western feminists assume that African women are passive objects who are acted upon by men or patriarchy, they do not look for examples of contestation, resistance and struggle and they usually fail to recognise resistances when they happen. Instead, the observer adopts a highly patronising/matronising position, assuming that she knows what is best for the African woman, the rural woman, the woman living with HIV/AIDS, the African girl. Western feminism has been adopted by many African women scholars, government officials, parliamentarians and NGO-based actors working in Africa, as well as Africanist feminists based in the North.

‘Black feminism’ identifies white supremacy and racism as being the major cause of the oppression and exploitation of black women, thereby subsuming the struggle against male domination as part of the overall struggle against racism and global apartheid. Many black feminists adopt essentialist views, similar to radical feminists, and argue that black women are, by nature, unique, the same and different from all other women. Black women, for example, are essentially, by their nature, sexy, musical, artistic, courageous, etc. Whether essentialist or not, the approach homogenises all black women as being the same, thus obscuring the way in which some black
women exploit and oppress other black women, and men. It also fails, in many cases, to address the ways in which imperialism and capitalism further the oppression and exploitation of working black women in particular, and all working women in general. (However, the work of Audre Lorde, a self-proclaimed black feminist, is a stunning example, to us, of transformative feminism – Audre Lorde identified herself completely with the struggles of African women against apartheid, colonisation and imperialism.)

Like black feminists, transformative feminists recognise the reality of white supremacy within different branches of the women’s movement worldwide and in Africa. White supremacy permeates many donor programmes emanating from ‘the North’, and is increasingly incorporated within post-colonial structures of power and ownership of property. Liberalisation and privatisation programmes have led to the growing economic power of white South Africans and ‘Europeans’ from the North in eastern and southern Africa, thus reversing the decolonising achievements of early independence. Moreover, northern-based feminists have increasing power to define what ‘African-based’ feminism ought to be about, by virtue of their position in global governance structures.

At the same time, this power is not defined solely or ultimately by race (witness the number of Third World women who now work for governments, international NGOs and academia in the North), but by position in imperial structures of power. Hence, post-colonial feminists based in the North who are of Third World origin have an undue amount of power to determine the direction which global feminisms should take, by virtue of their greater access to and control over resources than feminists based in the South (research, publications, media attention, academic positions, management posts).

The essentialising ideas of both black and radical feminism are rejected in this analysis as mirror images of sexism, white racism and imperial ideology about ‘exotic’ African women – and men. They share basic elements of biological determinism that have been rejected over time by all those movements which have struggled against white supremacy and male supremacy. One of the major ideological weapons of white supremacists and colonial ideologues has been the argument/assumption that whites are by nature/biologically superior to all other ‘races’. Similarly, male supremacists argue that men are biologically superior to women. Efforts to adopt biological/essentialist arguments for the supremacy/uniqueness of black women adopt a similar type of biological determinism, and are therefore rejected.

‘Marxist feminism’ struggles against both male supremacy/domination and class domination/exploitation, and identifies the main cause of women’s oppression/exploitation to be class. Hence, feminist struggles are to be subsumed under class struggles that are led by the workers against capitalists. Women workers have often been in the forefront of this movement, trying to win gains for all workers, while at the same time struggling against sexual abuse at work, discriminatory wages and male oppression in the workers’ movement. Many of our male activist partners embrace some version of marxist feminism – hence the unease, if not outright hostility, about prioritising feminist struggles against male supremacy as a diversion of the masses, or not being ‘serious’.

While recognising the significance of class struggle and identifying capitalism as a major cause of women’s oppression and exploitation, transformative feminists reject the prioritisation of any one ‘structure’ or set of relationships over the other. Instead, they examine the dynamic way in which class and gender
relations interact with each other, and with race and imperial relations. At any one ‘moment’ in time and space, one of these social relations may appear to be the most dominant and have top priority – however, transformative feminist struggles link all forms of oppression/exploitation together in order for real transformation to take place, and real women’s emancipation to be achieved.

‘State feminism’ is a term which has developed to conceptualise a strategy more than a conceptual framework, the strategy of mainstreaming gender in and through the state, and using the state to promote gender equity, women’s advancement and, in some cases, social transformation. In Latin America, for example, progressive leftist parties have won political power in some countries with the support of the feminist movement, and later have invited leaders of the feminist movement to join the new government in power. One result has been the fragmentation of the feminist movement and the domestication of its political programme.

There is a growing recognition worldwide about the way in which ‘gender mainstreaming’ has contributed to the domestication of the feminist agenda in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Once feminist discourse is appropriated by donor agencies including the World Bank and IMF, the original transformative goals are in danger of being subverted and domesticated. It takes constant vigilance to maintain clarity of positionality, especially in a context when many feminist organisations and/or researchers and teachers depend upon external funding and external support for publication.

Another expression of the same tendency is the rise of ‘gender technocrats’, i.e. state officials who are experts in gender, and/or gender consultants who work with donor agencies and the government to carry out gender analysis and training.

A whole industry of gender analysis and gender planning has developed, which has adopted many elements of feminist discourse but without the passion, the commitment and the grounding in the feminist movement. This has informed the development project, whereby the ‘nation’ is continually groomed to accommodate itself to post-colonial capitalism. Elements of gender equality may be incorporated into the development project in order to win support from local women’s groups as well as external tax-payers, but without challenging the dominant structures which oppress and exploit the majority of girls/women and boys/men.

This section of the article has compared and contrasted transformative feminism and other types of feminism in Tanzania and Africa today. The next section analyses transformative feminism in more detail.

Transformative Feminism

One of the most controversial elements in transformative feminism (and in radical feminism as well) is the belief that change must come about in both the public and the private spheres of life. Efforts to change dominant structures of decision making over policies and budgets in the public sphere will go on side by side with efforts to abolish male supremacy in decision making within the family (nuclear and extended) and the community. These struggles are linked, in that male supremacy is created, reproduced and struggled for in both the public and the private spheres of life. Hence, the need to struggle on all fronts for change. There are no boundaries for patriarchy – and hence, no boundaries for transformative feminist struggle.

Another dimension of transformative feminism, which is held in common with other forms of feminism, is its
attention to the emotional, psychological and sexual aspects of the self and of relationships, as well as the economic, the political, the cultural. Transformative feminists link struggles for ownership and control of bodies with those for ownership and control of land, for example, or of labour. Struggles over sexuality, gender identity and reproduction are part of these struggles.

Male supremacy is partly based on the way in which both femininity and masculinity have been constructed within the most personal, private areas of our lives. The link between male supremacy and macho identity/behaviour and the perpetuation of physical violence and war as a solution for social conflict illustrates how powerful psychology, self-identity and emotion are.

However, connecting the personal and the public is highly controversial and can be very painful. It means talking about oppression and struggle within our own families and homes, among people we love and care for. Moreover, the finger needs to be pointed in all directions – who is innocent? The mother who oppresses her daughter by trying to define for her how she should behave and who she should love? The older sister who exploits her younger sister’s labour?

Feminists of different types have also challenged the way in which knowledge is generated, packaged and disseminated. Research and knowledge cannot be ‘objective’ in the sense of a researcher not having a position, or her work not reflecting her position in society. The challenge, instead, is to make the position and identity of the researcher clear, visible.

Transformative feminists call for a holistic approach to research, which takes into account all aspects of reality. The subjective, emotional side of our lives is as significant and open to scientific inquiry as the so-called logical and analytical side.

Linking the creative and artistic sides of our brain with the logical and analytical has proven to be crucial in making transformation happen. Both quantitative and qualitative methods become potentially useful in our efforts to ‘know’ the world as fully as possible. These struggles include the popularisation of who does research and how the information generated will be shared, which media will be used and who decides, thus challenging the dominance not only of men, but also academic professionals and corporations.

As with historical materialism, transformative feminism links theory and practice, and is rooted in concrete struggles for change. In other words, the analysis is derived from what is learned in the process of struggle, and vice versa. Transformative feminists do not sit back and critique reality, including policy; they struggle to change it. This means taking risks, ‘getting our hands dirty’, in the process.

Finally, transformative feminists have promoted emancipatory ways of organising ourselves, to challenge male dominant top-down structures in civil society as well as in government. Group-centred leadership – not leader-centred groups – is one example. Collective participatory decision making is another. Engagement within participatory democratic structures is liberating, and becomes a school for the revolution, thus espousing animation as its main approach and philosophy whereby the oppressed take ownership and lead the struggle for their own emancipation, while those in solidarity with them accept to learn and be led.

Silence, Confusion, Positionality

In preparing these notes, we have recognised silences within transformative feminism in Tanzania, which may ultimately undermine the struggle for change. These silences are listed below in order
to encourage further thinking and to provoke debate as we continue shaping our collective identity and sharpening our tools of analysis and struggles:

– Sexual orientation and identity; and
– Sexuality.

Confusion has also been noted – which may be a creative development – over the following issues:

– the role of men in the feminist movement;
– gender versus women;
– the role of the state in the feminist struggle for women’s emancipation and transformation of society;
– the relationship between transformative feminist movement and organised religion;
– the relationship between transformative feminist movement and the state;
– strategies to handle the growing challenge of fundamentalist struggles, including market fundamentalism on the one hand, and religious fundamentalism on the other (far-right Christian, Islamic); and
– traditionalisms.

In terms of positionality, we reconfirm the importance of:

– naming your self;
– taking a position; and
– solidarity with other transformative movements.

Post-2006 Developments

As noted at the beginning of this article, TGNP carried out a series of awareness-raising sessions on transformative feminism with staff, members and partners during 2006 and 2007, and more explicit feminist discourse began to be employed in our ongoing activities. One of the major steps forward occurred through the Gender Festival 2007. TGNP and FemAct organise this festival every two years for gender/feminist activists and others to come together and share experiences of their analyses and struggles, and plan collective action for the future. The theme for Gender Festival 2007 was ‘Gender, Democracy and Development: African Feminist Struggles in the Context of Globalisation’. The keynote speaker, Muthoni Wanyeki, a young feminist from Kenya, shaped the framework for dialogue and debate through her presentation, ‘Believing in Ourselves’. One workshop focused on feminist organising and leadership styles, and feminist discourse was encouraged throughout the four days of plenary and workshops, involving more than 3000 participants from all over Tanzania and from many African countries as well.

Our resolve to strengthen feminist activism by grounding locally also defined the key priorities for the organisation’s next five-year strategic plan 2008–2012. The year 2008 was devoted to two major studies which together have contributed to the process of restructuring and repositioning TGNP. A pilot study of transformative feminist movement building was carried out, using participatory action research methodology, in three districts of Dar es Salaam, the major city of Tanzania, and in one rural district, Mbeya, in the South-West, in order to find out ‘what is happening on the ground?’ It explored the questions ‘what type of grassroots women/feminist organising is taking place? About what issues? Using what strategies? How do others perceive TGNP’s role in transformative feminist movement building, if at all?’ This intersected with the second Carrying Capacity Study, which explored to what extent the organisation was prepared and able to take a leading role in transformative feminist movement building, beginning with its own institutional culture and structure and ways of relating to grassroots and other women/feminist activists and their organisations.

Participation by staff and members in the two studies allowed us to incorporate the findings and the lessons learned into
ongoing restructuring and repositioning processes, without waiting for more formal reporting processes (which near completion). As a result, major shifts in the organisational structure and strategies of TGNP are already taking place this year, which we believe will strengthen its capacity to position self within the diversity of feminist activists’ struggles and make a significant contribution to the building of an ever more powerful transformative feminist movement in Tanzania and Africa in the future.

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Marjorie Mbilinyi is a founder member of TGNP, and currently leads Analysis and Research at TGNP.

Endnotes
1. An earlier version of this article was published in *Ulingo wa Jinsia* (July–September 2006) and in a special issue of CODESRIA Bulletin 2006.
2. Key presentations on feminism at the Gender Festival 2007 are reproduced in *Transformative Feminism: Believing in Ourselves* (TGNP, 2008).
opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) won 114 seats, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) 109, the People’s National Convention (PNC) two seats, and the Convention People’s Party (CPP) one. The other four seats were won by Independents, all of whom had been NPP supporters who objected to the particular choice of candidate.

The closeness of the result reflects the intense competition that characterised the election, but it, together with the eventual victory of the erstwhile opposition party, indicates the general ‘freeness’ and ‘fairness’ of the process. There were allegations of threats and intimidation in the Ashanti and Volta Region heartlands of the two main parties, and rumours abounded of fake identification cards and attempts to register minors and other ineligibles. One report was of groups of Togolese citizens being taken to the Volta Region attempting to register to vote, in the belief that they were arranging to attend the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca (interview, David Adeenze-Kangah). In terms of financial support, the high levels of activity of the NPP and NDC indicate there was no major disparity between them, but of the minor parties only the CPP was able to launch anything resembling a national campaign, and this was organisationally very limited in most areas of the country. Relative access to finance remains a concern for democracy in Ghana as in so many other states.

Thirty-two sitting members of parliament lost their seats. These included several important figures from the outgoing regime:

- the Minister of Women and Children’s Affairs, Hajia Alima Mahama, in Nalerigu, Northern Region;
- the Minister of Works, Housing and Water Resources, Alhaji Malik Yakubu, in Yendi, Northern Region;
- the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Saddique Boniface, in Salaga, Northern Region;
- the Minister of State at the Presidency, Charles Bintim in Saboba, Northern Region;
- the Deputy Upper East Regional Minister, Agnes Chigabatia, in Builsa North;
- the Minister for Public Sector Reforms, Samuel Owusu-Agyei, in Effutu, Central Region;
- the Deputy Minister for Education, Angelina Ammissah in Shama, Western Region;
- the Deputy Minister of Health, Gladys Ashietey, in Ledzokuku, Greater Accra (Daily Graphic, 13 December 2008);

The terms of the Constitution are that a successful presidential candidate must achieve 50 per cent +1 of the votes cast in order to be declared victorious on the first ballot. In this case the declared results are shown in Table 1 (figures rounded to two decimal points).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidential candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Result (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>49.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Atta-Mills</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>47.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paa Kwesi Nduom</td>
<td>CPP</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Mahama</td>
<td>PNC</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four other candidates shared the remainder (The Ghanaian Times, 11 December 2008).

The PNC campaign had been lacklustre with few electoral posters being visible outside the home area of Edward Mahama in Walewale in the Northern Region and in the Upper Regions, and there was a distinct lack of financial and administrative support for its parliamen-
tary candidates (interview, Moses Baah). On the other hand, the eventual poor result for the CPP belied a great deal of effort on behalf of its presidential candidate in particular to re-establish itself as a potent force in Ghanaian politics, with posters displayed throughout the country and confident television performances, but reflected the actual organisational and financial deficiencies at local level. In the event it seems that divisions within his own party, together with Nduom’s participation in the NPP Government after 2000, took their toll, with the NDC being viewed as the obvious vehicle of change for those critical of the regime.

This result triggered a run-off three weeks later, on Sunday 28 December. The new results are shown in Table 2.

However, this too proved inconclusive, as voting had been unable to take place in the Tain constituency in Brong Ahafo Region because of a shortage of ballot papers, and the 53,000 registered electorate there outweighed the declared Atta-Mills majority (Voanews). As the Tain constituency had been won by the NDC candidate in the parliamentary election and by Professor Mills in the initial presidential election, the final NDC victory was probably a foregone conclusion, but the NPP did not admit defeat, and the re-run took place in Tain on 2 January. In the event the NPP activity on the day of the election was minimal, and Professor John Atta-Mills was finally declared the victor of the presidential election.

Despite apprehension from many quarters that the election could lead to violence, particularly if the results were disputed, it was peacefully conducted. While there were some radio and newspaper reports of scuffles and rowdiness in various parts of the country, both the immediate build-up to the election and the polling days themselves generally went off without the loss of life and destruction of property that had been present, if very limited and sporadic, in recent previous elections (see for example The Ghanaian Times, 9 December 2008). In 2004, for example, a number of violent attacks on polling officials were reported and several people died in Tamale both before and immediately after the election (Kelly 2005). Ghanaian police had been on the alert for potential violence in a number of hot-spots where the earlier build-up to the elections had led to a resurfacing of local tensions. Earlier in the year, for example, there had been killings in Bawku in the Upper East Region and Gushiegu in the Northern Region. Following the election some of the latent tensions did erupt, with the stabbing of an NPP supporter at Agbogbloshie market in Accra during NDC victory celebrations (Ghana Review International, 8 January 2009) and the burning of a number of houses belonging to NPP activists in Tamale (The Statesman, 12 January 2009).

The success of the NDC can be taken to provide important evidence that Ghana has established itself as a functioning democracy. Its victory marked ‘the second turnover’ of power (the first being the victory of the NPP over the NDC in the 2000 elections) identified by Huntington as indicating the commitment of two major groups of political leaders as being sufficiently committed to democracy to surrender office and power; that both the elite and the public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidential run-off candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Result (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Atta-Mills</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>50.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nana Akufo-Addo</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>49.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
recognise that when things go wrong in a democratic system, the need is to change the rulers and not the regime (Huntington 1993, p. 267).

So what factors lay behind the opposition’s success? During the build-up to the election the NPP was quite confident that the international aid it had obtained, the developmental projects it had undertaken and a general optimism created by the discovery of oil in large quantities off the coast of the Western Region would guarantee a third term of office. The party could point to the great advances in freedom of the media, with a wide range of newspapers and radio stations offering alternative views and opening up political discussions, in contrast to the heavily government-controlled pattern under previous regimes. NPP supporters and non-partisan officials alike pointed to the many developmental improvements in the various regions of the country. In the Northern Region I was urged to note the improvements to street lighting, roads and the new sports stadium in Central Tamale, the building of a new bridge in Yagba constituency which would prevent many villages from being cut off from their nearest town (Walewale) during the rainy season, a new hospital at Gushiegu in Dagbon, and the creation of new districts with their own developmental budgets in Karaga and Central Gonja (interviews: Alhaji Yahya and Adam Cockra). In the Upper West a new district had been created in Lambussie, and the road links between Wa and Kumasi/Accra had now been greatly improved, with only a short stretch of the main road near Bamboi needing to be tarred. In the Upper East, new dams had increased agricultural production, new healthcare facilities had reduced infant mortality, a new district had been created for Chiana-Paga, and the liberalisation of trade with Burkina Faso had greatly benefited Bolgatanga and the border town of Paga (interviews: A.A. Luguterah, Issaka Sagito and Kofi Adda). In election posters across Ghana there were photographs of life ‘before and after’ the acquisition of NPP rule, stressing the improvements and developments that had taken place.

The figures in Table 3 show that in terms of parliamentary constituencies the NPP actually strengthened its position in Brong Ahafo, Upper East and Upper West, but in addition to the four seats it lost to NPP rebels standing as Indepen-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituencies</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2008</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National result</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

dents it had a net loss of three seats in Northern Region, seven in Greater Accra and eight in Central Region. This would indicate a regional difference in the factors at play. In Greater Accra the increasingly difficult economic situation led to disenchantment with the government’s economic performance, and this coincided with the completion of the expensive new presidential palace and increasing allegations of corruption against some prominent figures in the regime. As one commentator put it, a new presidential palace costing over US$30 million coincided with ‘the fact that the majority of our people exist in stinky poverty’ (Doris Yaa Dartey in *The Spectator*, 16 November 2008). In the Central Region, strong campaigning by the NDC to regain support for Professor Mills in his own region, largely lost to the NPP in 2004, enabled the party to make much of the plight of fishermen whose livelihood was becoming increasingly threatened by the activities of Chinese and Japanese fishing fleets. It was in these two regions that the NPP essentially lost the parliamentary elections. In the presidential elections the NDC’s largest increases in vote were in the Central and Western regions, while the NPP actually increased its percentage of the vote in the Northern and two Upper Regions.

In the interior of the country a mixture of ‘traditional’ and modern factors was at play. The developmental improvements mentioned above certainly played a role in sustaining and even enhancing NPP support. As the *Daily Graphic* (13 December 2008) put it, the ‘people of Lambussie in the Upper West Region showed their appreciation to the ruling NPP for giving them a district’, and strong candidates in Lawra (UW), Bawku Central and Binduri (UE) also helped the party overturn NDC majorities. In the Northern Region the ongoing Dagomba chieftaincy dispute almost led to a clean sweep for the NDC in that area (in Nanton the anti-NPP vote was split by the presence of a strong CPP candidate), while the selection of John Mahama, son of Kwame Nkrumah’s former minister E.A. Mahama, as vice-presidential candidate helped to win two Gonja seats previously held by the NPP. The choice of Muhamadu Bawumia as NPP vice-presidential candidate for the NPP (also the son of a former Nkrumah minister) failed to save the single Mamprusi seat held by the party in Nalerigu and did not lead to the expected victory in Bawumia’s home constituency of Walewale and adjacent Yakba/Kubori. Indeed, the limited impact of his candidature is shown by the fact that the NDC actually gained a 1 per cent higher vote in the presidential over parliamentary election in Yakba (54 per cent vs. 53 per cent) while in Walewale the NPP presidential ticket only reached 39 per cent – 7 per cent less than the NDC (myjoyonline.com).

One key factor in many areas was the role of primary elections, and this affected both the NPP, which held them, and the NDC, which did not. NDC thinking was that this was such a crucial election that any sitting MP should automatically be chosen this time around. This meant that some candidates who were not seen to be particularly active in their constituency’s interests or whose continued tenure was resented by local notables were confirmed in their candidacy, but were then subject to a local backlash – this can largely explain the failure of NDC candidates to hold their seats in Lambussie (UW), Buiisa South and Binduri (UE). It is interesting to note that while these NDC MPs lost their seats, in the latter two constituencies the presidential vote went to the NDC and in Lambussie that result was very close, with the NDC gaining a majority for Mills in the presidential run-off election. In the case of the NPP, disaffected losers in the primary elections played an important part in the loss to Independents of two Ashanti seats (Bekwai and Bosome-Freho), one Northern (Wulensi) and one Eastern Region (Nkawkaw) seats, with all four voting for the NPP presidential
ticket. In Yendi in the Northern Region the vote was split by an erstwhile NPP supporter standing for the Democratic Freedom Party, whose capture of 3 per cent of the vote enabled the NDC to take what should have been a relatively safe NPP seat.

So can any general trends be deduced from the campaigns and their results? I would suggest that several significant points emerge:

The choice of candidate: This has become more important as the number of potential opinion leaders in rural areas has expanded from the local chiefs to the range of educated and successful individuals. Given that in the rural areas any ideological difference between the parties is largely invisible, it is important that the candidate is well connected within the constituency, is known and is seen to be locally active. The lack of activity of a number of sitting MPs has been noted above as a source of their failure, but this was also used to explain the defeat of the sitting NDC MP in Bawku Central, Mahama Ayariga, who was criticised for spending too much time with the presidential and vice-presidential candidates on their tours of the country, and insufficient time looking after his own constituency (interview, Adda). Any MP who is seen to develop his own village while neglecting others in his constituency may also feel the wrath of the electorate, and this was used partly to explain the defeat of the incumbent NPP MP for Sissala East, Moses Baah, who allegedly in election year put up electricity poles near his home in Tumu while leaving them lying unconnected on the ground in Wallemelle.

Ethnic rivalries: All parties in Ghana are keen to play down this aspect of political rivalry, with leaders and candidates exhorting the electorate to vote on the basis of policies rather than ethnicity. However, for many voters the identification of the NPP with the Asante and related Akan-speaking groups and the NDC with the Ewe remains strong, and is displayed by the continued success of the NPP in Ashanti, central Brong Ahafo and the western and central parts of the Eastern Region. The approximately 25 per cent won by Professor Mills in Ashanti in both the initial and run-off elections is not significantly different from the 24 per cent won in 2004, indicating little reduction of the impact of this identification and possibly of the ethnic rivalry. Likewise, the NDC carried all the Volta Region seats, with the exception of the Akan-dominated area of Nkwanta North, and achieved over an 86 per cent vote for its presidential candidate in the run-off election. In Wa Central the candidature of Clement Elade, a Dagaaba for the NPP, was probably more a reason for his defeat by the NDC’s Wala candidate than was the issue of personality, despite the claim of the Daily Graphic (12 December 2008) that he had ‘poor human relation’ (sic) when compared to the ‘the more affable Rashid Pelpuo’. In Bawku Central the Kusasi vs. Mamprusi dispute was played out again, with the election of a Mamprusi/Mossi candidate showing a return to the 2000 pattern of an NPP victory, although this was one of the results subject to a High Court challenge. In the Nanumba/Konkomba constituencies of Bimbilla and Wulensi the rivalry between these two ethnic groups greatly contributed to the defeat of the incumbent NDC candidate in Bimbilla by the NPP and the incumbent NPP candidate in Wulensi by an Independent. In Bimbilla the numerically dominant Konkomba elected a Konkomba candidate, while in Wulensi a Nanumba standing as an Independent defeated the NDC and NPP candidates who were both Konkomba. The results of the 2008 elections show that ethnic rivalries remain as considerable problems for Ghana, but at present the key Akan–Ewe divide only manifests itself in electoral rather than violent rivalry, and regime changes enable this to be contained with each ethnic group having an opportunity to
benefit from periods of being in government.

**Local developments:** When asked, most voters are clamouring for local development, and this is of potential significance. The creation of a new district based on Funsi before the 2004 election certainly contributed to the NPP victory in Wa East, and in 2008 this was repeated in Lambussie. However, local developments are not always clearly attributable to one party. If a constituency is held by a member of the opposition party then the relative roles of the MP and the District Chief Executive (DCE) appointed by the President can come into play, with both claiming credit. In addition, local developments do seem more visible to the government supporters than to those of the opposition. NDC supporters across the country were very willing to complain about the lack of any real development in their areas, while NPP members could point to specific projects that had come to fruition.

**Traditional disputes:** In some areas these coincide with the ethnic rivalries mentioned above, but in others they are distinct. In the Dagbon area of the Northern Region the intra-Dagomba dispute between the Abdulai and Andani families remains very important. All Dagombas feel allegiance to one of the families even though they themselves are not of royal (Na Bihe) blood, and the failure of the NPP Government to charge anyone with the murder of the paramount chief (Ya Na) and some 30 of his followers in March 2002 has strengthened the link between the NDC and the Andani ‘family’. The NPP’s one safe Dagomba seat of Yendi was lost through a splitting of the vote, but the party gained Nanton in compensation through the splitting of the Andani vote there. In many parts of the Upper East and Upper West Regions the disputes are not really ethnic but are village rivalries. In the Upper West rivalry between Lawra and Nandom (both are largely Dagaaba towns) remains significant, while in Chiana-Paga in the Upper East, Kassena Chiana is resentful of the dominance of Kassena Paga both economically and in terms of representation, while Nankanni Sirigu feels totally excluded but does not get support from Nankanni Mirigu – hence candidates from each of the first three villages fought out the 2008 election (interviews, Luguterah and Rudolf Amenga-Etego).

**Party allegiance:** This has long been a factor, with some families being allied with the Nkrumah or Danquah ‘traditions’ since the early days of politics in the 1950s (for details see Nugent 1995 and Oquaye 2004). On a more limited term basis, party loyalty remained strong across the election period in 2008. There was very little change in the voting between the presidential and parliamentary elections, and even less between the presidential and run-off elections. The limited differences in parliamentary and presidential results in the 2008 elections involved the four successful Independent candidates and the three representing the minor parties. In each case the presidential vote was won by either Nana Akufo-Addo for the NPP or Professor Atta-Mills for the NDC. The changes are shown in Table 4.

From Table 4 it can be seen that even including the four parliamentary seats won by Independents (who were all NPP dissidents) only four constituencies changed their vote between the presidential election and the run-off (Lambussie, Bibiani/Anhwiaso, Mpohor-Wassa and Prestea-Huni Valley). It can also be seen that the NPP did distinctly better in the parliamentary than the presidential elections where there was a divergence between the two. This to some extent reflects the effect of the NDC failing to hold primary elections in seats that they held where it was the parliamentary candidate rather than the presidential candidate or party that lacked local support.

**Active support:** In the past one of the key elements of this was the backing of local
chiefs. While this has greatly reduced (see Kelly and Bening 2007) and chiefs’ participation in elections is actually banned by the 1992 Constitution, this still remains of some significance in rural areas. As Tufuor states, in many areas candidates ‘have a political responsibility to woo the chief and his elders’ (Tufuor 2008, pp. 28–29). In Lambussie, the chief’s car was seen campaigning for the successful NPP candidate, while the Chief of Kayoro in Chiana-Paga constituency pledged the support of his people to the NPP (Daily Graphic, 19 November 2008). However, of much greater importance is the support of the youth, with candidates mobilising large groups of young supporters to mobilise support for them (interviews: Baah and Adda). The resources of the local party are also important, with effective campaigning leading to NDC victories over sitting Independents, PNC and CPP members in Bolgatanga (Upper East), Bunkpurugu (Northern), Ellemelle (Western), Sissala East (Upper West) and Zebilla (Upper East). Divisions within the NPP and consequent lack of active support from senior party members contributed greatly to the loss of Nalerigu and Yendi in the Northern Region (interviews: Adda and Alhaji Ibrahima).

The high electoral turnout of almost 70 per cent, although it was 85 per cent in 2004 (Ghana Electoral Commission), and the victory for the opposition, are very positive signs for Ghanaian democracy. However, the closeness of the results offers a more ambiguous message. On the positive side it should encourage cooperative working across parties, and the PNC quickly responded to NDC overtures by allowing Azong Alhassan, the newly-elected MP for Builsa South, to become Minister of State at the Presidency (Daily Guide, 3 February 2009). On the negative side, it is possible that the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Parliamentary</th>
<th>Presidential</th>
<th>Run-off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>Ablekuma South</td>
<td>NDC</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ayawaso Central</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>Bekwai</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NPP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bosome-Freho</td>
<td>IND</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NPP</td>
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<td>Asutifi South</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NPP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nkoranza South</td>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>NDC</td>
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Source: Adapted from myjoyonline.com
outcome of a handful of court disputes and by-elections could create a situation where the President lacks parliamentary support. Before the election some leading members of the NDC were showing frustration at lack of power and were very fearful of election-rigging, and so a small change in the balance of power could lead to more tension and instability. Since the election there have been a number of reported incidents of NDC supporters harassing members and supporters of the former government and this could polarise divisions in the country. The demands for justice conflict with the needs for reconciliation. The election results themselves do not offer solutions to the various ethnic and local disputes that threaten Ghana’s peace and stability, but the ‘foot soldiers’ of the NDC in Dagbon, for example, now expect their government to deal with the murderers of the late Ya Na. Similarly, the NDC victory does nothing to alter the dependency of Ghana on international finance, and the hopes of the poor and disadvantaged are unlikely to be met.

The peaceful handover of power does however show that there is a general commitment to democracy and a desire to preserve the image of Ghana as a democratic and stable state in a continent that often lacks these features, and the continued high turnout shows the population retains a belief in the efficacy of the electoral system. The desire of the relatively neglected regions of the country to make progress through a government largely representative of them needs to be balanced with policies that will keep the relatively affluent areas ‘on board’ to avoid the polarisation that characterises so many African states. This is particularly important in Ghana, as areas of relative affluence to a significant extent coincide with the areas inhabited by Akan-speaking groups. This will require astute statesmanship from Professor Mills and his government to avoid the twin dangers of resentment from his opponents and disillusionment among his supporters.

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Africa’s Future is up to Africans. Really?

Tunde Zack-Williams & Graham Harrison

As this volume was being put together, President Barack Obama, the first African American to hold this high office paid his first official visit to sub-Saharan Africa – to Ghana – where he made a major policy statement on US–Africa relations. So Africa is no longer to be treated with benign neglect, or is that just cunning? The feverish expectation of the speech was not unlike Harold Macmillan’s ‘Wind of Change’ Speech of February 1960 to the South African Parliament, and the message was just as candid. This time it was not an old colonial coming to ‘talk down’ to the rulers of modern Africa, but a son of Africa, who happens to hold the most powerful office in the world.

Ghana was chosen for this visit ostensibly because Washington sees that country as a beacon of democracy in a continent that has had more than its share of autocrats and military dictators. However, some critics have questioned this explanation, pointing to the fact that Botswana’s democracy has been much more durable, and for a long time was one of the fastest growing economies in the world. One critic has drawn attention to ‘the sinister hand of oil’ (Zeleza 2009, p. 5); with leaders of American oil companies already swarming through the corridors of Osu Castle like flies over fresh fish. Critics also point to the fact that the US is becoming increasingly dependent on West African oil and that by 2015 some 25 per cent of US oil import is expected to come from the Gulf of Guinea. The growing importance of West Africa to US global strategic interests and the need to find a ‘local home’ for Africa Command (currently based in Europe and which has been opposed by African governments and civil societies with bitter memories of previous military interventions) must have been influential in the decision to chose Ghana for the ‘inaugural’ visit to sub-Saharan Africa.

These points aside, it must be also noted that Ghana holds some cultural and historical significance for African Americans: Ghana was the source of millions of slaves who entered the United States to form the Old Diaspora; and it is also the destination of thousands of African Americans returning to their roots. Furthermore, Ghana was in the vanguard of both the anti-colonial struggle and the Pan-African Movement, which included Diasporic figures such as African American stalwart W.E. DuBois, who moved to Ghana to work with the post colonial pioneers under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, the man who led sub-Saharan Africa’s first country to independence in March 1957. Furthermore, thanks to good marketing, African Americans have appropriated much of Ghanaian culture and cultural artefacts, such as the Kente cloth, which by now has become an item of cultural significance in African American communities.

In his speech to the Ghanaian House of Representatives, the President emphasised the role African actors have to play in shaping twenty-first century development, but this, he argues, will only happen if the continent can establish ‘sustainable democratic governments’, ‘good governance’, ‘strengthen public health’ and put an end to wars and conflicts. Furthermore, in an implicit rejection of the Afro-pessimists, who see Africa as...
an irrelevant continent marginalised from the global capitalist system, the President observed that he sees ‘Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world – as partners with America on behalf of the future that we want for all our children ... That partnership must be grounded in mutual responsibility ...’

The main theme of the President’s address was that ‘Africa’s future is up to Africans’. In valorising African agency, President Obama was not pointing to anything new, as contributors to this journal and others have emphasised the dialectical insertion of African formations within the global capitalist system, which structurally impel African underdevelopment and the need for collective African responses. In noting the widespread cynicism and despair that has engulfed much of the population of sub-Saharan Africa, the President observed that: ‘... the West is not responsible for the destruction of the Zimbabwean economy over the last decade, or wars in which children are enlisted as combatants’. The President drew attention to the role of corruption, poor governance, poor public health and conflicts have played in setting back economic and political development in Africa. Kenya, the land of his father, had a higher GPD per capita than South Korea in the early 1960s, yet has been outpaced by South Korea since. Whilst GDP is not a very satisfactory index of progress for a number of reasons (Clower et al. 1966), it is important to note that Kenya, like most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, has failed to engage with globalisation, and as a consequence has slipped down the development ladder. To compound the problem, functioning bureaucracies inherited from the departing colonialists were transformed into fiefdoms, leading to the increasing haemorrhaging of educated labour and capital (Collier 2007). The critical mass of cadres and technocrats who should take their countries forward has been forced out, or decided to vote with their feet to foreign land.

That Africans need to live under regimes of good governance is not in dispute (Zack-Williams 2001). Democracy has always been dangled as a carrot to the African masses, and they are fully aware that in the end their votes matter less than the will of the incumbent to power who can win the elections (as opposed to the popular votes) by unopposed (preventing others from filing in nominations) or by announcement (because they control the major communication organs). In fact, what Africa needs is democratic developmental states in order to strengthen the infrastructure and improve the material conditions of the masses.

As one critic of the President has noted, ‘Africa’s contemporary structural and institutional systems reflect complex intersections of the legacies of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the deformities of postcolonial political cultures’ (Zeleza 2009, p. 2). Indeed, African rights and citizenship need to be protected, defined and guaranteed by those who lead them. The issues of rights and citizenship have been key issues in the struggle of African people under colonialism and in their long struggle against post-colonial oppressors. In the case of the struggle against post-colonial dictators, African people have found little support among the democratic governments in the West, who have tended to bolster dictators, as long as Western interests can be protected. For example, on numerous occasions when the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo stood up against the kleptocratic demagogue, Mobutu Sese Sekou, the dictator’s friends in the West did not stay neutral, but French (and towards the end of the Cold War, Moroccan) paratroops were flown in and dropped in Kinshasa and other locations to quell the popular uprising. Mobutu maintained the support of his Western masters, until he became an embarrassment at the end of the Cold War, by which time he had transformed the Zairian Treasury into his personal bank to siphon state resources to banks in the West. In this way it can be seen that
corruption in Africa is not always structurally unrelated to the shenanigans of Western multinationals, as the recent conviction of a US official in the Halliburton $180 million bribe scandal in Nigeria shows.

In the then Belgian Congo and Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has been accused of being culpable in the overthrow and death of the patriot Patrice Lumumba and the Kwame Nkrumah respectively. The case of Mobutu in Zaire was repeated throughout the continent. For example, British Prime Minster, Edward Heath was one of the first leaders to give recognition to Idi Amin’s monstrous regime that brought carnage to Uganda before he was removed from power by Tanzanian forces; similarly, autocrats in Central African Republic, Togo and Gabon remained in power with support from the Elysee Palace. Perhaps one historical decision that the President could have instituted, is the return of illegally held assets in foreign banks by African leaders in a similar manner to that which off-shore tax havens are being pursued by the American authorities.

The President spoke about supporting development in Africa and went on to criticise dependence on single export commodities. Here we note three points. First, the effects of structural adjustment programmes, which have tended not only to reinforce agricultural production in Africa, but also monocultural economies, as each country is directed to continue production along traditional lines, with the result that this creates gluts in the world market for primary produce and there is a subsequent fall in prices, detrimental to the exporter, but favourable to the production cost of the importer.

Second, since many of the industrial enterprises in Africa were either government owned or joint ventures, the anti-dirigist nature of adjustment programmes has left the economies denuded of an industrial base, with infrastructure collapsing as the state was discouraged from investing in this sector. The private sector continues to avoid the sector as a plague. Marketing boards – which could have provided an infrastructure for agrarian support and more developmental export strategy – have been abolished or weakened under structural adjustment conditionality (van der Laan 2002).

Finally, African exports have been squeezed out of the market of the developed economies through tariff escalation and agricultural subsidies to farmers, making it harder for farmers in poor African countries to diversify their exports, by processing them before export. Thus Collier (no critic of the market) has noted that rich-countries trade policy is part of the problem, describing it as ‘policy of incoherence’ and that some aspects of the policy are indefensible. He observed: ‘It is stupid to provide aid with the objective of promoting development and then adopt trade policies that impede that objective’ (Collier 2007, p. 160). Thus even if good governance is addressed, Africa’s dysfunctional integration into the world capitalist order cannot provide the basis for convergence, but divergence. Africa needs inward direct investments in order to diversify export in labour intensive manufacturing and services, in order to provide jobs for the millions, in order to avoid ‘Afrosclerosis,’ the equivalence of Krugman’s ‘Eurosclerosis’, i.e. ‘the persistence of high unemployment rates, especially among the young, even during economic recoveries’ (Krugman 2009, p. 29).

The Articles

Roger Southall’s article on the fall of Thabo Mbeki analyses the repercussions of the complex denouement of his premiership in terms of the politics of the ANC.
Of course, this requires an analysis not simply of a ruling party but of a coalition; not just within the party but also through a range of provincial governments, a broader civil society, and the decisions of important individual power brokers. Southall advances seven explanatory narratives that explain the ascension of Jacob Zuma to power which range from the most reactionary to possibly more progressive prognoses. This complexity in itself is interesting; it suggests that government politics in South Africa is not entirely ‘shut down’ as some accounts of the rise of the ANC party-state suggest. Nevertheless, there are serious concerns raised by Southall’s article regarding the future of the ANC and its internal politics: the highly contested and ultimately opaque nature of the legal actions against Zuma and the suggestions of malpractice and corruption within various ‘camps’ of political fealty do not augur well for the ANC’s immediate future. Reflecting the multiple (and sometimes contradictory) vectors of change, Southall argues that the current political fluidity within the ANC challenges our understandings of the class politics that contained by – and to some extent mediated by – the broad infrastructure of the ANC.

Susan Willett analyses recent anti-corruption measures that have focused on military expenditure. ROAPE has carried a number of analyses of the double standards of international good governance regulations, in which African states are subjected to various forms of discipline and incentive concerning malpractice whilst international capital remains almost entirely outside of any remit to ‘tidy up’ acts of bribery, fraud, laundering, or illicit behaviour. Looking closely at DFID’s TIDE initiative, Willett shows how the ‘demand’ side of corruption is focused on at the expense of the ‘supply’ side. Beyond this, she also convincingly suggests that foreign investment is replete with shady practice, often intertwined with the support of Western politicians. This is particularly prominent in the arms industry – a ‘sector’ that is morally repugnant in its entirety for anyone who does not swallow the euphemisms of ‘security’ and ‘stability’ – but it is also prominent in mineral deals, the purchase of privatised utilities, infrastructure development, and many other investments.

The themes of disciplining and incentives are continued in Sophie Harman’s article on World Bank involvement in HIV/AIDS policy. A consideration of AIDS/HIV has been mainstreamed in most bilateral development policy, as well as World Bank operations, and in East Africa this has generated a regional policy raft underpinned by substantial amounts of donor/creditor money. Of course, substantial inflows of external finance into well-designed policies to tackle the spread of AIDS and to ameliorate the effects of HIV are to be welcomed. But even in the most ostensibly praiseworthy areas of development funding there reside questions of power. This is already well known with regard to the US policy of promoting a moral agenda based in Christian monogamous matrimony. In Harman’s article, we see how East African states are shaped by World Bank (and others international agencies’) ideas about how AIDS/HIV policy should be ‘governed’: how institutions should work, what types of political ideas should underpin policy, and of course the proper role for international organisations. Harman identifies a politics within the Multi Country Aids Programme that is similar to that ensconced within macroeconomic and development policy more generally: liberal, market-conforming and integrated into international architectures of development regulation.

In his detailed study of northern Uganda, Issaka Souaré identifies a tension in peace-making efforts between the requirements to maximise moves towards a cessation of war and the risks involved in providing amnesty to combatants – and especially those in positions of command. Amnesty might provide a means to bring LRA fighters
out of the bush, but this does violence to concepts of justice and also provides a possible ‘incentive’ to fighters that might be able to act with impunity under the LRA mantle. These tensions are only increased by the cross-cutting agendas of the bodies involved: the LRA, Ugandan military and state, international human rights organisations and, of course, the International Criminal Court. Souare’ advocates a rather hybridised approach to peace making, based in vernacular notions of justice, a pragmatic approach to amnesty provision, and an emphasis on economic rights/restitution as well as criminal and punitive ones.

Asma Halim provides a detailed and fascinating account of the ways in which religious texts and practices can be maintained at the core of progressive political projects. Looking at two women’s organisations in Sudan – the Sudanese women’s Union and the Republican Sisters – Halim shows how they have not only drawn on aspects of Islamic jurisprudence and authority but also contested the meaning of Islam in Sudan’s public life, and especially the terms upon which gender relations are negotiated. Of course, both organisations have faced turbulent political waters, especially as a result of the increasingly authoritarian nature of the state and its evocation of conservative formulations of Islam. But, there has also been an awkward set of relationships with the resolutely secular ideas of Communism. Halim concludes by emphasising the importance of ‘nego-feminism’ – a feminism of negotiation between women’s groups and other social agencies, an approach which she argues is also more amenable to find a way through the possible problems with the adoption of feminist theories which derive almost entirely from Western experiences.

Boku Tache and Gufu Oba seek out the historical roots of inter-ethnic conflicts in southern Ethiopia. At the heart of tension and conflict between Borana and Somali groups is rights of access to land. These rights have proven to be unstable and contested since colonial projects aimed to establish state boundaries which are always statements (and often partially realised projects) to create differentiations in law and rights. Tache and Oba focus on the post-Derg period, revealing how decentralisation, ethnic federalism, and the capture of local state authority by different claims to land have fuelled enmity between the two groups – indeed it seems as if these aspects of state policy ‘contribute’ to the construction of these groups in that particular setting. The case study shows how ethnic politics is produced through changing state policies and land politics – a political economy of ethnicity that is more substantive than one derived simply from a concern with cultural identities and their construction. Tache and Oba suggest that the key to reducing ethnic tensions lies in a more flexible understanding of rights to land and especially a reconciliation of law with pastoral understandings of rights.

Endnote

1. Citadel of power in Ghana

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