

BOOK REVIEW

Mobile phones: the new talking drums of everyday Africa, edited by Mirjam de Bruijn, Francis Nyamnjoh and Inge Brinkman, Bamenda, Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group (RPCIG) and Leiden, African Studies Centre, 2009, 184 pp., £19.95 (paperback), ISBN 9956558532

In the year 2000 about one in 50 Africans had access to a mobile phone. By 2008 the figure was one in three. When *ROAPE* dedicated a whole issue to information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Africa in 2004 (Issue 99) this technical revolution was just getting underway, and at that stage people were more concerned with the 'digital divide', and Africa's disadvantages within global developments. The extent and nature of ICT use in Africa over this decade has jumped by leaps and bounds, with research into its impact on societies and economies scrambling to keep up with rapidly changing and diverse circumstances.

A plethora of researchers has started following these developments, and their discussions appear in such fora as ICT for Development (ICT4D) and Mobiles for Development (www.dgroups.org/groups/mDevelopment) with numerous conferences and exhibitions. As one of the authors in this compendium says (p. 137), however, 'to date, very few studies have systematically considered the key factors of mobile ICT use in developing countries using data collected from individual consumers.' Less research has been undertaken on economic actors who use these technologies, and who operate outside of projects sponsored by the aid industry. As Jeffrey James has observed elsewhere, the literature

is still voluminous, yet fragmented (James 2005).

This compendium of research articles (one in French and the rest in English), brought together by the African Studies Centre in Leiden and Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group (RPCIG) in Cameroon, results from a workshop in 2006. These articles focus, often within an historical context, on anthropological, socio-economic, and cultural aspects of the uses made of mobile phones in African communities in recent years. The ways in which such phones are used vary from society to society, users adapting these technologies to their needs and cultures in a variety of ways. It points the way to ICTs needing to be more structured to the needs and perspectives of their users.

The subjects of the articles range from the impact of mobile phone use on the nature of anthropological research, to mobile phone callbox development in a small town in Cameroon, to societal impacts of mobile phone use in a large city (Khartoum). One article reveals the limited use of mobile phones amongst tomato and potato traders in Tanzania because of the social importance of face-to-face contacts in trading relations, and over-reaction to price signals resulting in flooded markets, but also reveals the growth of 'network reception spots' (where mobile phone-equipped agents link suppliers and traders by phone). Another article looks at how poorer households access mobile phones and the use of text messaging amongst poor, often semi-literate people in Burkina Faso, while another one looks at the use of the mobile phone for diagnoses, payments,

medicine deliveries, and check-ups by a traditional medical practitioner in Cameroon. The last two articles look at the embodied persona of an individual type of phone as it changes with its users in Tanzania, and Internet café use patterns and user objectives in Accra, Ghana, and their impact on travel and migratory objectives of Ghanaians.

Although these articles bring out the many positive effects on social development, economic opportunity and personal security afforded by mobile phones, they do not eschew the sometimes negative aspects of crime organisation, abrupt social tension created from swift change, uncertainty of location of user, trust difficulties, fantasy creation, or phone use 'addiction', and consumerist 'status' over productive use that may also result from the development and use of this technology.

This compendium provides a rather disparate, if sometimes interesting, collection of studies of ICT users. Much more still needs to be researched on the changing trends in ICT usage and their impacts in both social and economic areas, focusing on particular use needs, and how these are changing over time. Different approaches are needed for different groups, according to their differing needs and their different ITC access possibilities. A number of ICT projects have failed, because they cast their net too widely (no pun intended!), not focusing sufficiently on user needs.

A group of us are focusing in this way on the interface between ICTs and the functioning of agricultural marketing systems. A number of projects – e.g. Manobi in Senegal and South Africa; MISTOWA (Market Information Systems and Traders' Organizations in West Africa) in West Africa; IICD (International Institute for Communication and Development) in

Uganda (Commodity Exchange Project); MAPRONET (Market Access Promotion Networks) in Ghana; CROMABU (Crops Marketing Bureau) in Tanzania; KACE (Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange) and Drumnet in Kenya – have established ICT-based initiatives in relation to this sub-sector in recent years. In a number of these the beneficiaries and users have often been men, but increasingly (particularly in gender-conscious institutions), women are using such technologies.

Limited research has been undertaken to date, however, on how different operators in agricultural marketing systems have used existing and available ICT technologies to improve particular marketing functions. In some cases, previously radio-based price information systems have been replaced by computer-based systems, and they in turn are being by-passed by individual-user mobile phone-based systems. The change is rapid and use practices diverse. Sometimes resistance is found, as in Magu District in Tanzania, where the Sukuma ethnic group considered that information was seen as a collective good, and that it should not be disseminated on an individual level: societal norms in conflict with individualistic assumptions of neo-classical economics!

Reference

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BOOK REVIEW

The state of the state: institutional transformation, capacity and political change in South Africa, by Louis A. Picard, Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2005, 390 pp., £26.50 (paperback), ISBN 9781868144198

‘Colonialism in Africa included a cultural hegemony that fractured pre-colonial institutions.’ (p. 15)

‘By 1999, the most pressing problem facing the Government of National Unity was its own bloated and corrupt public service.’ (p. 278)

The state of the state is a highly innovative and superbly written text. The book centres on three themes: first, the transformation of South Africa into a democratic post-apartheid state; second, the nature of the bureaucratic structures and political control mechanism of the post-apartheid state; and finally, the transformation of the transitional bureaucratic policy-making and implementation processes.

The book starts its examination of the evolution of the modern state in South Africa by explicating the conceptual frontiers of the *institutional state* in the post-apartheid era. It delves into the unfolding transformation of the state via bureaucratic processes by reflecting on the political control structures of the past that have subsequently resurfaced as defining challenges in the task of state-building undertaken by the non-racial government: the development of a non-racial public service, a viable policy-making process for economic development, and enhanced public-private sector capacity as the engine of economic growth. Picard avers:

The new non-racial government in South Africa after May, 1994 inherited from the state system an authoritarian local level state administration that is tolerant of corruption and the institutionalised use of patronage in the public sector to advance Afrikaner ethnic claims. This inherited institutionalised state dampened economic and social development and weakened the evolution of democratic civil society. (p. 5)

Thus the institutional state becomes the central theme in Picard’s exploration of the African National Congress (ANC)-led government’s evolving capacity for state restructuring and the task of building a developmental state in post-apartheid South Africa.

Through the prism of the institutional state, the author undertakes in-depth analysis of the legacy of colonialism on the state in Africa. Picard draws on Crawford Young’s theory of the African colonial state (1994), and the legacies of its institutional form for understanding the frailties of its post-colonial successor. He emphasises that throughout Africa colonialism ruptured the evolving state system and in most cases pre-colonial polities were destroyed. As a consequence, the colonial system can be seen as having given birth to the modern post-colonial state (p. 15). Thus, central to the institutionalised state argument is an analysis of how colonialism resulted in what Mamdani (1996) calls the ‘alien and bifurcated’ nature of the post-colonial state. Picard employs this framework to examine how the colonial legacy resulted in a bifurcated state bureaucracy in South Africa during the period of Afrikaner monopoly of the civil service.

Subsequently the book historically contextualises the racialisation of politics in South Africa. Picard employs the Afrikaans slogan '*Ba antjies viv Boeties*' meaning 'for pals' as a conceptual framing device in his exploration of the historical antecedents of the post-colonial racialisation of politics. He examines the 'imperialisation' of the bureaucracy through patronage politics during the rise of the apartheid National Party, whose xenophobic and white supremacist ideology soon became the established ideology of the South African state. He explores the broader question of the nature of the transition from the apartheid to the non-racial era by focusing particularly on the challenges that shaped the institutional capacity-building process in South Africa as a result of the inherited legacy of minority rule. In particular, one aspect of the attempt to overcome the inherited institutional legacy of the past is the affirmative action strategies taken for public sector reform, regarding areas such as human resource and planning capacity, efficiency and effectiveness in the bureaucracy. The aim of affirmative action in South Africa was to promote equal opportunity, to increase ethnic or other forms of diversity at all levels of society, and to redress perceived disadvantages due to overt, institutional discrimination.

These enquiries lead the author to confront the question of why, despite the institutional transition and reorganisation of the South African civil service, its bureaucratic system remains dysfunctional due to the lack of human resource development, and will and capacity to implement public sector reform policies. This brings to the fore the notion of transition without transformation in the 'new' South Africa. Picard's analysis of the 'grand corruption' orchestrated via the bureaucratic institutions of the state in both apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa is compelling. It serves to highlight how the enduring

problems of patronage and corruption undermine the state's capacity to foster effective and efficient bureaucracy planning for development in Africa. He posits, 'levels of corruption are a good measure of the extent to which an institutional state has become dysfunctional' (p. 246). Picard's analysis reveals how the pervasiveness of corruption over four years after the transition has precipitated economic stagnation and decline in civil service productivity.

In seeking to understand these enduring problems, Picard critically examines the failure of the public sector during the apartheid era and how this institutional legacy remained a salient feature of the new non-racial government that came into power in May 1994. Picard argues that during the four decades under apartheid, the bureaucracy functioned as a major patronage network. This pattern of interest group articulation in the public service has continued to be manifest through favouritism and pervasive corruption in the new South Africa. This phenomenon has proved a major challenge to capacity-building initiatives as well as undermining measures to restructure the public service. Picard's book ends by exploring the implications of the new transition on the institutional state thereafter by reflecting on the Thabo Mbeki years.

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BOOK REVIEW

Globalization and restructuring of African commodity flows, edited by Niels Fold and Marianne Nylandsted Larsen, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2008, 276 pp., £24.95 (paperback), ISBN 9789171066169

This collection of essays seeks to identify and unveil the different ways in which African countries have been incorporated into ongoing processes of globalisation by adopting a common analytical approach known as global value chain analysis. Taking Gereffi's work on global commodity chains as its point of departure, the book focuses on actors, institutions and processes linked to the organisation of functionally integrated nodes of production and services at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Each chapter examines commodity chain-specific data collected in two or more African countries in order to highlight the impact of changing patterns of 'governance', 'regulation', and 'upgrading' on the development prospects of both local producers and national economies.

Focusing on the distribution of power and the role played by lead firms within specific commodity chains, the concept of governance refers to the ways in which different types of buyer–seller relations organise cross-border production arrangements. Charles Mather (Chapter 4) and Michael Friis Jensen (Chapter 5), for example, provide empirically rich case studies of the shift from producer-driven to buyer-driven export chains. In both chapters, the authors demonstrate how the imposition of quality standards and buyer requirements during the 1990s has become

a key vehicle of vertical integration led by powerful retailers within a context of market liberalisation and deregulation. In Mather's study of South Africa's citrus industry, the new demands for quality, variety, and higher phytosanitary standards, coupled with the withdrawal of price and technical supports from Citrus Exchange – the single channel system for citrus exports in the pre-liberalisation era – have strengthened the position of large producers selling certified fruit to overseas buyers. Similarly, Jensen underscores how the implementation of increasingly strict food safety requirements by UK retailers has transformed the organisation of the Kenyan horticultural supply chain, leading to the exclusion of smallholders previously involved in the production of fresh fruit and vegetables for the export market.

The way in which market reforms and changing quality standards have impacted the structure of value chains is further analysed by Fold and Stefano Ponte (Chapter 6) and Larsen (Chapter 7). The authors examine the relationship between the deregulation of domestic procurement and quality control systems, on the one hand, and the deterioration of international reputation and price premiums allocated to African producers, on the other. In Chapter 6, Fold and Ponte take a comparative approach to analyse the effects of market liberalisation on coffee exports from East Africa and cocoa exports from West Africa, underscoring how the maintenance of crop quality and price premiums as a source of added value in countries like Kenya and Ghana is closely associated with the preservation of state-regulated marketing

systems and payment procedures. In a similar vein, Larsen finds that the production of quality cotton in francophone African countries rests upon the development of a privatised but regulated export sector, characterised by comprehensive national schemes that enable the provision of quality-inducing inputs on favourable credit terms to small-holders. As such, moving beyond the analysis of structures of governance that shape commodity chains from within, these contributions emphasise the key role played by state policies and 'external' regulations in global value chain dynamics.

The institutional dimension of value chains constitutes the main focus of Benoit Daviron's account (Chapter 3) that seeks to historicise the evolution of African countries' participation in international trade through the lens of the 'Food Regime Perspective'. Under successive food regimes, Daviron argues, the position of developing regions in world food markets is shaped by the existence of evolving 'global norms' that 'define' the objectives and instruments of agricultural policies implemented at the national level. In particular, Daviron underscores how African food exports to Europe increased during the period of the 'imperial autarchy regime' (from about 1914 to the late 1950s) characterised by growing infrastructure development in the colonies and the introduction of discriminatory mechanisms against non-empire imports. Accordingly, Daviron posits that the marginalisation of Africa from international trade during the periods of the 'multilateral regime' (ending in the 1970s), and the 'globalization project' (after the 1970s) can be interpreted as the direct effect of protectionist policies implemented by Europe and the US to attain self-sufficiency.

Taken as a whole, *Globalization and restructuring of African commodity flows*

is premised on the assumption that the development prospects of African countries can be inferred by examining data on export-oriented production and trade as an indicator of economic 'upgrading' and national integration in the global market. The authors' overriding focus on single firms and commodity chains calls into question, however, the explanatory power of such a relatively narrow unit of analysis when applied to the study of national and regional economic development. Similarly, by conceptualising the organisation of commodity chains as an expression of vertical relationships between buyers and sellers, the collection of essays fails to fully account for the role played by local power relations and historically-derived class, race, and gender structures in shaping the livelihood and employment opportunities of chain participants. Likewise, the significance of the authors' findings could be strengthened through a deeper analysis of the political, social, and ecological relations in which commodity chains are embedded, paying more attention to labour and the impact of commodity production and trade on local communities, economies, and environments. Such considerations aside, this book has much to offer graduate students and scholars interested in the historical development of African export markets, the impact of liberalisation on the structure of commodity chains, the role played by quality management and control in international trade, and the distribution of economic power along production chains.

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BOOK REVIEW

The risks of knowledge: investigations into the death of the Hon. Minister John Robert Ouko in Kenya, 1990, by David William Cohen and E.S. Atieno Odhiambo, Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2004, 344 pp., £24.50 (paperback), ISBN 978-0821415986

The central focus of this book is the divide between the official or State-sponsored search for the truth and public or citizen perceptions of the same, in a defining moment in Kenya's political history: the murder in February 1990 of Foreign Minister Dr Robert Ouko. Any student of African politics will be keen to read this context-specific analysis of events and processes which resonate with core themes of broader interest – ethno-national competitive politics and political economies, and substantial challenges to and contestations over democratic space. This book fundamentally illustrates the widespread if not universal acknowledgement that the macabre killing of Robert Ouko was not fully addressed to the (legal) satisfaction of a public already overwhelmed by numerous conspiracy theories on the matter: this is a saga which has had no closure. As the book documents, Ouko's death was debated in various public galleries, commissions of inquiry, parliamentary debates, and village meetings, but nevertheless there remained a gap in the analytical and scholastic treatises about the event and its definitive consequences for Kenya.

The book's content is wide ranging: there is a focus on social histories, the state as a custodian of the truth, narratives of corruption, a close analysis of the actual murder, as well as critical theoretical

reflection on broader questions of epistemology. Though complex, this approach is logically convincing to the reader given the international resonance of the subject matter – for example in relation to similar events that have occurred in Latin America. Cohen and Odhiambo provide a new angle to the story by subjecting every possible public source to probing scrutiny. They go further to explore what the Ouko murder mystery really meant to Kenya and to the outside world, in terms of the implications for the new democratic paradigm that gradually followed the re-introduction in 1992 of multi-party politics, through to the post-Moi succession politics. The remarkable but slow changes that came to Kenya even within the context of the state-supervised official inquiry into Ouko's death are discussed, and subsequent debates over political reform are analysed, though not at great length. This is because the core objective of the book is to present a setting for exploring multiple processes of knowledge production in post-colonial Kenya, and the role of the state in this process. This work argues well that the epistemology of the Ouko case is produced, owned, and shared informally by various parties or actors in the Kenyan public. The book fails to note how significantly the reproduction of this knowledge especially by the state only further compounds the dilemma of who is the custodian of truth, especially given the risks that many players endured in the Ouko death saga.

Cohen and Odhiambo openly challenge the idea that historically, the public in Kenya were not able to define their knowledge of the moment, or that they were unable to assess the moment from media

and court transcripts. They reveal how a process and narrative of discovery was achieved within a series of related moments: Ouko's death and the discovery of his body; the unilateral fight against corruption that he quietly oversaw; and the management of the truth by the state and other agencies involved at the centre or the margins of the Ouko death dilemma. This wide-ranging inquiry briefly gives a scope to another type of risk of knowledge even before the Minister's death. His documentation of official corruption was risky business in the complex pyramid of the Kenyan political landscape – then consisting of a very autocratic one-party state centred on the highly personalised power of the presidency.

The production of knowledge by the state and state officials like Ouko is addressed in the book in terms of the dynamic experiences of the Kenyan public and, to an extent, the broader publics of other African governments and citizenries. The analysis is by no means comprehensive in scope, though, and perhaps this is in itself a manifestation of enduring risks of knowledge production. For example, an in-depth focus on the case of transnational corruption in the Molasses Plant in Kenya as seen by Ouko is not provided – perhaps this would have slightly diverted from the book's agenda of determining the production of knowledge in the government, public and personal spheres. Cohen and Odhiambo are less incisive – in fact deliberately so – in not risking their own discourse on the subject seemingly because the Ouko case has really had no official and public

closure. They have attempted to use quite a representative and fairly sufficient literature review given the scarcity of writings on the former politician other than media reports.

Their analysis follows the substantive moments in the search for knowledge, when the truth is really at a major risk of being squandered by the centres of power, by state securocrats in their opposition to the periphery – to traditions and customs of informal but well informed and sometimes biased actors. All this dramaturgy as contained in the book takes place in different scenes: in court rooms, presidential quarters, rural farms, public highways, in the murky worlds of international business, the mortuary, the Kenyan parliament. This multi-sited approach enables Cohen and Odhiambo to address the dialectics of rumours without being dismissive about the sources, instead assessing the transcripts and sometimes unfinished accounts of even the less schooled actors that played a role in the unfinished business that was the unrelenting posthumous dilemma of the question, who killed Kenya's possible future candidate for the presidency?

The dramaturgy in *The risks of knowledge* is essentially deep in every possible context of the word. Too many narratives and counter-narratives unfold, of multiple scenes, places and people – but that is the true essence of the Ouko murder case.

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BOOK REVIEW

The World Bank and social transformation in international politics: liberalism, governance, and sovereignty, by David Williams, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, 152 pp., £65.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-0415453004

David Williams has written a book on the World Bank in Africa that is both profound and ambitious. In essence, the question he explores is: how do we understand the World Bank's modalities of intervention ideationally? For Williams, the datum is the establishment of liberalism in late eighteenth-century Europe. It is here that the liberal canon is forged out of the *loci classici* of Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, and John Locke: the individual, property, the competitive market, and secular law. These ideas, Williams argues, have worked their way through modern history deviating or consolidating through processes and events such as imperialism, decolonisation, and the Cold War, coming to 'constitute' the World Bank. What makes the Bank interesting is its institutional effort to make liberalism a project, based in actual practices of social engineering. If liberalism bequeaths to us the mainstay of the West's political values (freedom, rights, and so on), it also provides us with a template for the establishing of political authority and techniques of intervention – to 'remake the world in its image' (p. 12). Eschewing orthodox approaches to the World Bank that evaluate its efficacy, its institutional form, or its history, Williams cuts into the liberal genre to identify a political project that is both expansive and beset with tensions (perhaps even contradictions).

Williams' argument is that the World Bank can be understood as an embodiment of liberalism's universal ambitions – with all of their attendant difficulties.

Clearly, Africa is a very good place to start to engage with the question that drives the book. No other region has been subjected to as much attention and such levels of intervention by the World Bank as Africa. In chapters three and four, Williams provides authoritative and concise overviews of the World Bank project in Africa: from economic liberalism to a broader and tendentially more complex 'toolbox' of micro-management within the state often bundled under the rubric 'governance'.

It is at this point that questions emerge. Chapters three and four could be read largely as descriptive narrative. Here, we find ample space for institutional complexity, the role of individuals, and the interplay of ideas with material forces that are clearly going to be prominent in an intergovernmental lending organisation. Of course, all of this matters; but in what ways do these things matter for the liberal project?

Or, to put it differently, how do we understand the force of ideas in institutions? There are two suggested answers to this question in the book. One is that it is heuristically sustainable to speak of liberalism doing things; not because this is literally true but because it provides a convincing account of complexity. Thus, we have 'liberalism has tried to ground its project' (p. 22). Secondly, we have 'liberals', a social category that dominates institutions like the World Bank. Neither of these ontological references is 'wrong', but both have their

baggage. Ideational explanations can be weak on agency and get away with it (something that many who follow Foucault don't seem too concerned with even if they berate Marxism's determinism). References to liberals can tempt analysis into the abstract: a referencing of a form of agency that is deduced rather than identified. This latter point is interesting because one of the key critiques of liberal intervention is its reified sense of the individual – *homo oeconomicus*. Could it be that 'liberals' in Williams' book are an analogous '*homo liberalis*'? It is not simply empiricist to claim that those who staff the Bank are themselves culturally constituted; they are not from nowhere.

The book moves on in chapter five to a case study of Ghana. Williams presents this in characteristic style: concise, balanced, and detailed. Here, we get a striking sense of the project's ambitions: its infusion into almost all aspects of the state, its specificity, its indifference to Ghana's own forms of authority unless they can be 'seen' through a liberal lens. What the chapter shows, however, is *ambition*, not *practice*. The account provides absolutely convincing detail on ambition, but less on the practices that ensue from the project design, funding, and technical detail. Again, this is not simply an appeal to a need to look at 'results on the ground' (which are always 'complex' and unintended in some fashion) but rather to ask how we take the Bank's interventions. In this reader's judgement, the long and concerted history of the Bank *et al.*'s involvement in African states has been to forge quite limited zones of liberal practice which are not even coextensive

with the central state, let alone at the provincial or district level; and 'society' is another thing altogether. It might be that a reader who is wanting to learn about the Bank's effect in Africa who picks up Williams' book as a starting point would imagine a process similar to the Enclosures in Britain – a sweeping disaggregation of communities under the harsh disciplinary panopticon of states whose sovereignty has been lost to the Bank's heroic global ambitions.

Williams does note that he is not concerned to determine the extent to which the Bank has succeeded; but then what the book is showing us is a transformatory ambition rather than transformatory practice. This is where the book finishes: on the normative issues raised by the effects of World Bank intervention. I would have liked to read more about this. Issues about the normative status of consequentialism and relativism lurk under the surface. It is easy to agree with Williams that the Bank's universalism, its monadic view of societies, and its bullish interventions into African sovereignties evoke normative opprobrium. Perhaps the challenge for students of the Bank is to try to develop ways to evaluate its actions – which are constantly repackaged and reinvented – in ways that marry an interest in social practice with normative thinking which is flexible, progressive, and tolerant. But that would take us back to the liberal genre once again. . .

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BOOK REVIEW

A new scramble for Africa? Imperialism, investment and development, edited by Roger Southall and Henning Melber, Durban, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2009, xxvii + 440 pp., R245.00 / £29.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-1869141714

This interesting volume is a collection of studies of the impact on Africa of the recent global boom in demand for raw materials, particularly (but not only) petroleum and minerals. Its sixteen chapters address concerns similar to those discussed in *ROAPE*'s recent special issue on mining in Africa (Vol. 35, no. 117). It examines whether and how the increased commercial value of Africa's natural wealth can avoid becoming a 'resource curse' and instead be effectively harnessed for sustainable development. As its title indicates, the book also asks whether revived external interest in Africa should be understood as a form of neo-colonialism, or as an opportunity that could work to Africa's benefit.

The quality of this collection of papers, first written in 2007, varies significantly, as does the contributors' adhesion to the central themes. Some chapters provide useful data on patterns of investment and activity in particular sectors, but little original analysis. Others suffer from rather normative assumptions about, for example the 'progressive' or 'reactionary' nature of Western and non-Western investors (the chapter on India's engagements in Africa is particularly weak in this respect). Some chapters are broad surveys (for example, Margaret Lee's exemplary study of the European Partnership Agreements [EPAs])

whilst others are useful case studies based on in-country research, something often lacking in studies of, for example, 'China in Africa': these include Cyril Obi on oil in west Africa; Massey and May on oil and conflict in Chad; and in particular Jana Hönke's excellent study of mining companies on both sides of the Zambia-Congo Copperbelt – her historically rooted analysis is unfortunately the exception rather than the norm.

The lag between writing and publication also means that some of the assumptions about the 'boom' are already out of date. Although the global recession is addressed by the editors in their introduction and conclusion, it is not reflected in most contributions. The claim by Daniel and Bhengu that 'Finance houses tend to be cautious and conservative . . . they are after all playing with other people's money' (p. 157) is not one contemporary observers of the global banking system will recognise. Nevertheless, the uneven impact of the 'bust' and its unpredictable impact on Africa means that much of the analysis retains relevance: African oil remains a valuable prize, whilst the value of some minerals, for example copper, has recently recovered a substantial part of the losses of the last two years.

The book provides analysis of two important questions that can usefully be built on in further research. First, the question of whether the new scramble constitutes a form of imperialism naturally depends on how imperialism is defined. Commercial investment by Western and non-Western companies has often led to increased political interference in the investment

destinations by those companies' home governments. This is of course not new, but evidence presented here suggests that the recent upsurge of foreign direct investment in Africa, and its increasingly diverse origins, has led to increased political engagement and/or interference. The case for the 'militarisation' of this contemporary scramble, in the chapter by Rupiya and Southall, is however less convincing: the ineffectiveness of the US African Command (AFRICOM) initiative can be judged in part by the refusal of African states to host it. Obama's presidency, beginning after this book went to press, so far suggests a more subtle projection of US power in Africa. The overall impression given by this collection is that the new diversity (and, in comparison to their late nineteenth-century counterparts, uncoordinated approach) of countries and companies scrambling for African resources means that the imposition of any singular 'imperial' project is impossible. The European Union's inability to uniformly impose the regional structures envisaged in the EPA strategy is one example of this. Related to this, secondly, is the question of the capacity and willingness of African states to ensure that the benefits of such investments accrue to them and, potentially, to their peoples. Daniel and Bhengu reject the 'new imperialism' notion on the basis that the massive revenues currently accruing to some African states do not resemble the 'looting' of earlier imperialism. But Europe did not simply loot Africa, as in the atypical

example of King Leopold's Congo Free State. It usually depended on the cooperation of African elites, whether chiefly authorities or a 'Westernised' intelligentsia, to whom benefits accrued as the junior partners of European exploitation. Various characterisations of 'comprador' bourgeoisies have of course long informed analyses of colonialism and neo-colonialism, helping to explain the failure of African states to effectively respond to the needs and aspirations of their peoples. Much of the evidence presented here suggests continuity rather than change in this respect: for example, the accrual of vast wealth to the Angolan political elite may enable a more effective playing off of one investor against another, but there is little evidence of a meaningful trickle down of that wealth to wider society. Southall and Melber's conclusion endorses a revival of the 'developmental state' funded by the new revenues, but nonetheless recognises that the potential of such states to improve on their initial post-colonial manifestation relies on the extent of their popular accountability. Indeed, state models are perhaps of less relevance than the question of how democratic accountability can be effectively achieved and then deepened, so that the benefits of any future boom flow into and not out of African societies.

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EDITORIAL

Post-neoliberalism?

Grand concepts like neoliberalism are both necessary and dangerous. Necessary because they help to identify the ways in which the global political economy is organised, how power works, and what ideas and ideologies are ascendant. Dangerous because these grand concepts enable generalisations, finesse specificities and tempt people to reckless degrees of certainty in their observations. Evocative of Nietzsche's understanding of truth, the study of African political economy has been replete with a mobile army of metaphors that have worked between this necessity and danger: developmentalism, authoritarianism, clientelism and neoliberalism. These broad concepts have allowed us to articulate a sense of the structural and generic out of Africa's multiplex dynamics. This study has also allowed us to develop a historical narrative – largely expressed through a set of sequences – in which one period is replaced by another. Without the language of grand concepts such as these, it is difficult to imagine how African Studies or political economy would exist.

It is often during periods in which researchers sense epochal change that these broad concepts need especially intense examination. We are currently within one of those periods, marked by global economic recession and financial instability. The global recession has led some to consider that neoliberalism is on its way out. The crisis's origins in loose lending and a highly financialised American political economy at least suggests that there might emerge a new or more powerful political effort to regulate capital mobility. This possibility, it seems, is being quashed quickly by business, the international financial institutions (IFIs), and by Western politicians and economists who have successfully connected responses to the crisis to packages of very light public regulation, private self-regulation, and 'rescue packages'. So-called nationalisation is in practice a long-term public subsidy for large banks, with negligible effect on banking practices – including the obscene rewards for chief executives and directors.

If (unsurprisingly) post-neoliberal institutions are not emerging from the apexes of power in the West, one might consider the efflorescence of unorthodoxies in Latin America: not just in well-known cases such as Venezuela but also in large economies, notably Brazil and Argentina. Argentina's escape from the austere clutches of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2002 into a situation in which it is no longer reliant on the usual IMF/World Bank support services is remarkable. And, of course, China's economic growth and industrialisation represent an insistent message that capitalist development within nation-states rarely – if ever – follows a neoliberal template. One of the paradoxes of neoliberalism – purported epitome of global capitalism – is how poorly it has served as a means to promote capitalist development.

This is nowhere more evident than in sub-Saharan Africa, where neoliberalism has become not only a grand concept for researchers but also the orienting template for social and economic management for nearly 30 years. And, during those 30 years the

evident trend was that economic growth has been weak and halting; and the social transformations that underpin economic growth have relied upon plunder, resource exhaustion, theft, and fraud rather than the idealised images of energised entrepreneurship supplied by the World Bank or advocates of microfinance. Indeed, in a counter-intuitive way, examples of free market competitive entrepreneurialism have more often than not emerged outside the economic plans of the age, in opposition to government policy and resisted by elites. Where spontaneous, popular efforts to promote social democratic development have emerged they have often been resisted by IFIs in coalition with anti-democratic elites.

Because of this, and in the context of the generic difficulty of building developmental states in the context of extreme extractive economies and unequal exchange relations, notions of a post-neoliberal *Africa* have been non-existent. That world-region in which neoliberalism has been most aggressively advocated by external agencies and most disruptive in its implementation remains – even if by default – attached to mutating forms of neoliberal social engineering. There are currently 34 countries involved in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process, from interim PRSPs to second- or third-generation PRSPs. And, even in countries where the entry of Chinese investment and aid is striking, many remain attached to the routines of World Bank and IMF lending: Zambia, for example.

Does this mean that Africa is locked into a neoliberal permanent revolution? As the rest of the world is rocked by financial crisis and the emergence of unorthodoxies in Asia and Latin America, perhaps Africa remains in the thrall of the World Bank and IMF's benchmarks, tranches of credit, and policy advice? The answer to this rather broad question is a rather broad affirmative, but with no assertions as to the prospects for neoliberalism nor the extent to which this big picture captures a good representation of what is happening between one country and the next. It is also a generalisation which tends to underplay the importance of the 'informal' or spontaneous economy which remains beyond the fiscal reach of the government and state.

And herein we see the danger that accompanies the necessity of thinking in orienting terms like neoliberalism. Neoliberalism's general characteristics may be well known, but their instantiation within diverse African political economies is not. Furthermore, the *practices* of neoliberal reform are not simply the creation of African governments in the image of the dreams of World Bank technocrats. What seems to be the case is that the instability and low rates of growth that characterise the current period have opened up the possibility (no more) of increasingly 'distorted' or unorthodox neoliberalisms. African governments have become increasingly disposed to push aspects of policy against prevailing neoliberal common sense. In 2008 the Tanzanian government rescinded a lease to a private consortium to operate Dar es Salaam's water and sewerage infrastructure, successfully defending itself at an international arbitration board and receiving damages from Biwater Gauff in the process. In the wake of a drought, the government of Malawi successfully integrated a fertiliser subsidy and a publicly supported storage and supply scheme as part of its agricultural policy within its PRSP. These headline-grabbing examples might be accompanied by myriad smaller examples in which specific loans are not taken on, leasing and privatisation contracts are revisited, and governments consider Chinese and other sources of investment, lending, and aid. In a related way, the EU Economic Partnership Agreements that were inaugurated in 2008 have not enjoyed strong take-up by African states. Meanwhile, the indigenous movement for social and economic justice and its apex in the African social forum continue to strengthen.

None of this announces a great change in the regimes within which African states operate. It does suggest, however, that neoliberalism is both less stable and homogenous than it was. It suggests that we should understand neoliberalism in Africa less as an *a priori* template for

all aspects of policy-making and more as a core neoclassical macroeconomic doctrine (still largely underpinned by the IMF) around which practices of governance might vary. Its continued strength is also, in part, due to the continued weakness of alternative economic policy and templates, whose development is continually undermined by the persistent hegemonic belief in the tenet that ‘there is no alternative’ to the dependent and policed existence of institutions of higher learning and advocacy to the donor bloc, and the consequent lack of financial support for independent policy-making and alternative ideas. This historic opportunity to lead change, when neoliberalism is weak, requires a continued concerted effort by heroic independent thinkers across the continent and beyond, to maintain and defend their institutional positions and right to publication, often in the absence of support or recognition, and/or while being undermined by their peers and senior management.

Recognising this mosaic of fractured neoliberalism, but also the coeval weakness of alternatives, allows us also to move beyond an unhelpful dichotomy that often emerges in studies of neopatrimonialism. The commonly used metaphor of the air-conditioned room and the veranda has generated a great deal of research in which African politics is either formalised and liberal, or informal and patrimonial, with the implication that the latter is in some sense more African and the former is more Western. In fact, neopatrimonialism (and its synonyms, such as clientelism, the politics of the belly, and many understandings of corruption) has also served as a grand orienting concept for African politics, is subjected to the same dangers of overgeneralisation, and has been used in broad ways that are at least as loose and generalised as studies of neoliberalism. It is also not a discourse that conclusively establishes the central assumption that this is an essentially *African* phenomenon, despite that being widely assumed, rather than just a characterisation of the anti-democratic paternalism present in all democratic struggle. Because of this weakness, the discourse of neopatrimonialism and its sibling, corruption, acts to pathologise African politics, with little intellectual gain to understanding either the specificities *or* generic aspects of African political processes.

If we recognise some malleability within the neoliberal template – especially concerning its political practices – we can begin to think outside of the constraining dichotomy of neoliberalism versus neopatrimonialism. In the process, we can move away from the pernicious assumption that ‘African’ politics is entirely performed within the smoke-filled room and the neoliberal agenda is a Washington-imposed straitjacket. Even if neoliberalism is not on its way out, our conceptualisations of it need constant reflection, adaptation, and attention in the light of the diversity of African governance practice.

The issue

This issue carries a diversity of articles. Sara Pantuliano’s article provides an empirically rich account of the dynamics of livelihoods (or, if you prefer, social reproduction) amongst the Misseriyya in Sudan. Occupying a boundary zone in Sudan’s geopolitics and involving patterns of migration subjected to various kinds of stress, Pantuliano highlights two key themes: first, the adaptive strengths of Misseriyya communities both before and after the Peace Accord; second, the diverse political possibilities that emerge out of changing livelihood strategies. Indeed, the compelling picture that Sara portrays is that livelihoods studies need to remain open to the ways in which survival, asset management, and income generation open up different political actions. Livelihoods are moral economies, and involve collective endeavours and the politics of dispossession, appropriation, and exploitation – all of which are detailed in the article.

Peter Alexander and Aleksandra Gadzala both deal with aspects of Africa's informal political economy. Alexander's article is also empirically rich, mapping a terrain of local protest against the quality and pricing of service delivery charges. Local protests of the kind accounted for in Peter Alexander's article are a leitmotif of South Africa's democratic denouement: the socially progressive aspects of liberation have tended to be quashed by the imperatives of accumulation that have been asserted by South Africa's capitalist class and a panoply of international advisers and creditors. But, beyond this historical context, Peter investigates the rhythm of protest and its local dynamics. As a result, we see how South Africa's urban spaces (especially Gauteng) are constantly pierced by messy outbreaks of protest by the informally employed, underemployed, and destitute. These protests are themselves also profoundly political – part of a difficult dialogue between local ANC party structures and its 'popular base', partly an outcome of new masculinities and youth identities, and of course partly anger and a sense of injustice and disillusion at the pallid social redistribution that has taken place in South Africa, leaving massive amounts of inequality and unemployment.

More populist analyses of urban poverty – both from the left and some neoliberal writers – argue that the informal sector is not a 'reserve army' of underemployed or a cantonment of those existing in a state of 'bare life'; rather it is the seedbed for new entrepreneurship and economic renovation. Aleksandra Gadzala's article on the informal sector in Zambia shows how problematic this approach can be. Informality is not necessarily vibrant renovation; it can also be a site of last resort for those expelled from the formal sector during crisis, and it can be extremely unstable and aggressively competitive. It is this context that Aleksandra describes in order to highlight the repercussions of Chinese business entry into the informal manufacturing sector. Chinese diaspora business methods have effectively undercut some Zambian small businesses, leading to an emerging 'Sinophobia' and a 'migrating out' of production to China for re-import – a structure of production that is likely to reduce Zambia's role in the production chain even in the informal and mass markets for basic goods.

John Saul's article takes a step back from Alexander's specific depiction of protest and collective local voices to question the ways in which we speak of liberation. Focusing specifically on South Africa, Saul argues that liberation should be seen as a way of thinking beyond the immediate constraints of the state and prevailing property relations to something more transformative. This transformative thinking might run along several different – and interrelating – pathways: race, class, gender, and voice. The latter, less categorical than the others, alludes to an agenda of deepening democracy, something more akin to a social democracy in which practices like participation and agenda-setting are in some ways more substantively connected with broader calls for social justice and equality.

In a related sense and more broadly, Kevin Cox and Rohit Negi consider the ways in which states are understood as potential agents of progressive social change. Rather than fetishising the state as an 'artefact' which fails, is developmental, patrimonial and so on, Cox and Negi argue that states are constituent parts of the spatial fixings of the political economy of capital. That is, states – and the strengths and weaknesses – are part of the ways in which capitalism has worked to expand through space and time. Historically, those states that have been instrumental, even crucial, in ushering in extended processes of accumulation which have led to mass social improvement (what is generally understood as 'development') have done so within fully fledged capitalist social relations. In much of Africa, and not only in Africa, capitalism exists in complex and dynamic interaction with peasant societies. As such, Cox and Negi suggest, the beginnings of a discussion about the prospects for developmental states must be with the nature of prevailing property relations.

ROAPE has carried a great deal of writing on this general issue over the years; in the context of global recession, questions of ‘deproletarianisation’, changing multiple modes of livelihood, and dispossession – and the political forces that they generate – remain as central as ever to a proper understanding of state power.

Graham Harrison

Oil, land and conflict: the decline of Misseriyya pastoralism in Sudan¹

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This article examines the strategies employed by Misseriyya pastoralists in Sudan to cope with a number of external pressures ranging from adverse government policies, climatic changes, the impact of oil exploration, conflict and the effects of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The paper analyses the current political context and discusses the tensions with other local and national actors in the context of the unresolved dispute over Abyei.

Keywords: Sudan; Abyei; oil; land; pastoralism

Introduction

The Misseriyya are a pastoralist group belonging to the Baggara Arabs² who live in the areas of south-western Kordofan and south-eastern Darfur. The area is customarily referred to as Dar Misseriyya, and it is internally defined by three long transhumance routes called *murhals* (the western, central, and eastern *murhals*), along which the two main sub-groups, the Zuruq and the Humr, have traditionally been moving with their livestock. Misseriyya's transhumance extends into the Dinka Ngok-dominated region of Abyei, one of the most sensitive in Sudan. The Misseriyya and the Dinka Ngok have long had competing claims over cattle-grazing areas and water sources in Abyei. Environmental degradation (also as a result of oil explorations) and climatic changes have exacerbated conflict over land. Tension has also been heightened by the legacy of war which has polarised Dinka and Misseriyya identities, particularly as a result of the Misseriyya having been used by the government of Sudan as proxy militia in the Popular Defence Force (PDF) against the Dinka in the North–South war. The creation of militia was made possible by a number of local and national factors, including the poverty of Misseriyya and other herdsmen following the 1984–85 famine and government attempts to protect Chevron's oil concessions. Both Gaafar Nimeiri and Sadiq al-Mahdi, heads of state in Sudan in the 1980s, wanted to avoid unpopular conscription in the North, so recruiting rural militiamen became an attractive alternative (Keen 1994). Moreover, in a state in economic crisis tribal militia were seen as an inexpensive defence force. The political implications of supporting tribal militia have been grave, resulting in the retribalisation rather than the modernisation of the political process in Sudan (Pantuliano 2004). Ethnic cleavages have been used to obtain short-term political gains, but the creation of tribal militia has fostered deep-seated enmities which are coming to the fore today.

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There is an unresolved history of contention over the region of Abyei which dates back to the transfer of the area from Bahr el Ghazal Province in South Sudan to Kordofan Province in the North during the colonial administration in 1905. The demarcation of the boundary of Abyei has proved to be the most intractable issue in the implementation of the Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) to date. The Misseriyya see the CPA in general and the Abyei Protocol in particular as being against their interests. The agreement stipulates the merger of West Kordofan, which was essentially a Misseriyya state, into South Kordofan, *de facto* removing Misseriyya's formal political base and leaving them as a minority group within another state. More importantly, the provision that southern Sudan can secede – and that Abyei can choose to go with it – leaves Misseriyya's migration routes potentially cut into two by an international boundary. Although those migration rights are acknowledged in the CPA, no mechanisms have been set up to guarantee them. This has left the Misseriyya with a widespread sense of having been betrayed by the government after the many years of loyal service as PDF frontline troops in the war.

The CPA determined Abyei to be the 'territory of the nine Ngok Dinka Chiefdoms transferred to Kordofan in 1905' and set up the Abyei Boundaries Commission (ABC) to delineate the boundaries of that territory, given that no maps exist of the area transferred at that time. The ABC report was rejected by the National Congress Party (NCP) and by the Misseriyya in 2005. After a three-year deadlock and renewed fighting in Abyei in 2008, the question was eventually referred to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which ruled on the boundaries in July 2009. The Misseriyya have rejected the PCA decision as well, as they fear that bestowing the ownership of the Abyei area to the Dinka Ngok would restrict their access to critical livelihood resources during transhumance, especially near the Lol and Bahr al-Arab/Kiir rivers.

There are different interests between actors at the local (tribal) and national levels (NCP and Sudan People Liberation Movement [SPLM]), with local actors being more concerned about the land issue than oil. While for the NCP the question is where the line is drawn, given the very considerable oil wealth lying underneath it, for the Misseriyya the very fact of drawing a line is itself a problem, given the rights of secession accorded to the inhabitants of Abyei. The Misseriyya see their traditional way of life as being under threat. This has implications for both their livelihoods and their cultural identity. Because it is also bound up with their loss of political power and their feelings that they have not been rewarded for their role as frontline troops in the war, this is leading to high levels of tension and a high risk of conflict breaking out.

This article presents the findings of a study into the current evolution of Misseriyya livelihoods undertaken in 2008 by a five-person team (four Sudanese and one international) with extensive knowledge of Sudanese politics and expertise in pastoralism, range management, animal production and agricultural economics as well as in-depth knowledge of Dar Misseriyya. Two team members hailed from the region itself, a factor which facilitated access to stakeholders in many of the areas visited. The field study took place over two months. The team interviewed a wide range of stakeholders (including local leaders, administrators, elders, youth, women, pastoralists, ex-pastoralists, farmers, traders, paravets, and aid workers) in nomadic *furqan* (sub-units), small settlements and larger towns along the three Misseriyya transhumance routes. Data collection and field analysis focused on assets, livelihoods strategies and outcomes, which were examined within the broader environmental, social, political, and economic context to take into account the institutions, policies, and processes affecting the changes Misseriyya livelihoods are undergoing. Special attention was paid to the relationships between different interest

groups in the area, to map evidence of competition over resources, and to identify other points of possible conflict.

Livelihoods under stress: chronic vulnerability and adaptive changes

The ecosystem of the Misseriyya can be defined as a non-equilibrium environment, with no long-term balance between populations, available resources and other elements of the ecosystem. Misseriyya areas are characterised by high rainfall variability, scarce water, low natural biological productivity, and extreme temperatures. The two main livelihood systems in Dar Misseriyya have traditionally been pastoralism and subsistence farming. Pastoralist communities in the region include both nomadic and semi-nomadic (transhumant) camel and cattle herders (El Sammani 1985). Although nomadism was the dominant system prior to the mid-1980s,³ an increasing trend towards transhumance was registered in 1985 by El Sammani, with pastoralists maintaining a home base and only migrating seasonally. The trend towards transhumance was attributed to a growing tendency to spend the dry season at government-provided water sources in the Muglad area (ibid.). Settled communities engaging in farming activities include smallholders, the vast majority of farmers and owners of large mechanised farms. Whilst in most of Southern Kordofan mechanised farms are mainly owned by merchants and civil servants from the North or Khartoum, in the western sector almost all scheme owners are local, usually hailing from the main centres (Muglad, Babanousa, al-Fula, Debab, Sitaib, Kilo 50, Nama, and al Jadeed). It is important to note that there has never been a clear division between the two livelihood systems: many households engage in both, combining pastoralism and farming.

The Misseriyya livelihood system has been systematically weakened by a series of external shocks. These include restrictive land policies for pastoralists both during colonial times and post independence, agricultural expansion, the weakening of local governance structures with the attendant reduced capacity to manage local conflicts over resources, and climatic changes. The two most recent and significant factors are insecurity in the Bahr al-Arab area and the damaging impact of the oil industry. Conflicts sparked by competition among local groups over natural resources have been a long-standing characteristic of the region. In recent decades, however, additional factors such as civil war and, later, oil exploration have exacerbated tensions and weakened livelihood systems. Misseriyya pastoralists have responded to these pressures through a process of adaptation, which for most households has resulted in greater settlement and the cutting short of transhumant movement south of the Bahr al-Arab area.

Migration

The annual migration of the Misseriyya takes place between the wet-season grazing areas (*makhraf*) in the North and the dry-season grazing (*masiaf*) towards the South. There are three main livestock routes (*murhals*), each divided into three sub-routes followed by one or two of the Ajaira and/or Fallaita sub-tribal groups. While the western and central *murhals* are inhabited by the Ajaira, the eastern *murhal* is shared by the Fallaita and some Ajaira sub-tribes (Awlad Omran and Fadleya). All routes terminate in the South, the western *murhal* in Aweil, the central *murhal* in the Toj and the eastern *murhal* in Bentiu, where the Misseriyya traditionally spend the dry season between December and May.

In addition to the search for adequate pasture, this long migration is driven by the fact that providing water to large herds is both tedious and expensive. Moreover, although water may be available from large bodies such as Lake Keilak, check dams like Abu Allikri and

Kijera or from *hafirs*, the surrounding grazing becomes extremely scarce towards the end of the dry season as a result of overuse.

Households with smaller herds now spend the dry season within the boundaries of Dar Misseriyya. Insecurity and access restrictions in the South oblige them to depend on water from shallow wells, water yards and other sources such as dams and lakes. Women and children spend most of their time in the *Ruqab*, while young men take the animals across the Bahr al-Arab. The concentration of people in the middle section of the *murhal* has reduced the amount of available water and people struggle to survive the dry season in places like Abu Qadama and Muqadama, where many Misseriyya congregate. All communities interviewed complained about the absence of *hafirs*, boreholes, and water yards in the *Ruqab*.

Where water has been provided, as in Sitaib, the population has sharply increased over the past few years. In Meiram the population doubles during the dry season. Small and medium-sized herds stay in and around the town, while others go beyond the river. The distance between Meiram and Bahr al-Arab is short, so many families stay in town. The concentration of livestock around limited water sources has helped degrade the range and reduce its nutritional value. The increasing number of pastoralists that settles in small towns for most of the year is forced to abandon cattle-rearing and reduce their herds, with many eventually dropping out of the pastoral sector altogether.

The overall livestock population remains high, however, especially since large livestock owners continue to use herd multiplication to insure against losses caused by disease, drought, or insecurity. Overall, the number of animals in Dar Misseriyya has been estimated at 10.2 million head, equivalent to 4.8 million Tropical Livestock Units.

Markets

Selling livestock constitutes an essential component of the Misseriyya household economy. Markets are seasonal and follow the annual rhythm of migration. The only permanent market in the area is Muglad. This is where large traders from Khartoum and El Obeid come to purchase livestock for sale in urban centres or for export to the Gulf, Egypt and Libya. Most traders buy one or two *murahs* (one *murah* equals 50 cattle or 200 sheep), but some buy as many as 40. Traders confirm that there has been an overall increase in livestock numbers in the last ten years, with sheep numbers growing more rapidly than cows. Despite this, trade has been very weak in the last few years, partly as a result of the export ban imposed on Sudan by neighbouring countries because of a suspected outbreak of Rift Valley fever. Livestock traders and community leaders attribute the collapse of the livestock trade in Muglad to increasing insecurity, deterring middlemen from coming to the region. Although cattle and sheep prices have fallen steeply as a result, many remain unsold. The export ban was lifted in December 2008, but traders were still reluctant to travel to insecure areas with large amounts of cash.

There is limited trade in livestock by-products, largely because the milk output of Misseriyya cows is very low (ten pounds a day, as opposed to the 60–70 pounds a day produced by the cows used by milk factories such as Capo in Khartoum), and would not sustain a dairy economy. Attempts to introduce improved breeds such as Kenana local breeds in Debab have shown these species to be too sensitive to biting flies. Northern Sudanese species have been more successful.

Agriculture

Crop cultivation has become increasingly important in recent years as a result of the decline in mobile pastoralism. The area under cultivation increased by 37.2% between 2001 and

2007. Cultivation of watermelons expanded by 687%, and millet by 80.1%; the area given over to sorghum fell by 9% and groundnuts decreased by 53%, while the area under hibiscus and sesame production stayed more or less the same. Watermelons, a recent innovation, have emerged as the major cash crop, especially in western areas such as Meiram, Tibon, Debab, and Mugaddama which double as major watermelon-marketing centres from where the crop is exported as far afield as El Obeid and En-Nahud in North Kordofan and Kosti in central Sudan.

The area cultivated by individual households varies considerably, from around five *mukhamas*⁴ in Mugaddama (west of Muglad) to nine *mukhamas* towards the North, in Umm Osh to the west of Babanousa. Some households cultivate up to 20 *mukhamas* depending on the availability of labour and financing. As a general rule, half of the area is given over to food crops, mainly millet, and the other half to cash crops, especially groundnuts and hibiscus. Sesame tends to be cultivated in very small areas. Intercropping of cash crops is common. Crop yields in 2007 averaged three or four sacks (270–360kg) per *mukhama* for millet, compared with around eight sacks (720kg) a decade ago. Reductions in crop yields are attributed to lower rainfall and declining soil fertility caused by continuous cultivation.

In 2003, semi-mechanised rain-fed farming was introduced in three areas covering 260,734 *feddan*⁵ in Northwest Lagawa (Block 1: Khallis and Umm Guluud, demarcated mechanised farms; Block 2: Al Nabag and Millais, undemarcated schemes and West Wadi Shalongo). The third area accounts for almost 82% of the mechanised schemes in the western sector of Southern Kordofan, with the average scheme size (1000 *feddan*) more than twice that in the other two areas. The introduction of mechanised farming was described as having significant implications for Misseriyya pastoralism and its future prospects as well as on peace and stability in the area because of the attendant reduction of grazing land and fiercer competition over resources. Wadi Shalongo is an important summer grazing and watering area. The schemes may block routes to watering points.

Most of those who have dropped out of the pastoral sector are now engaged in farming. In Meiram, 10–20% of the population is said to have abandoned pastoralism for agriculture in the last three to five years. Agricultural practices and skills are rudimentary and people lack the knowledge and technology to make farming more productive. Agricultural labour is provided by a combination of family and hired labour.

Off-farm activities

The Misseriyya pastoral economy has traditionally been supported by numerous off-farm activities. The most important are discussed below.

a) Hired livestock labour

This activity traditionally involved a considerable number of people, especially youth from poor families, who were hired by rich livestock owners. Beginning in the early 1990s, however, the role of hired livestock labour in the household economy declined significantly as young people were recruited into the Popular Defence Force (PDF) militia, a paramilitary group created during the war against the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Today, insecurity along the border with the South limits the number of Misseriyya youth willing to work as hired herders. Hamar youth from En-Nahud are said to have started filling this gap, but lack cattle-herding skills and are only entrusted with the care of sheep. Payment is usually in kind, a process which traditionally enabled recipients to build up their own herds.

b) Hired agricultural labour

Farm labour was traditionally provided by Dinka men in the western part of the state (Muglad area) and by Nuba in eastern parts (Keilak and Lagawa). The number of Dinka, Nuer and Nuba labourers has declined considerably following the signing of the CPA, and more Misseriyya now work as hired agricultural labour. The gap left by Dinka and Nuba labourers has not however been filled, and the size of plots has declined, from ten to three *mukhamas* on average, leading to a consequent fall in annual yields. The Misseriyya see the refusal of Dinka, Nuer and Nuba to continue to work on their farms as being politically motivated. Whilst this is certainly true, it is also true that many Dinka and Nuer labourers returned south because they did not feel safe in Dar Misseriyya, especially since the clashes between the SPLA and the Misseriyya in May 2008. Clashes in es-Sunut in 2007 also pushed Nuba away.

c) Forestry, fishing and wild-game hunting

Forestry, fishing and hunting constitute an integral part of the Misseriyya economy, both as a source of subsistence and for cash income. Activities include collecting and selling wild fruit (*balanites aegyptiaca*, *ziziphus spina-christi* and *papaya*), honey, gum arabic, firewood and charcoal. According to Ministry of Agriculture estimates in 2001, forestry activities accounted for approximately 10% of household income. The trade in charcoal and firewood is flourishing, and large amounts of charcoal were observed at the side of roads throughout the study area. Whilst charcoal-making is a subsistence activity for many impoverished households, the larger-scale trade (with charcoal being sold to merchants for the Khartoum market) is in the hands of the army and other security forces. The depletion of forest resources is particularly evident near army outposts. People report that security personnel justify tree-cutting on the grounds that the areas affected have been earmarked for oil extraction. Youth groups in Muglad said that they had reported the destruction to the Forestry Department, but to no avail.

d) Petty trade

The Misseriyya engage in a wide range of petty trade, selling locally produced grains, forestry products, animals, animal products and handicrafts, as well as imported manufactured goods. Most sellers are young people who have dropped out of the pastoral sector. Food selling and other petty trade, traditionally stigmatised in Misseriyya society, have become important activities, and are increasingly taken up by Misseriyya women.

Weekly rural markets still provide valuable opportunities for exchange and small business, but the best trade opportunities are found in the new markets along oil roads. A typical example is Al Kharasana market, on the road between Keilak and Higlieig. Al Kharasana started to develop as a market in 1997, with the first stirrings of the oil industry, and by 2007 the population had mushroomed to 15,000, mostly former pastoralists. Some 1100 shops and trade licences are registered in the locality. Wealthy traders come from Khartoum and Gezira in central Sudan. The livestock market provides valuable opportunities for Misseriyya, who work either as middlemen or small traders. Trade in wood, the most profitable commodity in the market, is controlled by the Jallaba (formerly pastoralist) group, while the clothing market is dominated by Fur and Zaghawa groups.

Urban migration

The large number of rural markets and the increasing mobility of people between these markets have created strong trade links between rural and urban areas. The concentration

of services, especially health, education and governmental services, in the main urban centres of Muglad, Babanousa, El Fula and Debab has made these centres magnets for migration from rural areas. This mobility has been enhanced by improvements in the road system made by the oil industry. Although people complain bitterly about the poor quality of the roads, there are now, for the first time, daily buses linking Muglad and El Fula to Khartoum. Developments in telecommunications and satellite systems have drastically improved links between rural communities and the wider world.

Whilst movement to local urban centres has increased, migration abroad appears to have fallen off substantially in the last decade. During the 1980s and early 1990s, migration to Saudi Arabia and Libya in particular was common among the Misseriyya, who mostly found work as camel-herders in these countries. Consultations with communities indicated that, in the 1990s, membership of the PDF provided a viable economic alternative for the majority of such migrants, and migratory flows declined as a result. The end of the war has however curtailed this critical source of income for the Misseriyya.

The war economy

The war economy constituted an important part of the Misseriyya livelihood system for nearly two decades. Although it is difficult to assess the number of Misseriyya youth in the PDF and the economic gains they attained thereby, throughout the fieldwork it was stressed that the great majority of youth were involved in the PDF and were highly paid. PDF militias were also involved in a wide range of legal and illegal trade, including a flourishing trade in weapons, smuggling and looting of animals and goods.

The signing of the CPA cut short the war economy. The PDF has been formally dismantled, although militiamen have not been disarmed or helped to re-enter civilian life. As a result, many are now resorting to crime. The lack of employment opportunities in the oil sector has added to the frustration among this group, and is at the heart of the insecurity affecting the region.

The oil industry

Extensive petroleum exploration began in Sudan in the mid-1970s, but it was not until October 2000 that commercial quantities of oil began to be exported. Today, oil is the single most important export industry in Sudan. Available data suggests that oil accounts for more than 90% of Sudan's total exports, with the primary importers being Japan, China, South Korea, Indonesia and India. Between 2001 and 2005, oil exports grew at an average annual rate of 32%. Exports of other commodities grew on average by only 18.6%.

Most of Sudan's oilfields and known reserves are located in the Muglad and Melut rift basins. Commercial reserves were estimated at 3 billion barrels in December 2006 (Table 1). Oilfields are linked to the country's refineries via pipelines. The largest pipeline belongs to the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC). It runs across the Misseriyya area from Heglig to Port Sudan. The pipeline was opened in 1999 and is operated by the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), which has a 40% stake in the GNPOC. The other two lines are the Petrodar pipeline, which extends 1380 km from the Palogue oilfield in the Melut Basin to Port Sudan, and the El Fula pipeline (428 km), which connects the El Fula oilfields in Dar Misseriyya (Block 6) to the refinery in Khartoum.

The Muglad Basin is located in the heart of the Misseriyya area and covers approximately 120,000 square kilometres. It contains a number of hydrocarbon accumulations, the largest of which are the Heglig and El Fula oilfields. The first discoveries were made by Chevron near

Table 1. Estimated commercial reserves as at 31 December 2006 (in thousands of barrels).

	Total	Remaining
Blocks 1, 2 & 4 (GNPOC)	1,686,000	983,000
Blocks 3 & 7 (PDOC)	803,000	779,000
Block 5A (WNPOC-1)	175,000	168,000
Block 6 (CNPC/S)	331,000	299,000
Total	2,995,000	2,229,000

Key: GNPOC is the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company; PDOC is the Petrodar Operating Company; WNPOC is the White Nile Petroleum Operating Company; CNPC is the China National Petroleum Company. Source: European Coalition on Oil in Sudan (ECOS), 2007.

Muglad town in the 1960s and 1970s. After Chevron suspended its activities in the mid-1980s, oil exploration in the Muglad Basin was halted until February 2008. Like other communities affected by oil exploration, there is profound, pervasive unhappiness in Dar Misseriyya about the impact of the industry on the local economy, and the marginal benefits received from oil extraction, both in terms of labour opportunities and development inputs. Oil extraction has generated competition and disputes over land, and has contributed to large-scale deforestation. In the hope of receiving compensation from the oil companies (so far paid largely on an individual basis), a number of people around El Fula have started to cut down vast tracts of forest and fence the empty areas with *zaribat hawa* (literally 'air fences': fenced off enclosures usually created by settled farmers on grazing land either as new farm plots or as a reserve pasture for their animals or for the sale of the grasses). This has destroyed grazing resources and led to tensions with pastoralists.

Pastoralists believe that the oil industry has contaminated water supplies and pastures, and say that their cattle are suffering as a result, especially as regards fertility. Their anger is palpable. So far, the authorities have refused to allow studies to determine the environmental impact of the oil industry, despite repeated requests by local people. Spontaneous efforts by local government technical departments to analyse the environmental impact of oil extraction have been immediately and robustly halted. Despite the absence of hard data, locals are convinced that oil companies have destroyed rangeland, and that most cattle losses experienced in the last few years are due to oil pollution. Polluted water is said to have become a threat to animal health in Heglig, Defra and Sitaib, with livestock numbers decreasing steadily since drilling began. Community leaders in Muglad stated that representatives of the oil companies had publicly admitted that the water in these areas was not good for animals. A local, unauthorised study conducted in 2008 (Khaleel 2008) listed 21 negative impacts of oil on the environment, livestock and human population in the area, including signs of boreholes drying up, water becoming toxic and malodorous (e.g. in Defra, Firdos and Abu Gabra, as reported during the study), large-scale deforestation, contamination of pastures and soil, the dispersal of naphtha, a by-product of the oil industry which is toxic to humans and animals, the emergence of complex and previously unknown diseases among livestock and increased conflict between pastoralists and farmers due to reduced access to land.

People are also angry about the impact of the roads built by the oil companies, alleging that water accumulates on roadsides because of poor drainage, creating swampy areas. They say that oil is having a deleterious effect far outside the actual concessions, with the alteration of the drainage system caused by oil drilling and road construction drying up even Lake Keilak. Depressions such as Abu Kadma and Danbaloiya, used as seasonal water sources, are also said to be endangered.

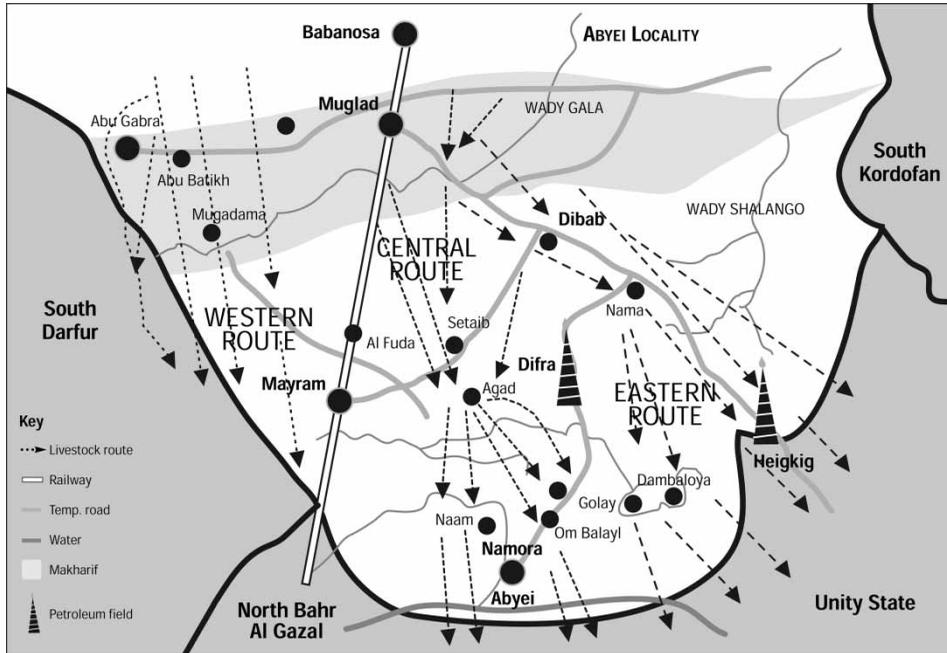


Figure 1. Oilfields in Sudan and main pipelines.
Source: Pantuliano *et al.* (2009) adapted from Brema (2006, p. 4)

Communities feel that they have not been adequately compensated for the damage the oil sector has inflicted on their economy. A common complaint is that the few boreholes drilled by the oil companies amount to ‘peanuts’. Compensation is seen as paltry and wholly incommensurate with the resources extracted and the environmental damage done. The few awards that have been made are said to have more to do with patronage than any genuine effort to redress grievances. Misseriyya youth say they have not been given the educational opportunities and technical training that would give them access (in theory) to jobs in the oil sector. This is one of the most important grievances, as will be discussed later.

Services

Despite some recent investment in service infrastructure by oil companies and government departments, access to services remains extremely limited in Dar Misseriyya, especially in rural areas.

Health facilities in the five Administrative Units of Abyei *mahallia* are limited to a single hospital in Muglad, with limited capacity and a lack of trained personnel. Most Primary Health Centres (PHCs) are not functioning or, if they are, have no drugs. There are no doctors at all in Sitaib Administrative Unit. At 98 deaths per 1000 live births, rates of infant and maternal mortality are far higher in Southern Kordofan than in neighbouring Northern Kordofan (and Sudan as a whole). Mortality among under-fives is estimated at 142/1000. In Muglad, where soldiers, militiamen and traders come into contact with a large number of commercial sex workers, people fear what they say is the growing incidence of HIV and AIDS. Neither testing nor treatment is available.

In towns such as Debab, greater investment in school facilities is apparent and the number of children enrolled, including girls, has been steadily increasing. Few permanent buildings however were observed outside the main centres of Muglad, Debab, Keilak, Meiram and Sitaib, and, even where they were evident, problems were reported with high fees and inadequate nutrition. Outside the towns, education services are very limited and illiteracy rates high, especially among pastoralists. Enrolment levels are low, and most nomadic children are de facto denied access to education. This is becoming increasingly problematic as pastoralist communities develop a strong new interest in education, aware that they have no alternative but to prepare their children for new livelihoods. While wealthier pastoralists have started to invest in their children's future, paying for the brightest to be schooled away from home in urban centres, middle-income and poor pastoralists cannot afford the loss of labour within the household. Many children enter school late, around the age of eight or nine years old, when they are considered old enough to walk the long distances from nomadic camps to towns or villages, and drop out after a few years when they fail to catch up with their peers. The closure of boarding schools for nomadic children in the late 1970s is blamed for creating two generations of illiterate youth. The piloting of nomadic schools by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education has had limited success because of a lack of teachers and teaching materials. People believe that more could be done to make mobile schooling more viable, but the overwhelming preference is for the reopening of boarding facilities in key locations. The two are not mutually exclusive: primary education could be provided through a greater number of mobile schools or the establishment of schools in key locations along transhumance routes, with a special school calendar to suit pastoral movement.

The greatest number of complaints concerned the absence of sufficient and sustainable water development in the region. Many of the wells drilled by the oil companies to compensate for the damage allegedly caused by their activities are reported to have a short operational life. At the most basic level, boreholes are being built to the wrong specifications. Compounding the problem, the community development projects implemented by oil companies are seldom coordinated with the technical departments of the ministries in El Fula. As a result, boreholes and other services are not maintained and quickly collapse. The potential for water harvesting (micro-catchment dams), a more sustainable and environmentally friendly solution than boreholes and *hafirs*, is grossly underexplored.

The lack of animal health services is another source of significant frustration. This includes vaccination services, which are said to be unreliable, veterinary clinics and drugs. Clinics are particularly important to fight the diseases allegedly generated by the contamination of water and pasture. In Sitaib, for instance, no vaccination campaign has been conducted for the last two years because of insecurity (last year the campaign was halted because the ministry vehicle was attacked), and no livestock vaccines are available in the market. This also has an impact on trade, as uncertified livestock cannot be sold.

The lack of services has a particularly severe impact on women, especially nomadic women, whose lives are particularly hard. In towns, women have better access to water, firewood and grinding mills, and many have become engaged in petty trade to complement household income. Illiteracy rates among women are extremely high both in rural and urban areas despite the increasing enrolment of girls in urban centres. Women comment that greater access to education for girls has already had a positive impact by helping to reduce the incidence of early marriage. The lack of boarding facilities in Muglad prevents girls from progressing to secondary education.

Women in urban centres and small towns expressed a strong desire to improve their skills in agriculture and other income-generating activities, to have access to adult literacy 'so that we can write our names', and to be supported with credit to set up or expand their

businesses. In rural areas, nomadic women emphasised the critical importance of increasing access to all basic services, particularly health and water. In both rural and urban centres a high incidence of female-headed households was reported, as many women had lost their husbands during the war. Many stressed that they felt threatened by increasing insecurity in the region, and feared a return to war.

Evolving tensions in Dar Misseriyya: current dynamics

The crisis experienced by the Misseriyya livelihood system is driving new political developments that are increasing tensions in the area. The area is currently in political turmoil. The Misseriyya perceive themselves as the victims of both war and peace. Their recruitment into the PDF during the war, as the backbone of the force, is widely seen to have eroded their historical relationship with the Dinka, while increasing militarisation among their youth. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is said to have increased insecurity and unemployment by depriving people of access to key resources in the South (pasture, water and the war economy) without any concomitant political gain. Among youth, the government's dismantling of the PDF without any compensation is seen as an act of betrayal, leaving former members unable to provide for their families. People see access to employment in the oil sector as a right, and are angered by the lack of labour and economic opportunities in the sector.

The Misseriyya are also suffering a leadership crisis. There is palpable mistrust both of traditional leaders and Misseriyya political leaders. Misseriyya society appears to be highly fragmented and people are uncertain about their future. There is an overwhelming feeling of helplessness across most sectors of society, and a widespread perception that only a return to armed confrontation will improve their lot. Signs of insecurity and instability are apparent across the region. If the Misseriyya predicament is not seriously and energetically addressed, the possibility of another 'Darfur-like' descent into violence cannot be discounted.

Main actors

The Shahama

The Shahama movement – Shahama means 'valiant' in Arabic – emerged in 2004. It is largely made up of young people, including those from nomadic communities. The Islamist-oriented group appears to have a substantial following. Shahama was founded by Musa Ali Mohamedain, a Misseriyya and a member of the Popular Congress Party (PCP) of Hassan al-Turabi. The government claims that Shahama is part of a strategy of destabilisation, and has from the outset accused the Darfur rebels of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) of being behind it. After Musa Ali's death in November 2004, his younger brother, Mohammed Bahr Ali Hamadain, took over the leadership, and soon after was named head of JEM's Kordofan 'sector' and deputy to JEM Chairman Dr Khalil Ibrahim. Hamadain was arrested and sentenced to death in May 2008, following the JEM's attack on Omdurman, although it is thought that the government will not carry out the sentence in order to avoid a backlash in Dar Misseriyya. Most Shahama activists followed Hamadain in joining the JEM. Many, reportedly including Hamadain himself, were however soon disappointed by what they saw as a lack of genuine concern by the JEM for the Misseriyya.

There are no clear boundaries between Shahama and other militarised groups. Most of its adherents are said to belong to the Awlad Kamil Darin Sheba Zarqa wa Hamra, one of the most militant groups in Dar Misseriyya. During the civil war they were the backbone of the

PDF. Almost all are said to be illiterate. A number of Misseriyya leaders are thought to want to isolate Shahama for fear of seeing Dar Misseriyya become 'a second Darfur'. At the local level, however, Shahama remains both strong and popular.

The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)

From its inception JEM has had a presence outside Darfur, in Kordofan, East Sudan, Gezira and Blue Nile. Interviewed early in 2008, shortly after his selection as JEM deputy chairman, Hamadain claimed that the majority of Misseriyya supported the JEM, arguing that the government had abused the Misseriyya in 20 years of war in southern Sudan, and that the SPLA had no clear vision about Kordofan.

The JEM has been active in Dar Misseriyya since 2005, with a strong presence in the weekly markets along the border with South Darfur. In December 2006, the group (under the name National Redemption Front) attacked the Abu Jabra oilfield on the Darfur–Kordofan border, assisted by local Misseriyya with knowledge of the area. The following August, the group attacked a police barracks in Wad Banda, killing 41 people. In September 2007, armed men attacked three Ministry of Agriculture vehicles south of Muglad, instructing their passengers to convey the message that their group was affiliated to the JEM. In October 2007, the Chinese-run Hajlil oilfield in the Defra concession was targeted in what Hamadain called a message to the Chinese companies in particular. Another Chinese-run oilfield was attacked in December 2007.

Although recruitment among Misseriyya has been significant, the JEM's presence in Kordofan has divided the Misseriyya. Following the attack on the police barracks in August 2007, the Misseriyya Union condemned the action as 'barbaric', demanded that JEM confine its war to Darfur and called on all Misseriyya to oppose it. In November 2007, a new group calling itself the 'Army of the Revolutionary Movement for the Restoration of Justice in South Kordofan', headed by a Misseriyya government supporter, Abdu Adam Al Ansari, said that rebellion in Darfur had caused huge destruction, and warned the JEM against conducting military activities in Kordofan. The group said that it was ready to confront any aggression against Kordofan in collaboration with other national forces.

Non-aligned ex-PDF fighters

An unquantifiable (but reportedly high) number of former PDF fighters is becoming increasingly organised. This group is armed and fiercely critical of the government for exploiting Misseriyya youth during the war and leaving them without compensation or alternative livelihoods in its aftermath. They have a number of key grievances, chief among them the government's refusal to acknowledge membership of the PDF as meeting the requirement for military service. Without a military service certificate it is impossible to access jobs, and oil companies exploit this loophole to justify their refusal to employ local youth in any significant numbers. PDF veterans were promised involvement in the disarmament and demobilisation programme in March 2007, but in early 2009 they were still waiting to be included. Veterans, a well-trained group, have claimed responsibility for attacks on roads from Muglad and El Meiram to Debab.

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)

Attracted by the prospect of regular salaries, a number of ex-PDF fighters joined the SPLA, including several young officers, some of them from wealthy backgrounds, as well as the

impoverished rank and file. According to some reports, around 13,000 Misseriyya fighters joined the SPLA in 2006, with a further 10,000 joining from the Debab camp. It is believed that the SPLA sought to recruit Misseriyya and Rizeigat militia as a fifth column or advance guard in the event of a resumption of hostilities with the National Congress Party (NCP). The SPLA used Debab as a recruiting station, aiming for one battalion (600–800 men). Thousands turned up, chiefly because of the US\$150 monthly pay on offer. The NCP argued that the recruitment was a violation of the CPA and sent an army unit to confront the SPLA, which eventually backed down. In September 2007, around 1500 prospective recruits were accepted and moved to the Pariang area, just south of the North–South border. Led by Hassan Hamid, a former PDF commander from the Misseriyya Humr sub-tribe, they were told that they would be trained and integrated into the SPLA.

Some observers explain the movement towards the SPLA as a tactic by the Misseriyya to strengthen their position rather than as a principled commitment to the group. The prime interest of the Misseriyya is to preserve their cattle wealth and access to critical resources, and to this end alliances are reportedly being used strategically.

Shamam

The Shamam movement originated in El Fula, the former capital of West Kordofan before it was merged with South Kordofan. It largely comprises opposition party members (Umma Party, Popular Congress Party, Ba'ath Party, Communist Party of Sudan, and others) and intellectuals, and seeks a peaceful resolution of the issues at stake. The movement is seen as elitist, and is thought to have links with Turabi's Popular Congress Party.

The Native Administration

The Native Administration is criticised by all parties for being excessively politicised and no longer reflecting tribal structures and interests. Native administrators are today seen as government officials who are more accountable to the government than the people. Mostly based in towns, including Khartoum, they are criticised for 'not being with their people' and failing to represent their interests, in particular those of the nomads. Youth representatives in Muglad accused the Native Administration of looking down on them and referring to them in disparaging terms. They believed that the Native Administration did not represent the views of the tribe, but felt that it could have an important role to play if it were neutral and apolitical. Young people felt that the role of the Native Administration should be enhanced and administrators given a greater say in social and tribal matters. To ensure impartiality, all interviewees felt that administrators should be selected by communities democratically, rather than, as at present, being appointed by the government – a radical change the government is currently unwilling to contemplate.

'Youth'

'Youth Mechanism for Development and Follow Up' (known as 'Youth') emerged in 2008. It claims to comprise educated Misseriyya youth, including lawyers, government officials, and business people. In late 2007 its leaders presented President Omar al-Bashir with a list of 52 demands focused on the lack of services and employment opportunities. Bashir pledged support and set up a body to follow up on their requests, chaired by the then head of the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) in Khartoum. With very few of their demands met, however, the rank and file of 'Youth' felt that their leaders had capitulated

to the government and were rethinking their stance. Mistrust of the government, described by one supporter as a ‘vulture which comes to you only when it sees carcasses’, is widespread, and most believe that ‘the gun is the only choice’. Many are reportedly ready to take up arms, arguing that they have tried to solve their problems peacefully and now have no option but to seek a ‘Darfur-like solution’. ‘Youth’ militants are seeking alliances both with the SPLA and the JEM. There is a widespread feeling that ‘Youth’ would win the backing of PDF veterans and nomads if its members turned to armed confrontation. The perception is that political parties and tribal leaders could not afford to oppose a popular groundswell and would be compelled to support an action by a group that enjoys more legitimacy than the illiterate militiamen of the old PDF.

The government/National Congress Party

Resentment against the government is so widespread that it is common to hear even children chanting anti-government slogans. There is a general collapse of governance, with the government unable or unwilling to ensure security. In protest, the Misseriyya have refused to pay livestock taxes since 2005 and the government has been unable to force them to do so. In October 2008, the civil service went on strike because their salaries were not being paid. There is a widespread perception that corruption is rife. Allegations of corruption have also undermined the Western Kordofan Development Authority. This body, created in the wake of the CPA, is based in Khartoum and has no presence or impact on the ground. There is no clarity about its annual budget, income or expenditure.

The failure to honour the wealth-sharing stipulations in the CPA has become a major source of discontent and frustration, and Misseriyya communities are demanding the 2% share in oil revenues that should be allocated to Southern Kordofan State. According to the 2007 wealth-sharing report, Southern Kordofan State’s share for January–April 2007 was US\$5.39 million. Very little of this appears to have been spent on initiatives to improve the livelihoods of the Misseriyya (or other groups in the state, for that matter).

The impact of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

The demarcation of the boundary of the Abyei area has proved to be the most intractable issue in the implementation of the CPA until the recent decision by the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague in July 2009, which has been upheld by both parties. Dinka Ngok leaders in Abyei welcomed the PCA decision, and they now refer to the Abyei area as ‘Dinka Ngok’ territory. Misseriyya leaders have also officially accepted the decision despite protests in Muglad by a number of Misseriyya. In August the Presidency issued five decrees promulgating the decision of the Court. The implementation of the PCA decision by the National Congress Party and Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM), the Abyei Administration and tribal leaders however presents significant challenges.

The Misseriyya fear that the implementation of the ruling will endanger their livelihood strategies even further. They maintain that the SPLM has already sought to restrict or complicate their traditional movement to the south across the Bahr al-Arab by imposing time restrictions, requesting that they travel unarmed, blocking migration routes and levying taxes. As the Misseriyya see it, the CPA strengthened the Dinka and gave them a government which speaks on their behalf. Although the CPA guarantees the right of the Misseriyya to access pastureland south of the Bahr al-Arab, in the last two years they have had to pay heavy taxes to access the South. In 2008, most Misseriyya cattle stayed north of the Bahr al-Arab, where they suffered from a shortage of water and grazing. Although large livestock

owners have managed to access the river in recent years by paying taxes to SPLA troops, having to pay taxes to the SPLA (or the government of Southern Sudan [GOSS], the boundary between the two being unclear in the fields of Abyei) is a sore issue for the Misseriyya. Misseriyya pay SPLA soldiers one to two calves per herd, depending on negotiation and acceptance of the offer by the soldiers. In 2007 Misseriyya crossing Bahr al-Arab through Unity state reported paying the SPLA SDG15,000 (Sudanese pounds). The Misseriyya Fallaita sub-tribal group already pays taxes to the government of Southern Kordofan State in El Fula, while the Misseriyya Ajayra sub-group has been refusing to pay taxes because of the lack of services. Neither group wants to incur double taxation by paying taxes to GOSS, but livestock owners are resigned to offering some payment in the interim in order to be able to access the river while a more acceptable solution is sought.

Traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution can no longer be relied upon in negotiating with the Dinka for access to the South. With the Native Administration so politicised, the old ways would now require the involvement of senior NCP and GOSS representatives. The Native Administration would not be accepted as a credible mediator. The government is aware of the tensions and is concerned that the situation may get out of hand. Despite a number of violent attacks along the main roads, it has however chosen not to react violently and to invest in dialogue, which seems to have led to some progress with some groups. There are reports of a rapprochement between elements of the NCP and former Misseriyya PDF groups (including renewed military support). There is a danger that these groups may exploit the general feeling of uneasiness about the 2011 referendum in Abyei amongst Misseriyya groups.

Relations with neighbours

Despite a renewed dialogue with the centre, there is a feeling of deep insecurity in much of Dar Misseriyya. Tension is particularly high between the Misseriyya Feyarin Awlad Jibril and the Rizeigat on the Southern Kordofan/South Darfur border, where clashes between the two groups left hundreds dead in May 2009. Relations between the Misseriyya and the Nuba to the east of the state are also strained, with sporadic clashes between Misseriyya Zuruq and Abu Junuk Nuba in the Lagawa area and tension in the Shatt ed-Dammam, Keiga and Buram areas. To the south, relations are difficult with most of the neighbouring tribes, though interaction with the Nuer and the Dinka Malwal is said to be less confrontational than with the Dinka Ngok.

There is deep concern about the easy availability of weapons (beyond those carried to protect livestock). Weapons are on wide display among communities in the Sitaib Administrative Unit, especially in areas bordering Darfur and in market towns like Sammoa. Links with the rebellion in Darfur are evident, and in several quarters considered desirable. Given this background, together with the JEM's activism and the deep and widespread grievances among the Misseriyya, it is critical that all possible efforts are made to prevent another escalation of violence.

Conclusions

While the process of livelihood adaptation described above has been under way since the early 1980s, the pace of change has accelerated dramatically since the signing of the CPA. Misseriyya pastoralists continue to consider their mobility of paramount importance, but some of their leaders stress the importance of settlement. It is important to note that such statements seem to prevail among leaders who are furthest removed from the grassroots.

The characteristics of the ecosystem in which the Misseriyya live would not make settlement feasible or sustainable without substantial investment in the medium to long term. Experience from other dryland areas in Africa shows that settlement strategies are only successful if they are developed as part of a long-term process involving a gradual shift away from a cattle-based economy and lifestyle brought about by education and the development of other livelihoods opportunities for succeeding generations. But time is a luxury the Misseriyya do not have: 2011 gives southern Sudan the right to secede, and the Misseriyya fear that this could deprive them of large areas of land central to their livelihoods. It is essential to put in place, now, a number of interventions to address their immediate concerns, sustain a process of diversification in the medium to long term and lessen the likelihood of conflict.

Urgent action is needed to provide assistance on the scale required to help restore confidence in the peace process, both in Dar Misseriyya and in Abyei. Interventions should focus on pastoralist livelihoods and on alternative strategies for those who have abandoned the livestock economy, risk dropping out of the sector or willingly pursue alternative livelihood strategies, in an effort to support the transformation and adaptation of Misseriyya livelihoods in a sustainable manner and avoid the risk that frustrated and destitute youth could be further manipulated for political gain.

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Notes

1. This article is an extract from a much longer study by S. Pantuliano *et al.* (2009).
2. See Cunnison's seminal work (1966) on the Baggara.
3. For a useful and recent piece of work on the complexity of nomads' settlement in Sudan, see El Sammani and Salih (2006).
4. One *mukhama* equals 1.75 *feddans*.
5. One *feddan* is 4200 square metres.

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Rebellion of the poor: South Africa's service delivery protests – a preliminary analysis

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Since 2004, South Africa has experienced a movement of local protests amounting to a rebellion of the poor. This has been widespread and intense, reaching insurrectionary proportions in some cases. On the surface, the protests have been about service delivery and against uncaring, self-serving, and corrupt leaders of municipalities. A key feature has been mass participation by a new generation of fighters, especially unemployed youth but also school students. Many issues that underpinned the ascendancy of Jacob Zuma also fuel the present action, including a sense of injustice arising from the realities of persistent inequality. While the inter-connections between the local protests, and between the local protests and militant action involving other elements of civil society, are limited, it is suggested that this is likely to change. The analysis presented here draws on rapid-response research conducted by the author and his colleagues in five of the so-called 'hot spots'.

Keywords: South Africa; service delivery protests; inequality; Zuma; corruption

Overview

There are grounds for tracing service delivery protests back to the apartheid era, and a strong case can be made for linking them to discontent that was noted in surveys conducted in the late 1990s and to the social movements that emerged in the years after 2000 (Seekings 2000, Nthambeleni 2009). However, analysts agree on dating the contemporary phenomenon back to 2004 (Atkinson 2007, p. 54, Booyesen 2007, p. 24, Pithouse 2007).

In defining the object of investigation, Booyesen (2007, p. 21) writes of 'grass-roots protests against both the quality of service delivery and public representation of grass-roots' service delivery needs'. Pithouse (2007), who draws on detailed knowledge of shack-dwellers' protests, rejects this 'economistic' approach, arguing that the protests are about 'citizenship', understood as 'the material benefits of full social inclusion . . . as well as the right to be taken seriously when thinking and speaking through community organisations.' Perhaps the distinction between the two approaches is more one of focus and level of analysis than a substantive difference about the collection of events that requires explanation. Atkinson's interest is in 'social protests – many of them violent – that wracked black and coloured townships . . .' (Atkinson 2007, p. 54). This neatly sidesteps the debate about whether 'service delivery' is a defining characteristic, but it opens the scope too broadly. The xenophobic violence of May 2008, for instance, had very different dynamics, and strikes and other occupation-related protests (such as those by police, soldiers, students and street

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traders) are also distinct. This analysis will not, however, ignore the xenophobia and worker solidarity present in some of the protests that concern us here, or reject the possibility that there may be underlying causes linking the various actions.

It appears that what we are attempting to grapple with is locally-organised protests that place demands on people who hold or benefit from political power (which includes, but is not limited to, local politicians). These have emanated from poorer neighbourhoods (shack settlements and townships rather than suburbs). Perhaps this is best captured by defining the phenomenon as one of *local political protests* or *local protests* for short. The form of these actions relates to the kind of people involved and the issues they have raised. They have included mass meetings, drafting of memoranda, petitions, toyi-toying, processions, stay-aways, election boycotts, blockading of roads, construction of barricades, burning of tyres, looting, destruction of buildings, chasing unpopular individuals out of townships, confrontations with the police, and forced resignations of elected officials.

The varied nature of such protests makes them difficult to quantify. One potential source is data collated by the Incident Registration Information System (IRIS), which is maintained by the South African Police Service (SAPS) Crime Combating Operations' Visible Policing Unit (VPU). This includes a subset on 'public gatherings' (Vally 2009, p. 10). The definition here of the term 'public gathering' derives from the Regulation of Gatherings Act 1993, which recognised freedom of assembly and protest as democratic rights, and sought to ensure that these were practised in a peaceful manner (State President 1994, Duncan 2009, p. 4). 'Gatherings' were not defined in the Act, although the term included 'processions' (also undefined), and according to Duncan (p. 6) events involving 15 people or fewer were excluded, as these were regarded as 'demonstrations' (again undefined). From a list of 'prominent reasons' for gatherings that the VPU provided to Centre for Sociological Research (CSR) researcher Natasha Vally, it is clear that a large majority of such events were protest-related (Vally 2009, p. 11). The reasons included 'demand wage increase', 'solidarity', 'dissatisfied with high crime rate', 'resistance to government policy', 'mobilising of the masses', 'in sympathy with oppressed', 'service charges', and, finally, 'sporting event'. While many gatherings were probably local political protests, the quantity of these as a proportion of the total is unknown. Contrariwise, some of the actions defined above would not have been included in the IRIS data. Notwithstanding these qualifications, the data presented in the tables below provide some indication of the scale of the protest movement. Data for 2008/9 are not yet available.

Table 1. Gatherings by province (financial years 2004/5 to 2007/8).

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Total
Gauteng	1932	2205	1888	1451	7476
Western Cape	557	511	577	642	2287
KwaZulu-Natal	1891	2529	1774	1146	7340
Limpopo	660	915	665	642	2882
Eastern Cape	754	1383	1626	733	4496
North West	1108	1341	1159	1502	5110
Free State	506	728	713	483	2430
Mpumulanga	295	336	337	4	972
Northern Cape	301	489	427	400	1617
Total	8004	10,437	9166	7003	34,610

Source: Vally (2009), based on IRIS data.

Table 2. Gatherings by type (financial years 2004/5 to 2007/8).

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Total
Peaceful	7382	9577 <i>9809</i>	8486 <i>8703</i>	6304	31,749
Unrest-related	622	860 <i>954</i>	680 <i>743</i>	699	2861
Total	8004	10,437 <i>10,763</i>	9166 <i>9446</i>	7003	34,610

Source: Vally (2009) based on IRIS data. Figures presented to National Assembly for 2005/6 and 2006/7 in italics.

Table 1 provides the IRIS data for all gatherings broken down by province. The VPU recognised that some of these figures were unreliable (attributing this to the impact of institutional restructuring conducted after 2006), and the Mpumalanga figure for 2007/8 is clearly inaccurate (Vally 2009, p. 8). Similar data had been provided to the National Assembly for the middle two years, but the table presented on that occasion had five numbers that were different (Internal Question 43/2007, see Vally 2009, p. 18). These were for the Western Cape – 672 in 2005/6 and 687 in 2006/7; for Free State – 673 in 2006/7; and for Mpumalanga – 501 in 2005/6 and 547 in 2006/7. The reason for difference between the two tables is unexplained, and it is not known which of the two is more reliable, but the disparities are not great. The total gatherings in the National Assembly statistics are 10,763 for 2005/6 and 9446 for 2006/7. In proportion to both total and urban populations, the two wealthiest provinces, Gauteng and the Western Cape, had relatively fewer gatherings than the others, and North West had the highest total.

The VPU distinguishes between gatherings that are ‘peaceful’ and those that are ‘unrest-related’, but it only provides national-level statistics under these two categories. The numbers are given in Table 2. Again there is a discrepancy between the figures that were provided to Vally and those presented to the National Assembly. The VPU did not provide definitions of ‘peaceful’ and ‘unrest-related’ gatherings and it is not known how the distinction relates to that between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal protests’. In 2004/5, the last year for which the data are available, the government said that there were 5085 legal and 881 illegal protests (Booyesen 2007, p. 23, citing *Cape Argus* 13 October 2009; see also Atkinson 2007, p. 58). It is probable that ‘unrest’ was more likely to occur in those instances where a gathering occurred without police permission, and thus was generally regarded by them as ‘illegal’, because in these cases the police would be entitled to use force to disperse the event (Vally 2009, p. 12).

Given the imprecise nature of the concepts used by IRIS and a lack of confidence in the quality of data collection, and given that no comparable figures are available for other countries, one cannot make any strong claim based on the statistics presented here. For this author, however, the numbers seem very high, and many times greater than the kind of figures presented for protests around the world (Walton and Seddon 1994, Dwyer and Seddon 2002, Seddon and Zeilig 2005).¹ If it is assumed that nearly all the unrest-related gatherings were protests of some kind, which is a reasonable assumption, then in an average week over the period 2004 to 2008 there were more than ten protests involving ‘unrest’. Many of these would have been labour-related, but it seems likely that a high proportion were local political protests, and one can certainly agree with Duncan (2009, p. 4) when she draws on the same statistics to propose that ‘protest action became a significant feature of political life in South Africa during Mbeki’s term of office.’

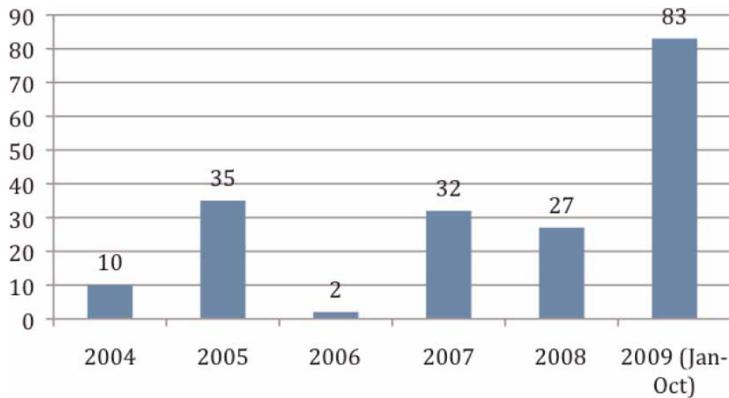


Figure 1. Number of service delivery protests (January 2004 to October 2009).
Source: Municipal Hotspots Monitor (Municipal IQ 2009b).

But what of the post-Mbeki era?

Another source of data is the ‘Hotspots Monitor’ maintained by Municipal IQ, a private research company (see Figure 1 below). This covers ‘major protests’ around service delivery, and includes most such events covered by the media. Comparing the numbers from this source with those from IRIS, there is clearly a considerable amount of activity that is not being picked up by reporters. The data are interesting, however, because they capture newsworthy protests – generally sizeable events involving a measure of unrest.

The graph highlights an initial peak in 2005, followed by a lull in 2006, the year of local government elections. The elections took place in March, and the nadir may not have been picked up in IRIS statistics because these are presented by financial year (i.e. from 1 March). The implication is that, for a period, activists put their energies into the elections, and/or that broader populations placed some hope in the possibility of electoral politics addressing their concerns. In 2007, the number of protests shoots up again. There is then a slight tailing-off during the period that the Zuma campaign gathers pace and leads into the national election of April 2009. The figures for 2009 are staggering, and only five of the protests took place before the election. There were a further 15 protests in the next four months (approximately), with the remainder, 63, occurring between the Municipal IQ reports dated 21 July (2009a) and 17 November (2009b). Thus, according to this source, there were more service delivery protests in the first seven months of the Zuma administration than in the last three years of the Mbeki administration. Unlike the lull that followed the 2006 elections, the 2009 election was followed by a storm.²

Existing analyses and Mbeki-era protests

There is a flourishing literature on South Africa’s social movements, a developing debate about participatory planning and a growing body of work on xenophobic violence; for recent examples see Dawson (2008), Duponchel (2009) and Sinwell (2009). By contrast, academic writing on local political protests is scanty.

Booyesen (2007) draws on national survey data and case studies conducted in five municipalities where service delivery protests had occurred in the two years preceding the March 2006 election, and proposes that:

The South African local electorate thus appears to believe that ‘voting helps and protest works’ when it comes to deciding on a repertoire of action to optimise service delivery in communities. . . . Results [of her research] indicate that communities continue believing that the ANC remains the party that is best equipped to take care of service delivery. (Booyesen 2007, p. 31)

In a 2009 update, which adds the 2007 protests to her account, Booyesen presents further evidence for the ‘dual repertoires’ interpretation. In addition, drawing on an analysis of 14 of the 2007 protests, she suggests that, while the ‘service delivery protests’ continued to be ‘grassroots’ actions, the triggers were increasingly national-level responsibilities, including housing, land and jobs (Booyesen 2009, pp. 128–129). Booyesen makes two other points that are of interest here. First, she notes that while statistics for the ‘roll-out’ of services often show significant improvements on the pre-1994 position, they tend to ‘gloss over the realities of uneven and insufficient delivery to the most needy in society’ (Booyesen, 2007, p. 23). Second, survey data are used to show that ‘Across all demographic . . . and ascribed-status (‘race’) groups, municipal and ward committee members were virtually invisible to 80 per cent of South Africa’s metropolitan and urban population’ (Booyesen 2007, p. 28).

Pithouse (2007) takes this last point further. He argues that ‘there is a pervasive sense that the state disrespects people by lying to people at election times and by failing to listen to them at other times.’ Where councillors are present, he says, they ‘most often function as a means of top-down social control aiming to subordinate popular politics to the party’. There are doubtless some councillors who live alongside their constituents and do their best to articulate popular concerns, but where they are absent, or operate in a top-down or corrupt manner, space is opened up for new leaders to fill the void.

Drawing mainly on media reports, Atkinson’s (2007) account largely confirms that of Booyesen, but provides some new emphases. The problem is not merely with a lack of services, she observes, but with something not picked up in roll-out statistics: poor maintenance and management of those services (lack of repairs, problems with billing and other issues). In her view, more attention should be paid to technical issues and skills development. She also notes that even where councillors are not corrupt in the criminal sense, they engage in various forms of self-enrichment and lead ‘fat-cat’ lifestyles. She reminds us that some harbour significant political ambitions (which might, one assumes, impact on their concern to serve higher party interests rather than their communities). Pressure to use politics to advance personal interest is exacerbated by high unemployment, she asserts. This final point leads Atkinson to propose, moralistically, that ‘councillors need to have a built-in sense of self-control’, and also, surely anti-democratically, that councillors ‘should be able to derive income from other means . . . such as employment or private enterprise’. In general, her analysis tends towards technocratic conclusions. For instance, she sympathetically quotes the Minister of Housing, who bemoaned the problems caused by poor communication between the three spheres of government (national, provincial, and local).

Four detailed case studies have been conducted. Two of these were undertaken by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE): Khutsong, located within Merafong Municipality, and Phumelela Municipality in the Free State. A general conclusion of the CDE report is that:

It is not the intensity of the disturbances that should concern us most . . . [but] that they have been widespread, repeated over a long period, and triggered by a variety of grievances, thus illustrating a persistent and general malaise in our system of governance. (CDE 2007, p. 53)

While this is a reasonable assessment, the Khutsong protest, which amounted to a five-year rebellion, must be regarded as exceptional. Following the eradication of cross-border municipalities in 2005, Merafong was placed in North West, rather than Gauteng (as the people demanded), and this led to a struggle against the national government. It was also special in its ferocity and endurance, with resistance – which included considerable violence, a lengthy school stay-away, a successful election boycott and a legal battle – continuing until victory had been secured in 2009. Whilst there are commonalities between Khutsong and other local protests, its unique character and scale mean that it requires separate attention (see Kirshner and Phokela [2009] for the beginnings of such an account).

Phumelela includes three small towns (Memel, Vrede, and Warden), and protests, sometimes violent, took place in each of them between mid-September and early November 2004. According to the CDE's researchers (2007, p. 12), there was 'some contact among the groups in the three towns', and protests which had occurred earlier in September in Har-rismith, about 50 kilometres away, had a 'demonstration effect'. Significantly, leadership was provided by 'unemployed people and youths of school-going age', who constituted 'Concerned Youth Groups', as they called themselves. Unusually, one of the marches was joined by whites from the local ratepayers' association. The CDE report adds two new dimensions to the analysis of local protests. First, poor policing was blamed for exacerbating problems. Second, the three towns had experienced an influx of migrants from rural areas, who placed additional strains on resources and relationships. Otherwise the case study provides further evidence for the two themes that are now familiar: poor services (roads, dirty water supply, and insufficient sports facilities were specifically mentioned), and pitiable local government (including nepotism, lack of transparency and indifferent, incompetent, and contemptuous officials). In terms of developing a prognosis, the Phumelela case (CDE 2007, p. 54) offers an interesting insight:

The unrest led to government action to remedy the local state of affairs. Individuals were removed from office, national government departments provided assistance, and administrative and managerial chaos was cleared up. However 18 months after the unrest, residents of the former townships were still waiting for significant improvements in their living conditions. The individuals on whom they had focused their frustrations might have been removed from office, but had gone on to equal or better posts elsewhere.

The other two studies were undertaken by the Centre for Development Support (CDS) based at the University of the Free State (Botes *et al.* 2007). These covered Phomolong in the Matjhabeng Municipality, again in the Free State, and the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (i.e. Port Elizabeth). The Phomolong protests took place between 4 February and mid-April 2005. Botes *et al.* (2007, p. 17) describe the beginning of the rebellion: 'Protesters brandishing toilet buckets and banners, and armed with pipes and sticks, sang protest songs and blocked the streets.' In the wake of this protest people employed outside the area were prevented from going to work, and schools were closed for a month. There was also some looting, with, according to one source, pillaging of Indian-owned businesses encouraged by local businessmen. The action only abated after the removal of a particularly unpopular councillor, which had been a prominent community demand (though possibly one inspired by rivals within the African National Congress [ANC]). Other major concerns included the continuation of the bucket system and complaints about housing delivery. There was a feeling that the municipality discriminated against Phomolong in favour of Welkom, the area's main town, with this reflected, for instance, in complaints about the award of tenders. Botes *et al.* show that while bucket sanitation had declined between 1996 and 2001, it was more prevalent in Phomolong than in the

municipality as a whole, as was informal housing. As an important underlying cause, the authors point to rising unemployment related to the decline of the mining industry, but the protesters actually complained that jobs were going to people from Lesotho rather than to locals. Three points are emphasised in the study: first, the importance of a lack of service delivery; second, the failure of the specific councillor to address concerns; third, the prominence of unemployed youth in the struggle.

Port Elizabeth was hit by protests during May 2005. These were widespread, occurring in at least six locations, but damage to property was relatively minor compared to elsewhere, and mainly involved burning of tyres. Botes *et al.* (2007) note, once more, the importance of service delivery (notably around housing issues) and unresponsive local government (including unfulfilled promises). Yet again, unemployed youth were to the fore in the struggles, but so too were school students (whose schooling was disrupted), and there was also participation by older women and men. Much of the action involved shack dwellers. The authors also mention police violence (which occurred in Phomolong as well), and they record suggestions that factionalism within the ANC (possibly South African Communist Party (SACP) and unions versus others) may have stimulated the protests. Finally, they propose that the high level of socio-economic inequality that exists in Port Elizabeth, and large-scale rural–urban migration, were significant structural considerations.³

The case studies tend to substantiate the main theme raised in the general literature: that the protests were principally about the lack of basic services and inadequate local administration. But the role of unemployed youth and even school students now comes into view, and high unemployment is surely a critical factor. Related to this, the importance of comparative local disadvantage, and hence inequality more broadly, need to be considered. There is also some suggestion of protests being linked to power struggles within the ANC, and of poor and/or violent policing contributing to the violence.

Zuma-era protests

For accounts and analyses of the protests that have occurred since the election of Jacob Zuma as president in May 2009, we must turn to press reports and our own research. We described the latter as ‘rapid response research’. A team of twelve researchers investigated five protests, doing so between a few days and about a month after the main events. The five included Piet Retief (where protests peaked at the end of June 2009), Diepsloot (early July), Balfour (mid-July), Thokoza (late July), and Standerton (throughout October).⁴ Thokoza and Diepsloot are located in Gauteng and the other three are in Mpumalanga, which has seen a high proportion of the Zuma-era protests. While the research lacked the depth and breadth of typical academic studies, and we regarded its conclusions as tentative, it had the benefit of immediacy. Also, in filling a gap between reportage and rigorous case studies, it enabled us to intervene in public debate. The primary methods were interviews (mainly with participants because we were particularly interested in motivation), observation (principally meetings), and analysis of memoranda. The research was backed up by a workshop held at the end of October and attended by protest activists. This occasion, which we filmed, enabled us to test and modify our analysis.

The form of the new protests was similar to the earlier ones. Generally (but not always), a memorandum was formulated at a community meeting and delivered to the local municipality (though, in the case of Piet Retief, it was addressed to the provincial premier). There were processions (with marchers sometimes wielding pangas, axes, and knobkerries), stay-aways, the construction of simple barricades within townships and/or informal settlements, occasional blockading of major highways, much burning of tyres (perhaps an emblematic

feature of the protests), confrontations with the police, some arson of symbolically significant buildings (e.g. council offices and councillors' houses), and often the looting of shops. Police brutality has been common, often precipitating counter-violence by protesters, and in Piet Retief at least two protesters were shot dead.⁵ However, in some cases the police lacked the resources to quell disturbances, leaving people in control of their own streets.

The range of demands from the new protests was also broadly similar to those in the Mbeki era, though the specifics varied. Housing has been an important concern – both a lack of formal accommodation and the extremely poor quality of much subsidised (i.e. Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)) housing. In Balfour, the main memorandum demanded such things as a training centre, a township police station, a mini-hospital and internet connection in the library, as well as clean water, the paving of roads, and street lighting. However, it is quite possible that governance issues have become more pronounced. Indeed, in Piet Retief and Standerton, possibly the two biggest protests, services hardly figure in the formal demands, except as adjuncts to a focus on maladministration. The Piet Retief memorandum mainly covered misappropriation of funds, with much of it couched in terms of demands for information (though see Dlamini 2009a, pp. 1–15 for a broader account). In Standerton, the main issues were around corruption, although press interviews suggest that poor services were also a factor. Accountability has emerged as a major theme in the unrest.

Many of the protests have occurred in shack settlements and others have emanated from poorer parts of townships. In the case of Thokoza, hostel residents were also involved. However, it would be an oversimplification to explain the protests in terms of poverty as such. There has been a general, albeit modest, decline in absolute poverty since 1994 (Presidency 2009); many of the poorest parts of the country, notably the rural areas, have been free of protests; and, to the contrary, there has been considerable unrest in Gauteng, where services tend to be better than elsewhere in the country. Comparative poverty, that is, impoverishment relative to some locally important reference group, is probably more significant. According to Municipal IQ (2009b):

An analysis of Census 2001 data (the latest available ward data) reveals that protests take place in wards: (1) that have higher unemployment rates than the average ward in their municipalities . . . [and] (2) that have worse access to services than the average ward in their municipalities.

The Piet Retief memorandum complained that the poorest people in the community experienced discrimination, being subject to the worst service delivery, and there have been numerous complaints about individual enrichment. The importance of comparative poverty is that it is rooted in inequality and a sense of injustice.

Income inequality must rank highly among the structural determinants of the protests. After 15 years of democratic rule, the country's Gini coefficient remains one of the highest in the world.⁶ Recent government statistics show that between the end of apartheid and 2007, South Africa's Gini coefficient dropped slightly, but also that the income of the poorest 20% of the population declined from 2.7% to 2.3% of total income (Presidency 2009). Increasing unemployment, which has followed in the wake of the global financial meltdown, will have expanded inequality and intensified problems of survival. According to the *Quarterly Labour Force Survey* (Statistics South Africa 2009; see also Letsoalo 2009), total employment dropped by 475,000 in the first six months of 2009, and by a further 484,000, 3.6% of the workforce, in the three months that followed. By the end of September 2009, the unemployment rate, already high, had increased to 31.1% (once discouraged work-seekers were included). But these figures do not capture the full extent of

the employment problem, for it is highly likely that the 'underemployed' (casuals, subsistence traders etc.) tend to be poorer than the unemployed (Wale and Alexander 2009).⁷

The importance of unemployment is reflected in the predominance of young adults, particularly those who are unemployed (or underemployed), in the struggle. In the case of Balfour, the memorandum came from 'the youth', and the protest was led by young people, women as well as men, who described themselves as 'community leaders'. These leaders were fluent in English and had a good command of strategy and tactics, and the main spokesperson was a graduate from the University of the Witwatersrand. From some of them we learned that housing is a generation issue, because many twenty-somethings would like to start their own family, yet are forced to stay in their parents' backyards. Two other factors have contributed to the development of a new generation of leaders. First, at least in the minds of some of the Balfour youth, older community leaders were often compromised by business interests linked to municipal tenders and by their membership of the ANC. Second, unemployed youth had both a shared identity and the time to organise. While the significance of generation has been more pronounced in Balfour than elsewhere, it has been an important dynamic in the protest movement generally.

The very sharpness of the recent growth in unemployment may help to explain the current spike in protest action, but we should be wary of pushing the joblessness argument too far. Unemployment peaked in 2002, when the expanded rate (including discouraged job-seekers) reached 41.8%. This was two years before the start of the local protest phenomenon, and for its first four years the rate of unemployment was in decline. Moreover, employment has not been a major issue raised in the protests, and where it has been it is generally formulated in relation to the allocation of jobs.

For a fuller understanding of the timing and scale of the movement, politics must be brought back into the equation. Here, a consideration of Zuma's leadership of the ANC is critical. There is no doubt that his defeat of Thabo Mbeki at the Polokwane congress, held in December 2007, was widely and enthusiastically welcomed by poorer people in general (see, for example, Ceruti 2008). Analysts contrasted the pro-Zuma delegates with those who supported Mbeki, noting the high proportion of unemployed and trade unionists among the former, and the more middle-class nature of the latter. Moreover, it seems highly likely that local protests and strikes fed into the anti-Mbeki campaign.⁸ For the next nine months the party and the government were split between the Mbeki-ites and the Zuma-ites, with Mbeki eventually resigning as President in September 2008 (replaced initially by Kgalema Motlanthe). It is plausible that from then until the April 2009 election there was a decline in the number of protests. We can now return to the 'dual repertoires' analysis. While a high proportion of the electorate supported the ANC in the hope that it would bring improvements to living conditions, they also did so because there was no serious alternative. Other formations were either marginal or regarded as unsympathetic, with the latter including the white-led Democratic Alliance and, in the last national election, the pro-Mbeki Congress of the People (COPE). Given massive disappointment with Mbeki, especially over service delivery, electing a new ANC leader was a perfectly rational step. Protest will have assisted Zuma's rise, but in the immediate pre-election period the main battle was to secure the victory of the 'pro-poor', Zuma-led ANC. Thus far, Booysen's argument holds up, albeit in a form that requires an appreciation of intra-ANC battle.

How, then, should we analyse the politics of unrest since the election of Zuma? This is only possible if we recognise the importance of the distinction between national government (led by Zuma) and local government. Only closer examination will reveal whether unpopular councillors were actually Mbeki-ites, but, in any event, opposition to local authorities is possible without it destabilising support for Zuma and his administration. Provincial

governments, also elected in April 2009, are generally seen as extensions of national politics. In our interviews we found no evidence that Zuma, or the ANC in general, were held responsible for people's problems, and some interviewees argued that the timing of the protests was linked to having a government that, at long last, would listen to people and address their complaints. When national leaders have appeared at protest hot-spots they have been well received (rapturously so in the case of ANC Youth League leader Julius Molema when he joined Standerton crowds celebrating the overthrow of their mayor).

Gwede Mantashe, general secretary of the ANC, has said (in an address to a South African Municipal Workers' Union conference): 'You find that in the majority of cases a march is led by members of the ANC.' The ANC carried out its own study of recent protests (which it refused to make public), so it probably has good evidence for his statement. Moreover, our own investigations tend to confirm its validity. In Balfour, most of the leaders were ANC sympathisers, and in Piet Retief the memorandum of demands ended: 'We would also like to state it clear[ly] that the . . . citizen's concerned group are members of the ANC.' However, it would be wrong to see the protests as a battle between good/the people/national leaders and bad/Mbeki supporters/local councillors. The internal politics of the ANC are more complicated. At another extreme they involve battles over patronage: access to tenders, jobs and so on (see, for instance, Dlamini 2009b). Somewhere between these poles lie fights between different components of the ANC and its Alliance partners. For instance, the Diepsloot protest recorded in our report was probably led by the local branch of the South African National Civic Organisation. In practice, the politics of the unrest can simultaneously involve various strands, with different activists having different motivations. So, a particular protest might contain both a popular antipathy to corruption and a struggle for patronage. To complicate matters further, activists of other parties, notably youth members of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in Balfour and COPE members (ex-PAC) in Piet Retief, have backed the protests. The 'dual repertoires' thesis has now broken down, for it cannot capture the messiness of the politics of local protests, let alone their broader dynamics.

Returning to the local/national distinction, there is a suggestion that the nationally focused issues that began to emerge in the Mbeki-era protests, notably around cross-border disputes such as that in Khutsong, have been tempered in the new period, with, for instance, housing, partially a national responsibility, being represented as a local problem. If so, this would fit our account, with Zuma-ite ministers given space to deflect responsibilities that were not available to their predecessors.

Such openings have been useful when it comes to calming the revolt, as seen, for instance, in Balfour, where this author attended a meeting held in the town hall on 27 July, a week after the start of the unrest. The platform consisted of Malusi Gqaba, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, and members of the provincial executive, and the floor included about 60 representatives of various parties and interests. The platform deployed a number of tactics. First, they simply listened, showing respect but also assessing the temper of the meeting and noting differences of opinion. Second, they said, in effect, 'We have only recently been elected and were not aware of your problems, which we will certainly address.' Third, they requested that the community pull back from further action for five days (with the implication of state violence if it did not). Fourth, they established a task team that would consider the various issues in the memorandum and where these should be addressed (municipal, provincial, or national government). This served to marginalise the youth, who could only be a minority in the task team, giving encouragement to older leaders, particularly those members of the Alliance who had not been compromised by holding office. Fifth, attempts were made to split the youth forum (which included ANC and PAC members). The meeting was followed by an unannounced visit by Zuma.

Disagreements within the ANC, which had been an important aspect of the unrest, were reworked to divide the community and stabilise the situation. This was only possible because the ANC nationally retained legitimacy, because the government was prepared to make some concessions, and because divisions within the community were multiple.

Some further aspects of the unrest are worthy of consideration. The first of these is the issue of xenophobia, which was highlighted by several reporters and some politicians as an important dynamic in the protests. It is tempting to sense an echo of the May 2008 pogrom, when more than 70 people were killed (about a third of them South Africans) and thousands of foreign residents were chased from their homes. There is no doubt that xenophobia is ubiquitous in South Africa (and spread fairly evenly across all social groupings), or that poverty and competition for resources, factors in last year's violence, were also present in this year's unrest. Moreover, one can find numerous examples of xenophobia in the protests. Its principal form has been the looting and torching of non-South African-owned shops (which have become a feature of post-apartheid South Africa, notably in the townships of Mpumalanga and the Free State).⁹ Sometimes these shops are owned by new Chinese immigrants and sometimes by Somalis, but most of those affected in Piet Retief were Pakistani-owned and most in Balfour were owned by Ethiopians.

In Piet Retief and Balfour we interviewed the shopkeepers who had suffered. Their accounts and opinions were very similar. They sympathised with the protesters; believed they had good relations with local communities; felt that the violence was not intentionally xenophobic, but rather the behaviour of an opportunistic minority; and planned to return to their shops. In Balfour, after the unrest had subsided, a rally was held at the local stadium where foreign shopkeepers were welcomed back to the township and invited to read their 'holy book' (Keepile 2009, and this author's response in *Mail & Guardian*, 6 November 2009).

Two of the young leaders of the Balfour revolt explained that, early in 2008, local businesspeople had called a community meeting with the aim of turning people against the foreign traders. The two countered arguments around drugs crime and competition with practical suggestions, and, so they claim, dissipated potentially dangerous xenophobia. After the May 2008 xenophobic violence, the Balfour community organised a sports day that brought together South Africans and foreign nationals, many of whom were Zimbabweans. Teachers and others with a little money provided a *braai*. Such was the strength of opposition to xenophobia that some refugees from other townships fled to Balfour. In Thokoza, we asked to be introduced to some Zimbabwean residents, but most of the people we then met turned out to be South Africans. From the Zimbabweans we did speak to, we learned that some of their compatriots had joined the protests alongside established residents. Our conclusion, then, is that while there was violence against the property of foreign traders during some of the protests, the character of the unrest was entirely different to that of May 2008 (see also Alexander and Pfaffe 2009).

Secondly, we should consider class dynamics within the struggle. The emphasis on favouritism in the award of tenders and evidence that shopkeepers may have encouraged some of the xenophobic violence, suggests that the township petty bourgeoisie may have been influential. While this argument might have some merit, it should not be overstated, partly because the protests have been mass events, with impoverished youth to the fore, and partly because the size of the petty bourgeoisie that resides in townships should not be exaggerated, as people with money generally move out.¹⁰

The response of workers and their unions has been mixed. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the main union federation, has been rather quiet in public. Its media office produces about two statements a day on average, but only one relevant item could be found for 2009. This was a short section of an address by COSATU

General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi, presented to the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) conference on 3 November. In this, Vavi stops short of supporting the protesters and limits himself to blaming 'false promises of the previous ANC government', the privatising and outsourcing of basic services, and deployment of unqualified people to senior positions. SAMWU, the main union with members employed by the municipalities, has been more sympathetic, arguing for instance in a press statement that:

Our members on the ground know and experience the frustration of the poor. It is entirely consistent with the ideals of a democratic society for the poor to protest and collectively raise their demands. That is why SAMWU supports those campaigning for an increase in services, and will continue to urge the government to make good on its promises to deliver them. Scores of perfectly legal protests on the question of service delivery have been met with hostile and unnecessary police violence. (SAMWU 2009)

In Balfour, the 27 July meeting mentioned above was not attended by SAMWU representatives. While it was proceeding, the union's members toyi-toyed outside the municipal offices as part of a separate strike action, which did not appear to be backed by members of the wider community. However, this is merely one example, and some of the SAMWU members, when interviewed, identified with the township protest. A general response among the leaders interviewed was that workers were members of the community and backed the actions (indeed their tone sometimes implied that the answer should be self-evident). Also, as we have seen, the protests have often involved calls on workers to stay away from work, though we have not yet investigated the impact this had. We did, though, come across one remarkable example of solidarity, which occurred in Standerton. Here there had been a long-running strike at the local poultry factory, which employed some 4000 workers, most of whom were members of a Federation of Unions of South Africa affiliate (who were on strike), with a minority of workers belonging to a COSATU affiliate (who were not). Strikers addressed community meetings and community activists addressed those of the strikers. On one occasion community members joined a mass picket at the factory, where barricades were erected and there were clashes with the police.¹¹

More evidence is required before one can develop a satisfactory analysis. However, it is possible that COSATU is influenced by its close relationship to Gwede Mantashe, Chair of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Secretary General of the ANC, who has been prominent in attempting to address issues related to the unrest.¹² In contrast, SAMWU, although a COSATU affiliate, has taken a non-partisan position in elections and its members see local government problems at first hand. On the ground, workers are generally (though not always) residents of townships, and easily sympathise with other members of their communities. However, as workers they tend to organise at work and in unions, which involves a spatial separation from the township. Time is taken up with work itself, and sometimes union activism, rather than township mobilisation.¹³ Arguably, while there are class interests that can unite workers and non-working or underemployed township residents, there are also divisions, especially in terms of use of time and organisation.

Thirdly, we noted an apparent lack of connectedness between the various protests, though our evidence is slim and may be biased by our sample. There is probably a 'demonstration effect', with activists in one area following events in another, mainly through the media, but this is not the same as sharing experiences, let alone coordinating action. If this assessment is correct, it may be associated with the localism of the demands being raised, but also with leadership being provided by a new generation of activists, who are not the kind of people to have a wide geographical spread of contacts. More broadly, with the exception of the Standerton example, there appears to be a disjuncture between the various struggles

affecting South Africa in recent years. These have included many militant protests dispersed by the South African police (usually using rubber bullets), which have involved workers, students, street traders, metropolitan police in Johannesburg and soldiers in Pretoria.

Finally, resonances from the apartheid period are striking. The battles have been fought by residents of formal townships and informal shack settlements, which are still spatially and socially separated from the suburbs (even if this is now more a class divide than a racial one). As before, the dynamics of the protests, including spatial location and demands raised, distinguish them from the struggles of workers. Moreover, people are pressing issues around housing and service provision that democracy has failed to address, and their concerns are still ignored by uncaring local officials. This has rekindled the socio-political divide between 'citizen and subject' (to use Mahmood Mamdani's formulation), with people responding by attempting to exert political influence through the development of a collective, community voice, as distinct from formal local politics. In addition, similar tactics are deployed, including the use of stay-aways and barricades with flaming tyres. The police response, too, is reminiscent of the apartheid era.

Conclusions

Since 2004, South Africa has experienced a massive movement of militant local political protests. In some cases these have reached insurrectionary proportions with people momentarily taking control of their townships, and it is reasonable to describe the phenomenon as a *rebellion of the poor*. There are strong similarities linking the Mbeki-era and Zuma-era protests, notably in relation to issues raised, which are principally about inadequate service delivery and lack of accountability by local councillors. A significant difference is that the new government has greater legitimacy. Ironically, perhaps, this may have encouraged a heightened level of protest, with people believing that Zuma is more likely to address their demands.

The protests reflect disappointment with the fruits of democracy. While some people have gained, the majority are still poor. Levels of unemployment are greater than in 1994, and income inequality remains vast. People can vote, but all too often elected representatives are self-seeking and real improvements are few. Many problems can be traced back to post-apartheid government policies that can be described as 'neoliberal'. Privatisation of local services opened up new opportunities for private accumulation by councillors and their cronies. Inadequate investment in public goods has produced a shortage of people with the skills necessary to administer local government and maintain municipal services (especially outside the metropolitan areas). There has also been underfunding in key areas, particularly housing. Critically, neoliberalism has sustained massive inequality, which, linked in particular to policies associated with black economic empowerment, has added to feelings of injustice. In practice, local councillors are often at the receiving end of problems that began elsewhere. Moreover the structure of governance makes matters worse. The ANC's policy of 'deployment' combined with its political hegemony can mean that councillors are more concerned about the support of party bosses than that of their electorate. Members of parliament (MPs) and members of provincial assemblies (MPAs) are elected through party lists, so they do not have constituencies of their own. Unsurprisingly, they appear to have been absent from the scene of the protests, thus failing to reduce the gap between national and local politics.

The key difference between the apartheid years and now is the existence of a democratic government retaining widespread legitimacy. Politics operates at several levels, including the influence that national leaders have over local party structures. As a consequence, the

government still has some scope for manoeuvre, as our Balfour example showed. In particular, the ANC can remove corrupt and unpopular councillors, and the 2011 local government elections will provide a focus for such activity. Replacement of councillors can provide an opportunity to co-opt popular leaders of the protests, but it is also possible that self-interested councillors will be replaced by other self-interested councillors, and, as Mantashe observed, removing too many councillors can lead to a loss of necessary experience (Maravanyika and Davis 2009). In addition, whilst the government would like to improve service delivery, it is constrained by the conservatism of its economic policies and by the current recession. While there has been some reallocation of resources, the government's main response has merely been that of pushing for greater monitoring and evaluation of elected officials and administrators.

One scenario is that, through a combination of political manoeuvre (listening, co-opting, dividing and other strategies), minor improvements (for instance, library internet connection in Balfour would cost relatively little) and repression, the government will be able to assuage the unrest. This author's sense is that it is doing too little, too late. It does not have the resources or the will to address the housing crisis, to rapidly improve skills, to significantly expand the number of jobs and markedly reduce inequality, or even to eradicate corruption in local government. A second scenario is that, having fought hard and won very little, people will collapse into political apathy and/or engage in another round of xenophobic violence. The third possibility is that struggles will generalise, developing more interconnections between townships and between township struggles and other arenas of conflict. This is what happened under apartheid, where the local battles of the early 1980s paved the way to national coordination. It is also what occurred in Zambia and Zimbabwe, for example, where food riots on a much smaller scale than South Africa's local protests contributed to the development of new parties (Alexander 2000). There is a dialectical relationship between the scale of a mass movement and its demands, but these are also influenced by political formations. For now, in South Africa, it is more likely that action will feed into the SACP and reform of the system than into the development of a revolutionary movement. But the position can change, particularly given the relative youth of the new generation of activists.

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Note on contributor

Peter Alexander is Professor in Sociology at the University of Johannesburg and holds the South African Research Chair in Social Change. Until recently he was Director of the University's Centre for Sociological Research.

Notes

1. See also Zeilig and Ceruti (2008), which includes a case study of Soweto. For the period January 2007 to August 2008, Leo Zeilig (email communication of 26 November 2009) has so far recorded 197 events identified as riots, general strikes, occupations, and uprisings. The largest number of these, 83, was in Africa, followed by 23 in Asia (both regions excluding the Middle East). I am grateful to Zeilig for this information.
2. According to Municipal IQ's November 2009 report (2009b), the 'worst affected' provinces in 2009 have been Gauteng (26% of protests) and Mpumalanga (23%). Given that about one in

- five of South Africa's population lives in Gauteng, the first of these figures is unsurprising, but fewer than one in ten lives in Mpumalanga, so the figure for that province is more significant. I am grateful to Municipal IQ for permission to reproduce their data.
3. In explaining the 2009 protests, Municipal IQ (2009b) echoes this argument about in-migration (but no specific evidence is advanced).
 4. Our report (Sinwell *et al.*, 2009) was published on 1 September, so did not include Standerton. The researchers for the report were Kgopotso Khumalo, Joshua Kirshner, Owen Manda, Peter Pfaffe, Comfort Phokela, Carin Runciman, Luke Sinwell, Peter Alexander, Claire Ceruti, Marcelle Dawson, and Mosa Phadi. Research in Standerton was undertaken by Kgopotso Khumalo, Peter Pfaffe and Lefu Nhlapo, and I am grateful for their report. For simplicity of presentation, I have referred to Piet Retief, Balfour and Standerton rather than to the townships where the protesters live and organise, Thandakukhanya, Siyathemba, and Sakhile respectively. These three towns and associated townships are located in the municipalities of Mkhondo, Dipaleseng, and Lekwa respectively. Diepsloot comes under Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, and Thokoza comes under Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.
 5. In Balfour we photographed and interviewed individuals with severe wounds inflicted by rubber bullets fired at point-blank range (Sinwell *et al.* 2009). These included a fifteen-year old boy who, pinned to the ground, had ten bullets fired into his back. The boy was then whipped with a rifle-butt, leaving a deep gash that required several stitches. The response of a national police spokesperson to our report was that accounts of brutality were merely allegations, and, to date, there has been no investigation of illegal actions by police officers.
 6. According the latest United Nations Development Programme data, South Africa's Gini coefficient is 57.8 (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 2009). All the countries with a higher figure have a smaller population.
 7. In a 2006 survey of Soweto, we found that the underemployed comprised 22.7% of the population, the unemployed 25.5% and the employed (including business owners and professionals) 30.5%. Our explanation of this phenomenon supported an Indian adage that 'the poor are too poor to be unemployed' (Wale and Alexander 2009).
 8. According to information kindly supplied by Andrew Levy Employment Publications, there were 12.9 million days lost through strike action in 2007. This was the largest number in South African history (considerably more than the previous high, 1987, when nine million strike days were recorded).
 9. In Piet Retief, there were complaints that jobs were given to people from Nelspruit (the provincial capital) and 'Swazis' (many of whom were actually part of South Africa's indigenous siSwati population, rather than citizens of nearby Swaziland).
 10. In the case of our Soweto survey, mentioned above, we assessed the petty bourgeoisie of Soweto to be about 5.7% of the total population, and their average LSM (Living Standards Measure) score to be only slightly higher than that of normally employed workers and lower than that of students (Wale and Alexander 2009; see also Zeilig and Ceruti [2008], p. 75).
 11. I am grateful to Peter Pfaffe for his report on this strike.
 12. Mantashe is, however, alive to some of the problems, commenting for instance: 'It is frightening to observe the speed with which the election to a position is seen to be the creation of an opportunity for accumulation (of wealth)', cited in Kasrils (2009), p. 15.
 13. Significantly, the Standerton memorandum ends with the authors stating, 'We are in no position to be elected as councillors [because] we are mostly working.'

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From formal- to informal-sector employment: examining the Chinese presence in Zambia

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This paper analyses China's recent engagement with Zambia, examining especially Chinese hiring practices, methods of business organisation and the labour conditions maintained by Chinese-operated construction and mining firms. Moving beyond existing analyses which remain focused solely on Chinese trade, aid and investment, this study begins to explore the micro-level of Chinese ventures, arguing that the continued employment of co-nationals as well as the generally substandard labour conditions maintained by Chinese firms lead to the offloading of Zambian workers into the country's burgeoning informal economy. There, newly emerged Chinese businesses stand to threaten local entrepreneurs who lack the resources necessary to parry Chinese competition. The result is a rapidly growing national unemployment rate and an increasing number of Zambians left struggling to sustain their livelihoods. This paper further argues that the characteristics defining China's engagement with Zambia are not particular to the Zambian context alone, but are rather abiding characteristics of overseas Chinese businesses in general. The paper ultimately calls for a policy framework regulating Chinese business activities in Zambia, lest the negative consequences of the Sino-Zambian partnership prevail.

Keywords: Chinese entrepreneurs; labour relations; Zambia; mining; informal economy; economic development

Introduction

China's engagement with Africa is frequently viewed through a narrow lens. Scholars continually emphasise the Chinese quest for resources, the litany of Chinese-run infrastructure projects under way across the continent, and Beijing's somewhat questionable relations with rogue African leaders. Yet beyond this governmental level of engagement, China's recent activities in Africa bear significant, tangible implications for the one billion inhabitants of the African continent. Specifically, this paper argues that the implications of 'China-in-Africa' are most prominently experienced by small-scale African entrepreneurs and casual labourers, for whom the influx of Chinese businesspeople poses an urgent threat to their already volatile job security.

In Zambia, for instance, local mine and construction workers are continually laid off as Chinese workers are hired to labour on Chinese-run projects. With an increasing number of Chinese people being imported to labour in the Chinese-owned Chambishi mine, for instance, formal-sector Zambian workers are driven out of their posts and frequently

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offloaded into the informal economy. The Zambian informal economy accounts for approximately 88% of the country's workforce and over 90% of manufacturing and construction employment in the urban areas (Central Statistics Office 2005), rendering job competition in this sector of the economy exceptionally high. The recent migration of small-scale Chinese entrepreneurs into the country's informal economy further exacerbates this reality, leaving an increasing number of Zambians without work. In a country where the unemployment rate is over 50%, and 86% of the population lives below the poverty line, the developmental implications of such a reality are quite dire.

Indeed, the dearth of opportunities for respectable employment bears directly on the country's human development (in aspects such as food, health care, and education), perpetuates inequality, exacerbates poverty, and limits the prospects of achieving sustainable economic development – a long-term objective articulated in Zambia's 'National Vision 2030'. Accordingly, employment creation remains a high priority for the Zambian government, as reflected in the National Employment and Labour Market Policy (NELMP) and in the title of the Fifth National Development Plan (2006–10), 'Achieving Broad-based Wealth and Job Creation through Technological Advancement and Citizenry Participation.' Yet concerns are being voiced over the proliferation of Chinese casual labourers and traders who are increasingly displacing Zambians active in those areas, and who in so doing are posing a significant hindrance to the country's developmental objectives (personal communication, Lusaka, October 2007).

This is not to suggest that the ramifications of China's entry into Zambia – and Africa more generally – are solely negative. The prominence of discounted Chinese goods on African markets has, for instance, increased African purchasing power. Chinese infrastructure projects further carry the potential to establish key intra- and inter-state trade routes where none previously existed. Yet such benefits are accompanied by significant costs, the least of which include rising unemployment figures in many of the continent's formal sectors, and heightened competition in informal sectors. The result is a growing number of Africans facing limited opportunities for income and employment and, consequently, sustainable livelihoods. Zambia is a case in point.

Owing primarily to its resource wealth, Zambia has become a key marketplace for Chinese businesses. The Zambian government at present claims to have 3500 Chinese citizens living within the country's borders, while other figures set the number far higher, closer to 80,000 (United Nations 2006). Irrespective of its magnitude, the Chinese presence in Zambia is surrounded by tensions, the clearest manifestation of which occurred during the country's 2006 presidential election. Running on what was effectively an anti-Chinese platform, opposition candidate Michael Sata vowed to expel all Chinese workers and traders if elected. While Sata ultimately failed to gain the presidential seat, he did win in Lusaka and the Copperbelt, the two most prosperous provinces, where the Chinese presence is particularly pronounced. Sata's rhetoric further gained the support of Zambia's Federation of Free Trade Unions (FFTUZ) and many of the country's trade union leaders. His victory is a telling indicator of Zambian attitudes towards the growing Chinese presence in the country's labour market.

Accordingly, this paper aims to scrutinise the practices of Chinese businesspeople in Zambia, with special attention to co-ethnic hiring, modes of business organisation, and the labour conditions maintained by Chinese-owned firms. This paper further links formal-sector dynamics with the persistent realities in Zambia's informal economy, arguing that the migration of small-scale Chinese entrepreneurs stands to threaten the job security of workers that lack the resources necessary to resist Chinese competition. The paper begins with an overview of the contemporary Zambian economy and mining

sector, which is one of the country's largest sources of employment in terms of both direct and indirect employment. In the second section, analysis turns to the nature of Sino-Zambian relations and the channels through which Chinese labourers enter the country. The third section then examines the sustained nature of co-ethnic employment practised by Chinese entrepreneurs in Zambia, emphasising the importance of traditional Chinese notions of trust and networking in overseas Chinese businesses. The fourth section further analyses Chinese labour practices, particularly as they relate to Zambia's intricate labour relations framework. Zambia's labour relations legislation is one of the most well developed of any African state; labour conditions maintained by Chinese firms often stand in direct opposition to the protections entrenched in this framework. In the fifth section, the connection between Chinese activities in the country's formal and informal sectors is explored, with special attention to the rise of small-scale Chinese shops and their implications for Zambia's informal vendors and traders. The analysis concludes in the sixth section with an examination of the development implications of Sino-Zambian relations and a suggestion of potential ways forward.

Zambia's copper mines and the formal economy

Although it is one of the most urbanised countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Zambia is also one of the poorest countries in the world, with annual GDP per capita of US\$1500 and approximately two-thirds of the population living below the poverty line. The country is characterised by a landlocked, urbanised economy highly dependent on its copper sector. In 2008, copper mining accounted for over 74% of the country's total export earnings (Ndulo *et al.* 2009, p. 2), rendering Zambia the world's eleventh largest copper producer.

Mining has dominated Zambia's economy since 1928 and since then has been regarded as the engine behind the country's development. At independence in 1964, the industry transformed the Copperbelt from an area of bush to a dynamic urban and industrial region, making Zambia a model for a continent moving rapidly towards political and economic independence, industrialisation and an end to poverty. In 1969, Zambia was classified as a middle-income country, with one of the highest GDPs in Africa. By 1973, it had an urban population of one million out of a total population of four million, with 750,000 in waged employment (Ferguson 1999).

Despite such early progress, development slowed with the collapse of copper prices after the first oil crisis in 1974, forcing Zambia to borrow in order to maintain social provision. Between 1974 and 1994, per capita income declined by 50%, rendering Zambia the twenty-fifth poorest country in the world (*ibid.*) and heavily reliant on international aid, much of which was conditioned on internal reforms, particularly the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, which began in 1992.

From the very beginning, the primary targets of the privatisation project were understood to be the copper mines, and the government took significant strides to establish an investor-friendly policy regime that would attract investment in its floundering mining sector. The 1995 Investment Act established the Zambian Investment Centre, set up to assist companies through the process of buying into the Zambian economy. The Centre provides incentives that apply to all investors as well as special incentives for investors in particular industries (e.g. mining). The Act further does away with foreign exchange controls, allowing companies to take out of Zambia, without interference, all funds in respect of dividends, principle and interest on foreign loans, management fees, and other charges.

The liberal investment climate engendered by the Act is further perpetuated by the 2006 Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) Act which, while introducing stricter regulations

regarding the minimum investment and employment creation requirements in order to obtain a Zambian resident permit, nevertheless continues to authorise investors freely to repatriate any capital investments, and to send home profit, dividends, interest, fees, and royalties; it further allows foreign nationals to transfer wages earned in Zambia. Moreover, the Mines and Minerals Act of 1995 provides particular incentives for investors in mining. Not surprisingly, a significant majority of Chinese people in Zambia have taken advantage of these provisions and have established a major foothold in the country's mining industry. As of early 2009, mining-related activities constituted approximately three-quarters of the value of all registered Chinese investments in Zambia (Kragelund 2008).

Most significantly, the Chinese now own Chambishi Copper Mine, which was restored in 1998 and is regarded as a step towards the country's economic revival. The mine is a joint venture between the Chinese government through the company China NFC, which holds 85% of the shares, and the Zambian government through ZCCM Investment Holdings, which holds 15% of the shares. In February 2007, Zambia and China launched an economic partnership zone centred on the mine. The partnership is designed to draw US\$800 million in mining investment from scores of Chinese companies and to create 60,000 local jobs. Immediately following this announcement, China NFC announced in March 2007 that, together with Yunnan Copper Industry Group, it would work to develop an ultra-modern smelter for US\$220 million. The smelter will produce 15,000 tonnes of copper annually and will process ore from mines in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (*Africa Confidential* 2007). Zambian authorities hope that such investments will contribute to export revenue and help remedy the country's unemployment situation.

Unemployment in Zambia is currently high: in a country of approximately 10 million people there are only about 400,000 formal-sector jobs (United Nations 2006), placing unemployment close to 50%. According to the Global Policy Network, since the early 1990s the trend in formal-sector employment has shown a persistent decline. In 1997, out of a total labour force estimated at 4.194 million workers, only 11% were employed in the formal sector. The remaining 89% were either unemployed, or employed in the informal economy. In 2005, out of a population of 10.8 million, only 436,066 were in formal-sector employment (Konayuma 2006). In the mining sector alone, employment between 1997 and 2000 declined from 44,498 in 1997 to 35,042 in 2000 (*ibid.*). In 2004, employment in Zambia's mining industry was 19,900 (Chamber of Mines of Zambia 2005).

The onset of the global economic crisis in late 2008 has further exacerbated Zambia's declining employment figures, in particular in the mining sector. Owing largely to the plummeting price of copper, many of Zambia's major mines have been forced to reduce the cost of production: they have shut mining units, laid off workers, reduced the work being performed by mining contractors and suspended contract labour and recruitment. Mopani Copper Mines, one of Zambia's biggest mines, for instance, reduced work for contractors by 40% and the use of contract labour by 30%, and suspended hire contracts and recruitment. The mine expected to lay off 215 workers at Nkana and 467 workers at Mufuilira during 2009 (Ndulo *et al.* 2009, p. 19). Total job losses at Konkola Copper Mines in 2008 are estimated at 6667. Chambishi Metals closed Luanshya copper mines, with 1719 workers being laid off, and the Chambishi smelter was also closed, leaving 240 workers and 267 contract workers without work.

As in other sub-Saharan African states, rampant unemployment in the formal sector has led to a rise in the informal economy, which offers poor quality jobs that generally fail to meet employment protection legislation. Where jobs are protected, the legislation is timidly enforced. In Zambia, the informal economy is particularly large. In 1997 it was estimated that approximately 700,000 workers were employed in the informal economy, constituting

some 18% of total national employment and 64% of non-agricultural employment (Central Statistics Office 1997a). Recent figures from the World Bank suggest that Zambia's informal economy currently amounts to 48.9% of GDP: approximately 80–90% of the working population is employed in the informal sector, with the majority of businesses concentrated in urban areas (eStandardsForum 2009).

The informal sector in Zambia is, indeed, foremost an urban phenomenon. Trade is by far the most dominant activity, constituting 79% of sector enterprises and contributing to 79% of total employment in the sector (Haan 2002). Manufacturing is the only other sizeable activity, with textile manufacture the leading employer. Almost three-quarters of all informal ventures are found in urban areas, with over 60% found in Lusaka and the Copperbelt, which are the most urbanised provinces and therefore those most susceptible to Chinese influence.

China and Zambia: an 'all-weather' friendship

Overseas Chinese migration to Zambia is facilitated by continuing friendly relations between the two countries: bilateral ties are indeed among the strongest in the region (Taylor 2006). When President Hu Jintao visited Zambia in early February 2007, the then president, Levy Mwanawasa, described China as an 'all-weather friend' (Hare 2007), recalling Chinese assistance during the liberation struggle, Chinese construction of the Tanzam railway, and the establishment of the Mulungushi textile plant in the late 1970s, which became the biggest textile mill in the country.

Relations today remain strong, driven less by ideological concerns and more by the economic objectives of both states. In 2006 China was the biggest investor in Zambia, investing more than twice the amount invested by France and four times that invested by the United Kingdom. In early 2007, the Zambian government announced the establishment of a special economic zone for Chinese investors in the Copperbelt town of Chambishi: Chinese firms operating there are exempt from import duties and value-added taxes. In return, China promised US\$800 million in new investments, adding to the existing US\$500 million in projects. Recent undertakings include a US\$1.1 million grant for road rehabilitation and repair of other infrastructure; a donation of 7780 tonnes of fertiliser valued at US\$2.5 million, and 4500 tonnes of yellow maize; a US\$8 million contract for the construction of a sub-station at Kansanshi Mining Plc, one of Zambia's leading mines (*The Times of Zambia* 2003); a partnership between China's Higher Bus Company and local Zambian bus operators under which local transporters will be supplied with buses after making a minimum payment (*The Times of Zambia* 2009); and negotiations with China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO) to upgrade Zambia's T-59D tank engines, armour and fire-control systems (Minnick 2009).

The importance of Chinese companies is growing in relation to the share of domestic companies. While companies with Zambian-majority ownership ranked as the country's principal investors in 2005 (investing US\$91.3 million), by 2006 they ranked only third (investing US\$63.4 million). Meanwhile, China moved from being the third most important investor in 2005 (US\$40.8 million) to being the largest investor by the following year (US\$209 million) (Kragelund 2008, p. 5).

The most pronounced increase in Chinese firms has been among those centred on the country's mining industry. Since 2003, overseas Chinese workers have been flocking to the country, taking jobs in the country's mines and establishing ethnic enclaves around them. Such enclaves are generally characterised by firms that are clustered together, economically independent, and employing only co-ethnics. Together they create a distinct

ethnic protected labour market, which functions to serve predominantly the needs of the founding Chinese community. The enclaves around Chambishi mine, for instance, consist of various small-scale groceries, restaurants, and (Chinese) medical clinics, all of which cater to the needs of the Chinese workers employed in the mine. Outsiders are neither hired, nor do they generally patronise the associated businesses (personal communication, Lusaka, October 2007).

A significant majority of those employed in Chinese-owned mines and their corresponding enclaves in Zambia arrive as tourists, reaping the benefits of Section 3.3 of Zambia's immigration regulation, which grants fee-waived visas to tourists travelling on pre-arranged package tours through a Chinese tour operator in conjunction with a Zambian counterpart. Once in the country, it is easy for an immigrant to change status through a range of exemptions aimed at prospective investors (Mwanawina 2008, p. 5). This, coupled with the welcoming provisions found in both the 1995 Investment Act and the 2006 ZDA Act, has led to a rapid upswing in the number of Chinese people resident in the country.

Initial reports indicate that a sizeable percentage of Chinese people in Zambia are workers contracted to labour on Chinese-operated projects, especially those run by Qingdao Construction Group Corporation, China Jiangsu International Economic TC, Hunan Construction Engineering Group Corporation, China Railway Engineering Corporation, China National Electronics Import and Export Corporation, the China Engineering Corporation and the China Non-Ferrous Mining Corporation (NFC), currently the most prominent Chinese companies in the country. Most of these companies have entered Zambia through contracting and financing programmes, and fund their jobs through project grants and export credits (Chen *et al.* 2007). Such findings are in line with previously presented evidence which suggests that the vast majority of Chinese state-owned enterprises in Africa have entered through greenfield investments and are supported by export credits, concessional loans and international guarantees by the China Export-Import Bank (Broadman 2007).

As with most other African economies, the quality and availability of data surrounding the ratio of domestic to Chinese employment in Zambia is poor, and figures from the Chinese regarding their use of local labour are either suspect or non-existent. Moreover, where figures are available, they are often contradictory. Official Chinese statements, for instance, assert that by 2006 more than 200 Chinese companies had invested in Zambia. The number of Chinese investments approved by the Zambian Development Agency, however, only reached 143 by 31 December 2006. To date, hardly any of these projects have been implemented (Kragelund 2008).

Similarly, according to official Chinese statistics there were 82,000 Chinese labourers working for Chinese firms based in all of Africa in 2005, up from 42,000 the previous year (Chinese International Labour Cooperation 2006). These figures do not, however, tally with anecdotal evidence emerging from various African countries where the number of labourers is clearly growing (Alden 2007). In Zambia it is currently estimated that for every Zambian in a Chinese firm, there are about 15 Chinese workers, with a total of only 10,000 local jobs created over the past 13 years (United Nations 2006). Overall figures on indigenous employment are vague, however, as the variances among companies' reports on use of local labour are difficult to interpret, if not lacking altogether. Estimates suggest that on average Chinese construction firms employ an equal number of Chinese and local workers, and that they overwhelmingly resort to Chinese nationals for managerial positions (Chen *et al.* 2007). The latter finding is supported by evidence from Zambia, both within and beyond the construction industry. Of the senior management

team at Chambishi mine, for instance, 11 are Chinese and just one is Zambian. With respect to the overall ratio of Chinese to Zambian labourers, however, existing estimates are rather suspect, with anecdotal evidence pointing to the continued employment of co-ethnics in Chinese companies.

Co-ethnic employment and the importance of ‘trust’ networks in Chinese business relations

Co-ethnic employment is one of several constant characteristics of overseas Chinese businesses, both at the level of large state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Like other ethnic groups, overseas Chinese entrepreneurs possess a specific business culture that characterises their strategies. The possession of such a culture is a central tenet of theories of ethnic entrepreneurship, which centre on the notion that ethnic groups are equipped with culturally determined features such as dedication to hard work, thriftiness, solidarity and loyalty, and orientation towards self-employment, which provide resources that facilitate and encourage entrepreneurial behaviour.

With respect to Chinese entrepreneurs in particular, two defining characteristics prevail: trust, or the Chinese notion of *guanxi*, and networks. These, of course, are not *the* dominant factors informing the nature of overseas Chinese activity in Zambia or elsewhere, over and above other factors such as the political and economic realities of the host society or government policies, but they are deserving of consideration in any account. As regards Chinese presence in Zambia, and in Africa more generally, however, they are the most significant.

For Chinese entrepreneurs, interpersonal trust and social networks are particularly important. Indeed, they have been a pervasive part of the Chinese business world for the last few centuries. Central to discussions of trust in Chinese society is the notion of *guanxi*. *Guanxi* is generally understood as a special relationship between two persons (Alston 1989), a kind of personal relationship in which long-term mutual benefit is more important than short-term individual gain (Zamet and Bovarnick 1986), and as the status and intensity of an ongoing relationship between two parties (Kirkbride *et al.* 1991). The emphasis on close personal relations in *guanxi* differentiates Chinese networks and personal trust from their African equivalents in three distinct ways.

First, trust between Chinese people is highly circumscribed, rendering networks equally exclusive: a person trusts members of their family or lineage absolutely; friends and business partners are trusted to the degree of mutual obligation; and people outside the person’s networks are mistrusted. The notion of mutually obligatory trust is perhaps best exemplified by Gregor Dobler (2005), who in writing on Chinese migrants in Namibia observes that while Chinese entrepreneurs are socially connected, these social networks do not always translate into business: while entrepreneurs may cooperate on a private level, they often keep key business information to themselves. The degree to which this proves the case is again highly predicated upon the intensity of *guanxi* ties sustained between colleagues and the extent to which individuals are regarded as close, trusted parties. Second, because networks are based entirely on personal relations, maintenance of reputation (the Chinese notion of ‘face’) is of much greater importance than in African networks. Thirdly, Chinese trust relations are characterised by the long-term nature of obligations, as opposed to the immediacy generally expected in African networks. Trust relations are regarded as a kind of stock to be put aside in times of abundance and plenty, but brought out in times of need, and are developed and reinforced through continuous, long-term association and interaction (Redding 1993).

In business dealings such personalism is often manifest in the informal management and organisation styles characteristic of Chinese firms, both large state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). In the first place, both Chinese SOEs and SMEs are distinguished not by their formal or informal qualities, but by the 'structure of personal relations and networks of relations between and within firms' (Granovetter 1985, p. 483). The operations of the Charoen Pokphad (CP) Group, one of China's largest foreign investors, are a case in point. Founded initially as an animal feed business in 1921 by two brothers who migrated from Guangdong to Bangkok, the company has since grown into a global conglomerate with over 250 subsidiaries in 20 countries, all engaged in various sectors of industry. Despite great diversity in their business, all the firms in the CP Group remain largely reliant upon tight networks of independent producers and investors. Moreover, the firm continues to be operated by generations of family members: most of the founders' 13 sons and other close relatives are or have been key employees of the company. The sons all have seats on the board of directors and take most of the major decisions (Hamilton 2006, p. 266).

The pervasiveness of such personalism generally allows for great informality in Chinese business operations. Many Chinese businesspeople do not, for instance, use (written) contracts; they do not regulate credit relationships formally, and generally rely on informal criteria when recruiting new employees. As Kidd and Richter (2004, p. 14) observe:

When a Chinese entrepreneur seizes a business opportunity, he prefers to make a deal based on previously established *guanxi* rather than seeking the anonymity of the market. Such a deal is based on opportunities arising through *guanxi*, engaging with privileged contacts and using non-publicly available information.

For many firms, *guanxi* ties alone facilitate business financing, labour and material supplies and customer loyalty, and militate against market uncertainties and unnecessary costs. In Zambia, the Association of Chinese Corporations in Zambia (ACCZ) and the Chinese Centre for Investment Promotion and Trade (CCIPT) are discernible manifestations of the overriding importance of such network ties in the operation of Chinese firms overseas. Established under the Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office of the Chinese Embassy, the ACCZ is ostensibly intended to serve as a 'common front' (Nkonge 2005) through which Chinese investors and relevant Zambian departments can discuss and resolve issues pertaining to Sino-Zambian relations. It is also intended as a mechanism to enhance relations between Zambian and Chinese investors. In reality, however, the ACCZ essentially functions as the Chinese chamber of commerce in Zambia, catering to the interests of Chinese companies, communicating and promoting the cause of Chinese investors, and educating its members on the rules and regulations of Zambia (Kragelund 2008, p. 13). Similarly, the CCIPT functions to identify suitable investment projects and provide practical support to newly established Chinese companies.

Existing research on overseas Chinese associations indeed suggests that such organisations generally function to support Chinese people overseas both socially and economically, rather than to facilitate linkages with enterprises in host societies. An overwhelming number of these newly emerged associations are further characterised by their strong apparent orientations towards the People's Republic of China (PRC), or have been established with the PRC's direct involvement and endorsement (Nyiri 1999a, Nyiri 1999b), as is true of both the ACCZ and CCIPT.

From a Chinese business perspective, organisations like the ACCZ and the CCIPT and reliance upon trust-based networks more generally have significant positive implications for

company performance and growth. At the same time, however, exclusive reliance on such social networks may become a constraint when businesses develop, especially when they are rooted in a foreign context. Because of the highly personal and limited nature of trust and networks, Chinese people often find it difficult to come to terms with neutral, objective relationships where they cannot read trustworthiness, and tend instead to work only with those with whom they already have an existing trust relationship. The intensity of the 'sociological superglue' (Putnam 2000, p. 23) between Chinese people overseas reinforces their homogeneity and exclusivity, and hinders significantly their ability to connect with people beyond their immediate networks.

The degree of exclusivity becomes all the more acute when working in hostile contexts: the greater the cultural divide between the immigrants and the host societies and the greater the level of prejudice, then the stronger the sentiments of in-group solidarity among the members of the group (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). In Zambia, where the Chinese presence has become especially politicised, it should therefore come as little surprise that the majority of Chinese activities remain confined to enclaves, and that co-ethnic employment among both Chinese SOEs and SMEs remains the status quo.

Aside from serving as a reaction to unsympathetic environments, however, the proclivity towards co-ethnic employment is further a reflection of the limitations of *guanxi* as a coordinating principle. Chinese firms in Africa hire the largest percentage of workers from China, accounting for 17% of total employee numbers (Broadman 2007). While some deride such hiring practices as exemplifying Chinese prejudice against Africans, a proper understanding of *guanxi* coupled with a brief examination of previous overseas Chinese projects counters such claims. Writing on Chinese migrants in Italy, for instance, Carchedi and Ferri (1998, p. 265) observe that:

Unlike other immigrant groups, the Chinese tend to employ co-nationals in their enterprises, thus reinforcing the tendency to live concentrated in particular neighbourhoods.

Chinese entrepreneurs working in the cotton-spinning industry of Hong Kong in the 1970s also employed only co-nationals, as did Chinese construction workers in Russia in the late nineteenth century. All works in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok in 1883 were carried out by Chinese labourers, except for a small number of projects which were undertaken by low-ranking reserve soldiers or freed convicts (*Trudy* 1903). By 1911, 60% of workers in the building of military establishments, 48% of those on the Ussuri Railway construction, 87% of miners, 67% of timber workers, 38% of workers in mills and sawmills, and 42% of workers in shipping and transportation companies were Chinese (*Materialy* 1911). The total number of Chinese workers in the Amur and Maritime Provinces was 42,535 (*ibid.*). Many Chinese industrial enterprises were created, and only Chinese workers laboured there.

When outsiders were hired, they nearly always held low-skill, manual positions. This remains no less true today. In some of the Chinese restaurants outside New York City's Chinatown, for instance, white Americans were hired in the 1980s as waiting staff and kitchen aides (Wong 1982), while the core group had to be Chinese. Similarly, local workers employed in Chinese shops in Cape Verde are responsible for assisting customers (owing to the language barrier between shop owners and local clientele) and guard against shoplifting. There is no evidence of Cape Verdean workers being entrusted with the handling of money or being elevated to managerial positions (Haugen and Carling 2005). In Zambia, too, numerous Zambian-run shops, particularly those in and around large markets, are de facto owned by Chinese businesspeople. While Zambian employees assist customers and attend to the upkeep of the shop, all activities remain coordinated by the (Chinese)

owners who have their offices on the outskirts of the large markets. In a similar vein, Peter Kragelund observes that while some Chinese companies, especially those concentrated in Zambia's construction sector, are de jure Zambian (i.e. a Zambian citizen owns 51% or more of the company's shares), the Zambian partner is in fact only a smokescreen used to obtain tenders specifically targeted at Zambian SMEs. The de jure Zambian firms, then, are actually de facto Chinese (Kragelund 2008, p. 7).

Despite, furthermore, the passage of the 2006 Citizens Economic Empowerment Act which, among other provisions, legislates for a required minimum level of participation by the local population, Chinese companies like Qingdao Construction Group Corporation, China Jiangsu International Economic TC, and Hunan Construction Engineering Group Corporation continue to recruit employees from China. This is much to the detriment and displeasure of local Zambians who are frequently left without work, or otherwise left to labour under very poor conditions.

Chinese labour practices in Zambia

Coupled with the centrality of trust and *guanxi* in informing the Chinese preference for co-ethnic employment in Zambia and elsewhere, research emanating from the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship suggests yet another reason for the continued use of compatriots as a key source of labour, even where large numbers of indigenous workers, often willing to work for low pay, exist. Simply stated, the use of co-nationals is instrumental. The need to complete tasks as quickly as possible and with minimum complication demands mutual understanding and cooperation. As an employee of the China National Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Corporation explains:

If my supervisor gives me a task to finish in two hours, I work hard to finish it in one. If I give an African a task to finish in a day and at the end of the day ask him if it is finished, the response often is '*Insha'Allah*' and the task remains unfinished. (Personal communication, Beijing, September 2007)

Moreover, because in Zambia it is quite common for workers to enter into employment without possessing any appropriate skills (Haan 2002), Zambians are often ill equipped to properly execute the duties demanded of them. This in turn renders co-national employment an increasingly attractive option for the Chinese.

In early 2007 there were 52 Zambian employees on permanent contracts in Chambishi mine, compared to 180 Chinese employees. Of the others employed directly by the NFC, 687 were on contracts varying in duration from one to five years. The remaining 100 or so employees hired directly by NFC were classified as casual workers, with no job security and generally poor conditions of employment compared to other employees (Fraser and Lungu 2007). Zambian workers in Chambishi mine are paid less than the minimum wage and are often laid off before their period of work reaches the stipulated six-month minimum. These conditions are widely at odds with commitments made by NFC in its development agreement. For example, in this agreement the NFC undertakes the commitment:

[To] take all reasonable efforts in its recruitment and employment of employees in its professional, managerial, engineering and scientific grades ... to bring to the attention of such qualified Zambians, positions available within NFCA [China Non-Ferrous Metal Mining]. (NFCA 1998, p. 14)

Existing evidence indicates that no such attempts are being made.

Violations of such contracts, coupled with the substandard working conditions maintained by Chinese-run firms, have become contentious issues in Zambia, as they stand in direct contrast to the extensive labour protections entrenched in Zambia's industrial relations framework. The basis of Zambia's industrial relations framework originates in the fundamental rights outlined in Part III of the country's constitution, specifically Article 21(1), which states that:

No person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of association . . . and in particular [from forming or belonging to] any . . . trade union for the protection of his interests.

Further legal instruments governing industrial relations in Zambia are the Employment Act, the Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment Act, the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act, and the Factories Act. Together, this body of law provides the legal foundation for employment relationships, including the enforcement of contracts, the protection of wages, the welfare of employees and the termination of employment.

Recent Zambian worker protests against Chinese-owned companies have their basis in claims that these very provisions are being violated (Bariyo 2008). Under the Factories Act, for instance, Section V provides for general health provisions, guaranteeing cleanliness, sanitary conveniences and protecting against overcrowding. Section VI outlines general safety provisions, particularly as regards the training and supervision of inexperienced workers, fire drills, machinery, and precautions with respect to explosive or inflammable dust, gas, vapours, or other substances. Such provisions notwithstanding, many Zambian construction workers do not wear helmets, as they are often required to pay for their own safety equipment, which they are unable to afford (personal communication, Lusaka, October 2007). In April 2005, a blast at Beijing Research Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (BGRIMM) Explosives Plant, owned by NFC Mining Africa Plc, killed all 52 Zambian workers inside. None of the 52 workers had any training in handling dangerous materials and had received none from their Chinese employers; moreover, 50 of them were crammed into a workshop designed to accommodate less than one-third of that number (Michel and Beuret 2009). Indeed, safety standards in China's mines are among the worst in the world, and it is feared that Chinese companies are exporting such hazardous conditions to Zambia and elsewhere across Africa.

According to the China Labour Bulletin, China's domestic mines account for approximately 80% of the world's mining fatalities. There were 5986 Chinese miners killed in 3341 explosions, fires and floods in 2005. Sixteen miners die every day on average, three-quarters of them in the 23,000 small, private mines that produce about 40% of China's coal (Kurtenbach 2006). A Human Rights Watch researcher visiting a Chinese coal mine in 1999 described bulbs dangling from electric wires, which produced little light for the miners forced to walk to the working seams; transport cars were not running; workers wore helmets made of nothing sturdier than bamboo; they dug coal with hand tools, and carried them in a cloth bag to the surface over their shoulders. Officials frankly admitted their fear of fires and gas explosions (Davis and Spiegel 2005). Workers in Chinese factories are routinely short-changed on their wages, have their health benefits withheld and are exposed to dangerous machinery and harmful chemicals. In some cases, workers labour for as much as twelve hours a day, and for as little as US\$120 to \$200 per month (Barboza 2008). With such conditions tolerated in the Chinese national territory, it should come as little surprise that they are reproduced elsewhere.

Zambia's Minimum Wages and Employment Act guarantees K268,000 (US\$52.95) monthly pay for general workers, and K360,000 (US\$70.91) for lift operators. It further

stipulates that for employees other than managers, a working week shall not exceed 45 hours, and a working day shall not exceed eight-and-a-half hours. Yet Zambian workers employed in Chinese ventures are often required to labour twelve hours a day without a break, sometimes for seven days a week (personal communication, Lusaka, September 2007). Zambian workers in Chambishi are also paid less than the minimum wage, with workers at NFC receiving between US\$14 and \$68 a month (Dixon 2006). When workers protested against their wages in 2006, six people were shot and wounded by Chambishi mine personnel, according to a police spokesman, although others more specifically accused the Chinese managers. In March 2008, 500 Zambian mine workers were fired after rioters threw stones at their Chinese managers in response to rumours that members of the Chinese management team were going on holiday. Workers suspected that this was an attempt by the managers to sidestep negotiations pertaining to the improvement of their labour conditions.

The persistence of such poor labour conditions and their consequences, coupled with the continued practice of co-ethnic hiring among Zambian-based Chinese firms, is proving highly problematic for Zambia's labour market, where unemployment is rampant and opportunities for economic mobility few. With the sale of Chambishi mine, employment fell from 56,582 in 1991 to 31,000 in 1998 (Association of Copper Mining Employers [ACME] 1999). In subsequent years, the indigenous workforce at the mine was cut by another third, and total employment dropped to 19,145 in 2001 (Chamber of Mines of Zambia 2005). Statistics from the Chamber of Mines indicate that this figure increased slightly to 19,900 in 2004 (*ibid.*). Moreover, as previously observed, the onset of the global financial crisis has further negatively affected the country's mining industry, with mines being forced to reduce the costs of production, and laying off high numbers of workers in order to do so. In some mines, between 30–40% of the labour force has been laid off.

For Zambians forced out of formal work in the mining industry, the informal sector, particularly in mining and trade, has become the primary source of income. In 1998, the total labour force in Zambia was estimated to be around four million, of which 50% (two million) was in the informal sector (Afronet 1999). Figures from the Zambian Central Statistics Office indicate that by 2005 this figure had increased to 3.6 million, accounting for 88% of total employment in the country (Central Statistics Office, Zambia, 2005). By early 2009, 80–90% of Zambia's working population was employed in the country's informal economy. While further research is necessary, these figures appear to signal the offloading of Zambian formal-sector workers into the informal economy, partially on account of the increased Chinese presence in the mining industry.

Zambia's informal economy and the diversification of Chinese entrepreneurs

Zambia has a large and rapidly growing informal economy. Informal-sector employment is estimated to have grown from 2.3 million people in 1993 to 3.6 million in 2005 (Solidar and the Global Network 2007). Some 88% of all Zambians in work are now engaged in the informal economy: around 91% of female workers and 76% of male workers. World Bank figures indicate that the country's informal economy contributed 48.9% of GNP in 1999/2000 (*ibid.*), and the same amount in GDP in early 2009.

Working conditions in Zambia's informal economy are poor. Many street traders lack basic facilities, such as toilets and shelter. Vendors frequently work in overcrowded markets, characterised by mismanagement and corruption. Many further complain about business instability, as they lack access to loans from financial institutions. Such problems

are further exacerbated by the influx of small-scale Chinese entrepreneurs, particularly textile traders, who have rapidly become active players in the country's informal economy, and whose greater access to resources gives them significant advantages over the Zambians, with their poor networking and amateurish approach, compared to the Chinese.

Much like the Chinese who labour in Zambia's mines, small-scale Chinese entrepreneurs are organised around ethnic enclaves that, apart from providing basic services to migrant communities, function to endow entrepreneurs with key resources such as credit, labour, skills and technical assistance, and information gathering. Enclave economic theory suggests that it is precisely owing to such superior access to resources created through the spatial concentration of ethnic groups that such communities are able to make rapid economic progress, in many cases displacing the indigenous workforce. Such was indeed the case for the grocery sector in Jamaica; Chinese groceries first catered to the ethnic Chinese population, and over time evolved to serve locals, in so doing ousting the native Jamaicans as the shopkeepers of the country (Bonacich 1973).

In Zambia, Chinese entrepreneurs likewise appear to be diversifying into the general market while simultaneously retaining close ties to the ethnic enclave. In Lusaka, entrepreneurs are centred primarily on Kamwala market, where rents are too high for some Zambians. It is estimated that there are over 100 Chinese small-scale enterprises based in and around Kamwala. Although many enterprises continue to cater to the particular needs of the Chinese migrants (e.g. Chinese medicines), a sizeable majority is directed towards the market at large: shops sell items ranging from kitchenware, wall clocks, watches, electric-powered torches, and shaving equipment to handbags and garments. As is the case with Chinese goods in other parts of Africa, such items are manufactured at lower production costs and in larger quantities than Zambian goods, and are generally more attractive to local consumers. According to a 2007 report published by the Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia, Chinese retailers purchase Zambian goods, send them to China and manufacture cheap imitations that they then offload on the Zambian market at about a third of the local prices. A former Zambian textile factory worker observed that:

The cost of production for a single Zambian-made shirt is four to five times higher than a shirt from China. Even though the quality of locally-made clothes is better, a customer will still opt for the cheaper products, because of low wages that the majority of people in Zambia earn. (Mpundu 2005)

Indeed, the influx of cheap Chinese commodities onto the Zambian market has made available to many Zambians goods which they were previously unable to afford, increasing their purchasing power in so doing.

Chinese shops in Lusaka that sell such cheap merchandise generally resemble those found in traditional Chinatowns in South-East Asia and North America: they consist of a single-room shop in the city centre with a warehouse a few miles away and are operated by a single family or several families together. Rooted largely in the entrepreneurial familism endemic to overseas Chinese businesses, the organisational structure of the shops is vertically integrated, with family members occupying management and strategic functions. Though locals may be hired to do menial work, Chinese staff are preferred and are brought from China through legal and illegal means.

Chen-Li Enterprises, a Chinese-owned wholesaler of clothing, foodstuffs and essential commodities located in Lusaka's Kamwala market, is a prime example of such a shop. It is a family-operated firm, established by a group of Fujianese migrants who left China for Zambia to explore the new business environment (personal communication, Lusaka,

October 2007). Business transactions at Chen-Li generally proceed in the following fashion: communication is achieved via body and sign language and shopping lists are transcribed into Chinese; upon transcription the customers (most often Zambian traders) will be taken to the shop's warehouse a few miles away where they can see and inspect the range of goods that they want; after inspection, the goods are loaded into the transport van and taken back to Chen-Li in Kamwala where the transactions are concluded. In 2007 when fieldwork was conducted, all workers employed in the shop were native Chinese.

While studies on the existence of such Chinese ventures in Africa are few to date, a general picture of how they emerge and operate can be obtained from examples in Europe and Cape Verde. In the first instance, an entrepreneur opens a shop, selling merchandise at prices that give a reasonable profit, undermining established merchants in the area through greater access to supplies in China and/or exploitation of family labour. A diverse collection of stock is packed inside the four walls of the shop, all presided over by the owner, who sits behind the counter. The success of the first shopkeeper inspires others to open similar shops nearby, which within a few years drive down profits and force diversification and sometimes closure. This pattern of development, known as the 'flying geese' paradigm (Brautigam 2007), has been repeated in different geographical locations and industrial sectors. In Britain, the growth of the Chinese restaurant sector in the 1980s grew from the old Chinatowns in London and Liverpool to new Chinatowns in other large cities, such as Birmingham and Manchester. The next stage was towards single restaurants outside Chinatowns; the last stage was the large-scale entry to the cheap fast-food sector, where Chinese take-away restaurants replaced or complemented fish and chip shops (Haugen and Carling 2005). In Cape Verde, the first Chinese shop opened in Praia in 1995. Since 2007, there are Chinese shops in every urban centre in the country, and on certain streets in the country's two major cities, almost every second establishment is a Chinese shop (Bhandari 2007).

Such rapid proliferation of Chinese enterprises lends credence to enclave economic theories that posit that the spatial proximity and subsequently networked ties between immigrant entrepreneurs endow them with comparative advantages that enable them to rapidly expand their ventures and succeed economically. The contradiction is that ethnic enclaves offer opportunity for some ethnic people through the exploitation of others of the same ethnicity. In Zambia, the emergence of Chinese enclaves and their respective businesses seems to be having the effect of crowding out local enterprises: for example, Zambian textile producers and traders are experiencing reduced sales volumes and employment levels (Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia 2007). In personal interviews conducted with Zambian entrepreneurs in Kamwala Market in 2007, several textile producers confessed that they were contemplating either manufacturing cheap, low-quality products so as to compete with Chinese retailers, or stopping production altogether. Similarly, many shop owners have been forced to close their businesses, making more Zambians unemployed.

Such realities are largely the consequence of the competitive advantages enjoyed by overseas Chinese entrepreneurs. Productive externalities resulting from *guanxi* networks provide entrepreneurs with the start-up capital, market information, technologies, and labour necessary to sustain their enterprises. In Zambia, the ACCZ and CCIPT further play a pivotal role in endowing entrepreneurs with the resources essential for establishing and sustaining business ventures; members frequently travel to China to import materials and goods that are then sold in Chinese shops. Likewise, the Zambian branch of the Bank of China, established in 1997 by political decree, helps to pave the way for Chinese entrepreneurs in Zambia. While the branch's foremost activities centre on investments in the mining and construction sectors through cheap loans for capital investment, the

branch also serves to facilitate the daily financial operations of a broad range of Chinese enterprises in Zambia, both on the macro and micro levels (personal communication, Lusaka, October 2007).

Zambian entrepreneurs in the country's informal sector, on the other hand, generally lack market information and access to key technologies; because they are unable to readily access working capital, credit has to be obtained from informal sources such as friends and relatives, or non-banking financial agencies with favourable terms. As Deborah Brautigam aptly observes (2003), African networks have generally failed to produce the sort of strong linkages emblematic of Asian networks, thus limiting the possibility for the procurement of key resources and for collective action among enterprises. Where such networks are formed, they generally link back to rural markets where outdated technologies and strategies persist.

In an attempt to overcome such hindrances, the Alliance for Zambian Informal Economy Associations (AZIEA) was established in 2001. AZIEA is an umbrella body of 13 organisations representing street traders, market vendors and other workers in the informal economy, and is formally affiliated to the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions. AZIEA has as its objective the political representation of the country's informal-sector workers, as well as aiming to bring informal-sector labour conditions in line with those set out in Zambia's extensive industrial relations framework. AZIEA members are mostly street and market vendors, many of them former miners in the Copperbelt who were laid off as the mines closed. Yet, while there is little denying the merits of an organisation such as AZIEA, it appears to do little to endow informal-sector workers with the resources, such as credit and information, which they need to compete viably with the well-networked Chinese. As such, workers in Zambia's informal economy are usually left struggling, with many forced to close their businesses down in the face of a growing Chinese presence.

Conclusion

The ramifications of China's recent engagement with Zambia extend beyond mere government-to-government relations, and have significant implications for the country's formal and informal labour force. In the formal economy, in particular in the mining industry, co-ethnic employment and sub-standard labour conditions exacerbate the country's growing unemployment figures. In the informal economy, too, the competitive advantages enjoyed by Chinese entrepreneurs by virtue of their *guanxi* ties and their enclave structure facilitate the displacement of their Zambian counterparts. Consequently, increasing numbers of Zambians are left without employment and hence a means of securing sustainable livelihoods. Despite the Zambian government's emphasis on job creation, the unabated perpetuation of such Chinese activities may in fact impede the government's development agenda.

This is not to suggest that the Chinese presence in Zambia contributes only negatively to the Zambian economy. The creation, albeit limited, of jobs, the increase in Zambian purchasing power resulting from the introduction of cheap Chinese goods, and the construction of key infrastructure projects are just three of the positive outcomes resulting from the growing Chinese presence. In 2003, for instance, the Chinese firm Qingdao New Textiles Industry established a company called Chipata Cotton Company in the Eastern Province of Zambia for the purpose of producing cotton, seed cotton and other products. The company processes approximately 15,000 tonnes of seed cotton annually and has increased employment opportunities for local Zambians. In 2004, Chipata started a registration process targeting 20,000 small-scale cotton farmers to work with the company, a move that would affect a sizeable proportion of Zambia's labour force (*Times of Zambia* 2004).

Similarly, in June 2009 China NFC took charge of Luanshya Copper Mines where production halted in November 2008 following a drop in copper prices. China NFC has promised to use the US\$400 million investment in the mines to add value to Zambia's economy by creating more jobs and restoring the mines to profitability.

Such investments certainly help to bolster the struggling Zambian economy. Yet such deals must be entered into with careful scrutiny; similar commitments, for instance, were made when the Chinese purchased Chambishi Mine in 1998. Only later did it become apparent that the purchasing party, China NFC, would operate under very specific conditions: visas for Chinese workers and managers, low wages for the local workforce, no unionisation, only token taxation, and the stipulation that any negotiation of these conditions must be carried out directly with the umbrella company in Beijing (Michel and Beuret 2009). The challenge for Zambia, then, as for other African states where China is making significant inroads, is the formulation of a policy framework governing Chinese activities. Indeed, while China appears to have a Zambia strategy, and more broadly, arguably, an Africa strategy, both Zambia and Africa lack a China strategy. To date, Zambia has been acting towards China's expansion and investments in a reactive and *ad hoc* fashion, much to its own detriment.

Speaking at a ceremony to break the ground for a new stadium to be constructed by China's Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Company in Ndola, for instance, President Rupiah Banda in early July 2009 urged Zambians to adapt to the hard-working culture of the Chinese people and to refrain from protesting against poor labour conditions (*Lusaka-times.com* 2009). While the adoption of various elements of the Chinese work ethic could certainly contribute positively to Zambian entrepreneurship, such advantages should be acquired within the country's labour relations framework, not in spite of it. As the foregoing analysis suggests, the ramifications of China's labour practices currently benefit few, with a significant percentage of Zambia's formal labour force being transferred into the informal economy. In the informal economy, however, the growing number of Chinese enterprises is crowding out Zambian entrepreneurs, resulting in the closing down of many of the country's informal-sector businesses and in a rapidly increasing unemployment rate. In a country where unemployment stands at 50%, with 86% of the population living below the poverty line, such a situation is cause for concern.

The Zambian government should therefore take concerted strides to regulate and manage the country's growing Chinese presence by strengthening the enforcement of and adherence to laws and regulations governing immigration, labour practices and investment policies. Indeed, Zambia's lax imposition of its regulatory guidelines is among the factors facilitating China's exploitation of the Zambian economy. Although Zambia's immigration law requires immigrants to secure work permits prior to their arrival in the country, for instance, the reasons for entry of the vast majority of immigrants are not examined in this regard until the time of their application (when they are already in Zambia) or request for extension, usually at intervals of two to four years (Mwanawina 2008). Similarly, despite having a well-developed labour relations framework in place, quality and safety measures are repeatedly overlooked by Zambian officials.

Liberal provisions contained in Zambia's investment codes further frustrate the country's long-term economic growth and development. The ZDA Act (2006), for instance, does not stipulate any requirements regarding local content, technology transfer, equity, employment or the use of subcontractors for foreign investors, even if foreign investors are encouraged to commit to local participation. The Act further permits investors to repatriate any capital investments freely, and to send home profit, dividends, fees, and royalties. Such provisions contrast with the government's development agenda as articulated in its

National Vision 2030, the NELMP and the Fifth National Development Plan (2006–2010). Indeed, rather than facilitating the creation of national employment, Zambia's liberal investment codes seemingly do the reverse by creating market opportunities for foreign investors at the expense of local Zambians. The persistent dearth of decent work subsequently perpetuates inequality and exacerbates poverty; given the 86% of the population already living below the poverty line, such outcomes have serious consequences for the country's overall development.

There thus exists the need to simultaneously reconsider several of Zambia's laws and strengthen adherence to existing regulatory guidelines in order to ensure that Zambia receives maximum benefits from its engagement with China, with respect to all aspects of the country's economy. Indeed, the reach of China's engagement with Zambia extends beyond mere government relations and prestige projects; it affects all economic sectors – from mine workers to street vendors. If properly managed, Zambians stand to gain much from this new wave of Sino-Zambian relations. If current realities persist, however, the developmental consequences could be dire.

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Race, class, gender and voice: four terrains of liberation¹

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This article focuses on the complex conceptual and practical terrain offered by the concept of 'liberation', both analytically and practically. It argues that liberation is best considered to be a multi-dimensional process, evoking an approach to its study (and to its practice) that would take seriously its resonance, for purposes of the analysis of Africa, as implicating struggle on the levels of race, class, gender, and (democratic) voice. The article then seeks, with special reference to South Africa, to suggest the costs that have accompanied a collapsing of the meaning of the term 'liberation' into a mere metaphor for national emancipation from colonial/quasi-colonial and racially defined rule. Comfortable as the narrowing of its definition in such a way may be to the domestic elites who have succeeded their former colonial rulers into possession of formal power, it leaves great scope for merely rationalising the imposition of a kind of recolonisation upon the territories concerned and ensuring the continued subordination in class, gender, and political terms of the vast mass of the ostensibly 'liberated' population. In sum, in both political and theoretical terms the concept 'liberation' must be reclaimed so as to permit both more precise scientific investigation and more militant and engaged practical work.

Keywords: liberation; race; class; gender

For most of the participants in it, the struggle for southern African liberation was, perhaps, principally a struggle for liberation from racial domination, as epitomised in South Africa under the term and in the practice of apartheid. Nor is this surprising, given the horrors of apartheid *per se*. Yet this dimension did not exhaust the meaning of the struggle for many of those involved, nor did the overthrow of racial domination exhaust the meaning and import of the concept 'liberation'. In fact, the latter also implied, for many involved, a struggle on three other fronts, with liberation in southern Africa also thought:

- (1) to involve (certainly on the part of some of the movements and notably, at least initially, Frelimo in Mozambique but also, to some degree, the African National Congress [ANC]) the overthrow and/or strong qualification of the capitalist system, defined as it crucially is, by class differentiation and exploitation, both locally and globally;
- (2) to facilitate the realisation of a distinctive measure of gender equality, such a struggle waged in the furtherance of claims centred on demands for a much greater measure of women's emancipation; and

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- (3) to be conceived as the attainment of a meaningful democratic voice, in terms of the genuine empowerment of the entire mass of the population from the bottom up.²

The precise balance between these various liberatory goals (cast in terms of race, class, gender, and voice) was struck in various ways in each of the countries in this region and hence dictates careful specification. But I will tend to focus here on South Africa, the better to exemplify the general perspective I wish to argue for – which is, in fact, the central focus of the present article.

Thus, in spite of the fact that ‘liberation’ has been the focus of my political life and my scholarly preoccupations since the 1960s (Saul 2005), that work continues to present analytical problems which arise precisely from working with the expanded notion of liberation suggested above. How, in fact, should one assess the relative claims of race, class, gender, and voice in any evaluation of outcomes in southern Africa? Of course, no one can doubt, to start with, the importance of the fact that a demand for racial equality has, at least to some degree, been realised in the region, although, equally, no one would claim that problems of race and racism have merely disappeared even, or perhaps especially, in South Africa itself. Nonetheless, although I did not live directly under apartheid and race rule in southern Africa, I well recall, on an admittedly minor note, my first exposure to the White South some 45 years ago when I worked in Dar es Salaam. At that time the way from Mbeya to Sumbawanga and Mpanda on the Lake Tanganyika coast had to lie, by road, via (what was then) Abercorn, in only recently independent Zambia. I found, to the naked eye, a large population – well into the thousands, I guessed to myself – in Abercorn as I drove in and stopped for lunch at a well-appointed hotel. ‘We’re full up’, said the owner, ‘but there’s a place at that table where that chap [he indicated the place] is sitting alone.’ Soon, I was seated opposite a white ex-colonial civil servant still wearing the full regalia of his now transitional post: white shirt, shorts, and knee-socks. ‘Say, how many people live in Abercorn?’, I asked politely in order to launch an informal chat over lunch. ‘Oh, a couple of hundred; there used to be five or six hundred, but . . .!’ A couple of hundred? People? Welcome to the White South, I mused.

Of course, I was to learn a great deal more about this reality by carefully studying developments in both southern Africa and South Africa itself over the crucial years of liberation/anti-apartheid struggle there, including several trips (one made ‘underground’) to South Africa during the apartheid decades. I also lived for periods in both Tanzania and neighbouring Mozambique and was privileged, too, to be involved in Canada in the liberation support movement for many decades. Nonetheless, in all such contexts I was also forced continually to ask myself: can you not talk about the struggle against the palpable horrors of apartheid *per se* while being careful to highlight the necessary interpenetration of self-evident and parallel claims cast in terms of class, gender, and democratic voice at the same time? And if you can and must do all of these things, must you not also ask, quite concretely, whether, at any given time, the glass of liberation so defined is full; or merely half full; or perhaps, at best, half empty. Difficult questions to answer, needless to say. And, equally obviously, the answers arrived at will depend crucially upon just what you mean by liberation!

This is a point that was reinforced for me quite recently when I was invited to become part of a Southern African Development Community (SADC)-sponsored team to help compile a series of volumes on the southern African liberation struggle. My own brief was to cover the US and Canadian fronts of that global struggle. However, at a planning meeting in Dar es Salaam, it became apparent that my operative definition of liberation (as sketched above) was not so very readily acceptable – a point quickly conveyed to

our global research group by the overall coordinator of the project, my former Dean at the University of Dar es Salaam, Arnold Temu, and also by the patron of the project, Hashim Mbita, formerly and for many years the chief executive officer of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Liberation Committee.

For, as we were firmly instructed, we were to concentrate *only* on ‘the first phase’ of the liberation struggle in southern Africa, the overthrow of racial rule, and other phases would ‘come later’. I was not alone in Dar in arguing the sad fact that the very ‘winners’, the new elites who had successfully led the struggle for racial equality, would be those who were often most responsible, in defence of their own class and gender interests and their own political power, for putting the brakes on any continuing deepening of the meaning to be given to ‘liberation’. Indeed, these very elites were to be our paymasters in such a SADC project. Small wonder that it should be feared that such heads of state and other members of their entourages would be less than enthusiastic about raising the issues of class, gender, and democratic voice-from-below in investigating ‘their’ liberation struggles.

I found some breathing room for my own paper by insisting that it would be impossible, in writing about North America for example, to accurately recount the history of the liberation support movement there without seeing it as engaged with developments, real struggles, in southern Africa (and as between southern Africa and Canada) that occurred on the multiple levels I have mentioned. Nor (as was apparently being tacitly implied by my critics) was this because of some ultra-leftist, purist idiosyncrasy on our part. In fact, I noted, we had learned most as to the expansiveness of the southern African liberation struggles from those directly engaged in the liberation movements themselves, notably from Frelimo and also from a wide range of activists at work in South Africa. Recall, for example Eduardo Mondlane’s strong statement to the effect that:

I am now convinced that Frelimo has a clearer political line than ever before . . . The common basis that we had when we formed Frelimo was hatred of colonialism and the belief in the necessity to destroy the colonial structure and to establish a new social structure. But what type of social structure, what type of organisation we would have, no one knew. No, some did know, some did have ideas, but they had rather theoretical notions that were themselves transformed in the struggle.

Now, however, there is a qualitative transformation in thinking that has emerged during the past six years which permit me to conclude that at present Frelimo is much more socialist, revolutionary and progressive than ever . . . Why? Because the conditions of life in Mozambique, the type of enemy which we have, do not give us any other alternative . . . [In fact] the conditions in which we struggle and work demand it. (Mondlane, as quoted in Saul 2005, p. 185)

This is not to romanticise the past or render the liberation movements as mere well-meaning bearers (even if only initially) of plausible utopias. There was a mixed picture in this respect certainly, for even the most promisingly progressive of them (Frelimo, for example) was less clear on the question of gender than on the question of class, and, in its vanguardist self-certainty, not very sensitive at all as to the virtues of and pressing need for a democratic empowerment from below within its own structures and, especially, within its freshly ‘liberated’ Mozambican state. Of course, these are points about the southern African liberation struggle that I have sought to document, in clear historical terms, elsewhere.³ Here, however, I would suggest, as I will further note below, that the ANC in South Africa was, in tendency, even less progressive on many of these same fronts than was Frelimo.

It is the current situation in South Africa, however, that must preoccupy us. Let us assume (although we did also problematise any too-glib version of such an assumption above) that ‘liberation’ in terms of racial equality has, to a meaningful (if qualified)

degree, been achieved with the overthrow of apartheid. What about liberation in the extended sense that I am invoking here? Take, for example, the fact that the economic gap between black and white is narrower than previously it has ever been in South Africa. But note too that the gap between rich and poor is actually *wider*. We have valuable work by scholars like Sampie Terreblanche, Michael McDonald, and Natrass and Seekings to point the way here (Terreblanche 2002, Natrass and Seekings 2005, McDonald 2006). But note also the intervention several months ago by a leading South African prelate, Rev. Fuleni Mzukisi, who charged that poverty in South Africa is now worse than apartheid and, in fact, ‘a terrible disease’. As he said, ‘Apartheid was a deep crime against humanity. It left people with deep scars, but I can assure you that poverty is worse than that . . . People do not eat human rights; they want food on the table’ (Nzwili 2008).

In short, as an African elite is increasingly consolidated in power we seem merely to have substituted for a racist society ever more of a (relatively) colour-blind yet profoundly hierarchical class society. But if this is indeed so, there is the further question: why does this class gap not seem to matter to many people – especially those outside the country, but the elites inside as well – nearly so much as the racial gap once did? Is this kind of ‘commonsensical’ acceptance of dramatic class inequality, in fact, what becoming ‘an ordinary society’, to invoke Neville Alexander’s deft phrase, means in South Africa (Alexander 2002)?

Of course, we had seen Thabo Mbeki disclaim as early as 1984 that the ANC had anything like a socialist project, and even if he then qualified his clear, even soberingly prophetic, statement with talk of the importance of safeguarding the interests of workers and peasants and the like, he did not vouchsafe for even a moment that socialism (real socialism, that is) could be a particularly effective (and indeed preferable) economic development strategy for *all* the people (Mbeki 1984). In fact, we also soon saw Mandela himself, in the very first years of his freedom, shifting ground rapidly. Thus, he moved from the strong affirmation, in his first speech in Cape Town on the day of his release from prison in 1990, that ‘the nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industry is the policy of the ANC and change or modification of our views in this regard is inconceivable’ to the assertion a mere four years later, to a joint session of the US Houses of Congress, that the free market is a ‘magical elixir’ that would produce freedom and equality for all. Here, indeed, was a sobering anti-climax for a struggle for liberation, as defined in any very expansive sense.

Needless to say, striking out in an innovative left direction in South Africa would not have been easy to do, with the global odds of the time so stacked against socialism. Nor is it the case that capitalism is necessarily, for each and every follower of the Mandela and Mbeki line, an unproblematic development option. It is rather that South Africa is said by them to have *no choice*, although there are plenty of South Africans who disagree with that position, ranging from Oupa Lehulere and Trevor Ngwane to Patrick Bond, and including, no doubt, many of those who felt quite comfortable earlier this year to be able to vote for someone other than Thabo Mbeki for president.

Yet the ‘no choice’ alternative is in effect the rationale that Mark Gevisser offers, rather complacently, in his recent much-cited biography of Mbeki, especially in chapters 23, ‘The Diplomat’ and 24, ‘The Seducer’ of that book (Gevisser 2009). This is also an analysis that Ben Turok, in his important recent rethinking of the ANC’s record once in power, seems, at first, to echo (Turok 2008a; see also Turok 2008b).⁴ Thus he quotes an earlier version of Gevisser’s book (Gevisser 2007) with apparent approval, agreeing that, by as early as 1985, Mbeki had concluded that ‘a negotiated settlement [required] a far more liberal approach to economic policy’ than had been the ANC position up to that time, and that,

by 1994, 'he and his government [felt] forced to acquiesce to the Washington Consensus on macro-economic policy when they implemented their controversial GEAR [Growth, Employment and Redistribution] programme in 1996.' Indeed, notes Gevisser, Mbeki's first instructions to Trevor Manuel, upon the latter's taking over as finance minister in 1996, was for a policy that 'called precisely for the kind of fiscal discipline and investment-friendly tax incentives that the international financial institutions loved and that Manuel already believed in' (Gevisser in Turok 2008a, pp. 57–58).

In short, here was an ANC in power with very few remaining predilections on the left. Yet Turok himself has also remained far too honest not to see the limitations of such strategies, set as they were firmly within an overall capitalist framework and with their 'Black Economic Empowerment' mantra actually more likely to produce only some kind of black middle class empowerment rather than 'black empowerment' in any more general sense. In short, here in place were the mechanisms of further class formation and, in effect, of a neo-colonial solution to the 'liberation problem' in South Africa. Has the state, Turok now asks, 'given equal attention to empowering the masses as to the elite? And why has the insistence of parliament on broad-based empowerment brought so little success?' (Turok 2008a)

Yet Turok knows the answer to such questions. Indeed, it can come as no surprise to find Turok in the later chapters of his book backing away rather uneasily from the 'new' ANC's hard-line capitalist position, and himself harking back to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and even, in effect, to positions such as those taken by Eduardo Mondlane above (even though Mondlane's is a position that has long since been left behind by the current Mozambican leadership). For we there find Turok invoking the need to premise socio-economic activity on 'the primary objective in a development society', with this in turn to be defined as a society in which *all* (not only 'full-time paid workers' but also 'part-time workers, casual work and even unpaid work') are 'to be usefully engaged in productive activity, however it may be defined'. Any alternative, he asserts, would be to merely dismiss 'pro-active efforts' on 'the mistaken assumption that ordinary people in the second economy have no skills or capabilities to lift themselves out of poverty, even with state support' (Turok 2008a).

Instead, Turok invokes the possibility of an alternative class dynamics and a politics of progressive change. Yet to truly empower people in this and other ways would also be to view the ANC as capable of facilitating a practice that reaches, in democratic terms, well beyond anything that the ANC in power has taken as a possible premise of social and economic strategy – one that aspires to a radical politics of 'voice' and of 'democratic liberation' beyond anything it has heretofore envisioned. True, we have just witnessed an election in South Africa that suggests democracy to be alive and, if not entirely well, at least much more than being merely formal.⁵ But how far this is, at the moment, from any genuine popular empowerment and from any sense of ownership in their own liberation and their own development on the part of the broadest reaches of the population.

Truth to tell, of course, few ever saw the ANC alone as the possible agent of dramatically democratic practice. In Canada, for example, we were more than a little nervous about its Stalinist tics and its uncertain economic vision. But we saw the positive signs of a popular revolution-in-the-making in South Africa and hoped that the broader movement there, far from requiring a vanguard to guide it, would itself be strong enough to hold the ANC on a progressive political and economic course. Recall, however, a passage from the late Rusty Bernstein, a long-time stalwart of the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP), who wrote to the present author an unsolicited letter commenting on my own somewhat disillusioned piece, 'Cry for the beloved country: the post-apartheid denouement' first published in *Monthly Review* a year or two before (Saul 2001). In this

letter, he suggested not only that he agreed ‘with almost every word of [my article]’, but then went on to give an extended analysis of ‘what is going wrong, and why’, an ‘understanding’ of this being, in his words, ‘the essential precondition for any rectification, and thus for any return to optimism about South Africa’s democratic future.’ His summary:

The drive towards power has corrupted the political equation in various ways. In the late 1980s, when popular resistance revived again inside the country led by the UDF [United Democratic Front], it led the ANC to see the UDF as an undesirable factor in the struggle for power, and to fatally undermine it as a rival focus for mass mobilisation. It has undermined the ANC’s adherence to the path of mass resistance as a way to liberation, and substituted instead a reliance on manipulation of the levers of administrative power. It has paved the way to a steady decline of a mass-membership ANC as an organiser of the people, and turned it into a career opening to public sector employment and the administrative ‘gravy train’. It has reduced the tripartite ANC-COSATU-CP [ANC-Congress of South African Trade Unions-Communist Party] alliance from the centrifugal centre of national political mobilisation to an electoral pact between parties who are constantly constrained to subordinate their constituents’ fundamental interests to the overriding purpose of holding on to administrative power. It has impoverished the soil in which ideas leaning towards socialist solutions once flourished and allowed the weed of ‘free market’ ideology to take hold. (Bernstein 2007)

This is a formidable accusation. As queried above, how different things might have looked if an effort had been made to actually try to achieve – in fact, a short-lived initial goal of Frelimo in Mozambique – a sustained and continuing mobilisation and activation of people at the base of South African society in ways that would be cumulatively productive economically, and also cumulatively transformative socially? Is such active – popular and profoundly democratic – involvement that spills over into an ongoing reality of economic transformation, the positive vibrancy of townships in movement, and gender empowerment merely a utopian aspiration in a real world in which responsibility for such change as occurs is generally left to political vanguards, bureaucrats and corporate executives? Might not any such ‘new realities’ of popular empowerment have helped substitute a sense of active and shared public purpose for, say, crime or rape or xenophobia as motivating levels of awareness and self-consciousness?

Moreover, it is not that such energies do not continue to exist, manifested as they are in a range of popular mobilisations of recent years: the Treatment Action Campaign, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, and so on: all the kind of initiatives, that is, which are so effectively evoked in the slogan ‘We are the Poors’ to which Ashwin Desai has given such resonance in his book of that title (Desai 2002). But what would it have looked like if more of such activities had actually been facilitated by the state and by the ruling party and given expression as part of a planned institutionalisation of agency, from below, for meaningful change, rather than merely premising the (perfectly understandable) popular suspicion of a recolonised state of palpably corporate and new-elite provenance that we now have?

Much the same could be said about the further expansion of the concept of liberation, as proposed above: that which looks towards enhanced feminist empowerment and a dramatic increase in gender equality. What would ongoing liberation look like in this sphere? True, there are aspects of South Africa’s recent past that have suggested a history of distinctive promise in this regard. Thus Shireen Hassim’s excellent book, *Women’s organizations and democracy in South Africa* with its very resonant subtitle ‘contesting authority’ makes it clear that, in her words, women within the ANC, ‘more often and more consistently than any other sector within the liberation organization, opened debates about what a democratic culture might look like’ (2006, p. 114) – the reference here being to

diverse women's efforts at 'shifting, disrupting, and reconstructing the organizational culture and objectives', and this despite 'the limits of nationalism as democratic discourse and . . . the exclusionary and hierarchical aspects of exile culture, particularly one in which military mobilization was favoured over political organization' (Hassim 2006, p.114).

Yet there seems no doubt from Hassim's account that the drive to sustain such a challenge to established power (at once top-down and masculinist) has been weakening. In part, this evidences the drain of feminist activists into parliament and the bureaucracy, a trend that, even if momentarily representing an apparent achievement, has also served to undermine the efficacy of the pressure of organised women coming from below:

The danger of leaving policy formulation and agenda setting to women within the state . . . is that gender issues may become the domain of academics and technocrats, a new elite that may leave behind black working-class women – the 'moral subject' of the triple-oppression approach to understanding gender inequalities in South Africa. (Hassim 2006, p. 265)

More generally and even more damagingly, however, the ANC's 'abandonment of the path of transformation, exemplified [however briefly and] in somewhat imperfect form in the Reconstruction and Development Programme, [has] removed the enabling discursive environment in which claims for gender equality could be pressed' (Hassim, 2006, p. 264). Indeed, Hassim then expands upon her specific point as to the need for the revival of gender-based mass activism into a more general call for the 'reinstatement of "real politics" into democratic [and, I might also add, liberation] discourse: debate about who articulates needs and how they become articulated into policy choices.' Quite simply, she concludes, 'such politics must be engaged not simply by policy elites but also by the voices from below, whose interest in being heard has never been greater' (2006, pp. 264–265)

* * *

In effect, then, we are posing some pretty basic questions here: what is liberation? In what ways and to what extent has southern Africa been liberated? How necessary is, in the words of the title of an earlier book of mine, a 'next liberation struggle'? We must be careful here: it would clearly be very foolish to downgrade or underestimate the scope of what has been accomplished, both in South Africa and throughout the region, through the overthrow of racial dictatorship. Nor should we underestimate the cruel constraints imposed by the fact that the global capitalist hegemony is at its strongest in Africa and that western capital is reinforced in its power by working with and through the complex domestic structures of class and other divisions that the continent has to offer. After all, imperialism is trying too, and it would be sheer 'voluntarism' to ignore the severe constraints that have been placed upon the leaderships of the liberation movements come fresh to power in the region, not least upon those among them who had envisaged other, more progressive, possibilities. We must not, in short, fall into a voluntarist cul-de-sac by ignoring the structures of cooptation that pressed the southern Africa 'liberation-elites' into becoming mere junior partners in the new 'Empire of Capital'.

Yet the danger opposite to that of voluntarism is a far too comfortable form of 'structural determinism' that would allow liberation movement elites to rationalise their own passage into privileged positions within a process of post-liberation domestic class formation with the excuse that 'imperialism made me do it'. No, choices have been made in southern Africa, and they have not, by and large, been choices favourable to the life chances of the poorest of the poor or to their empowerment: to their liberation, in sum. After all, the facts are there, many alluded to above, including the unsettling reality that even if in

South Africa the income gap between black and white has narrowed somewhat, the gap between rich and poor has actually widened; that related gaps along similar lines could be readily documented in the spheres of health, education, food and the like; that democracy has become stalled, even in South Africa, at the level of a relatively passive act of voting rather than an active engagement of people in the transformation of their own lives; that the pace of a genuine levelling up of the role and status of women has slowed to a relative standstill. So, in the end, the question is not merely ‘what is liberation?’ but, to repeat, whether the glass of liberation is best considered as being half empty or half full. And if, as I suspect to be the case, it is at best merely half full, we must seek to identify and to encourage such social forces (and their organisations) as we can realistically expect to engage in a ‘next liberation struggle’, a struggle that will be necessary in order to further advance the cause of African liberation in its fullest, most multi-faceted and most meaningful sense.

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Notes

1. This paper was first delivered at a seminar organised by Andrew Nash of the Politics Department at the University of Cape Town, 13 May 2009; I was in South Africa at the invitation of Ingrid Fiske, also of UCT and the South African Association of Canadian Studies.
2. I have also alluded to this framework, as well as to some of the substantive points that I present here (though in more abbreviated form) in the final section of a related paper (‘Two fronts of anti-apartheid struggle: South Africa and Canada’) to be published in the South African journal, *Transformation* (Saul forthcoming), although, as the title of that article suggests, its main focus is on the links established historically between Canada and South Africa in both sustaining oppression and struggling together to overcome it.
3. Here my argument is primarily designed to argue the case, generally, for a more expansive conceptualisation of liberation and its aftermath than is often deployed, and to underscore the costs, in both scholarly and more practical terms, of not so doing. The historical evidence which I take to document this case is to be found more fully elaborated in several of my recent writings (Saul 2005, Saul 2007), as well as in a wide range of my earlier writing.
4. I have focused on Turok’s book (2008a) both because it is a recent publication and because, like Bernstein’s letter (Bernstein 2007) before it, it shows (especially in its latter chapters) a long-time ANC cadre having critical second thoughts as to the path the ANC has chosen; however, I find Turok’s concept of the ‘developmental state’ in that book, rather like the ANC’s oft-sloganised trumpeting of the ‘national democratic revolution’, an unrealistic evocation of a role for a new ‘national bourgeoisie’ (to, in effect, realize the betterment of all citizens!) that present global conditions make most unlikely to occur – even more unlikely than the revival of a ‘socialist project’, the latter being, in contrast, an ‘historically necessary’ project, if one that only a ‘next liberation struggle’ can render an ‘historically possible’ one.
5. More generally, if rather less weightily, I can even cite *Newsweek* (2009), of all sources, as proclaiming on the cover of its issue of 18 February 2009 that ‘We are all socialists now’!

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The state and the question of development in sub-Saharan Africa

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A common view of the developmental prospects of sub-Saharan Africa is that the crucial obstacle is political. Stronger states and representative institutions are a necessary precondition for development. This is a common view in both the media and in academe. The paper argues that this is to get things the wrong way round. Rather it is development, specifically the *capitalist* form of development, which is the necessary condition for strong states and democratic institutions. This is something which theorists of the state in Africa have got consistently wrong. Strong states require in the first instance neither the overthrow of patrimonialism nor of the bifurcated state. What they require is a radical change in the property relations that tend to prevail over most of the sub-continent: a change that would instantiate a process of capital accumulation but which is unlikely to be forthcoming.

Keywords: sub-Saharan Africa; state capitalist development; land tenure; democracy

In the Marxian sense of the term Africa has ‘suffered’ not from being exploited, but from not being exploited enough; not enough capital has been invested; too few Africans have ever been employed productively enough to create relative surplus value; the reinvested surplus has been too small. (Saul and Leys 1999)

Context

Political institutions judged deficient are common media images of sub-Saharan Africa: a landscape of weak if not failed states, tribalism and civil war, and a sharp disjuncture between the formal character of whatever democratic institutions exist and how politics is conducted in practice. The result of this, it is claimed, is the material backwardness of sub-Saharan Africa: a failure to develop. These views are extraordinarily rife. They have, in turn, found their way into more academic understandings. The state and its relation to society emerge as the central problem: the argument is that given the state’s weakness and the vacuity of representative institutions we should not expect anything other than developmental failure (e.g. Diamond 1988, Chazan 1994, Chabal 1998).

In this article we argue that this is to get things the wrong way round. Rather, the reason that Africa has weak, undemocratic states is subsequent rather than antecedent to failures of capitalist development; these failures in turn have to do with conditions that even the strongest of states would retreat from rectifying, i.e. the dispossession of the vast majority

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of the population in the sense of their separation from the land. Over most of sub-Saharan Africa, people enjoy customary rights of possession in land and so are in a position where they can produce their own means of subsistence.¹ Accordingly, their desire to work for a wage is very limited. Yet, on the one hand, the historical record is clear: it is only with the creation of markets in both labour and land that capitalist development can take off. And, on the other hand, bringing about that separation would be politically fraught. In the African case, not only would it be a challenge to the prerogatives of chiefs, who have the responsibility of granting access to land to married males, but it would also be resisted by the broad mass of immediate producers for whom land is the means of physical survival, and dispossession is to be thrust into a world of great uncertainty, if not pauperisation. It is thus no accident that incipient capitalism has historically been promoted by authoritarian states such as those in South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, which are immune from, or disregard, popular pressures.

In the first part of this paper we lay out an argument outlining why it is that the development of stable democratic regimes, along with strong states, requires capitalist forms of development, and why it is that, in turn, the latter require the separation of immediate producers from the means of production. Capitalist development produces a working class, the necessary resistance of which entails its further deepening. This has its political as well as economic moments, as a labour movement develops and pushes for representation at the level of the state, and as the state, furthermore, and in response, strengthens its capacity to act as an essential part of capital's social division of labour. The paper then turns to the African case.

First, we examine three major theories of the state in Africa, pointing out how they lack that strong material base that we believe to be essential if they are to be defensible. In two cases, those of Chabal and Daloz (1999), and Bayart (1993), the state and its relation to the economy is understood in dominantly culturalist terms. In their view, it is the cultural specificity of sub-Saharan Africa that makes the state an ineffective means of promoting development while at the same time giving it superior attractions over the private economy as a means of enrichment. In the third case, that of Mamdani (1996), the approach assigns a privileged causal role to the political: the African state is as it is – weak and undemocratic – because of structures laid down by the European empires. This is Mamdani's so-called bifurcated state. Little is said by Mamdani about the developmental consequences of this structure – whose existence over most of sub-Saharan Africa we do not contest – though there have certainly been consequences.

Second, we point out at length why it is that, *pace* these theories, and paraphrasing the title of one of the books in question, sub-Saharan Africa does *not* work; why capitalist development has difficulty taking off and, therefore, why we should not expect strong states and flourishing democracies. Our diagnosis is rooted in the general absence of the necessary preconditions for capitalist development: i.e. the separation of immediate producers from the means of production, in this case the land.

Third, we examine two cases in sub-Saharan Africa, those of South Africa and Zambia. South Africa is the case that proves the rule. With the possible exception of Botswana, it is the one instance where there has been a vigorous process of capitalist development, and the concomitant development of a fairly strong state, along with democratic institutions that are arguably stable; it is also the one country in which the separation of immediate producers from the means of production has been most complete. Zambia, on the other hand, underlines the difficulties of political development where capitalist development is relatively weak and confined to a few enclaves having to do, in particular, with mining.

1. Logics of capitalist development, the state and democracy

The connection between stable democratic government, on the one hand, and ‘development’, on the other, has been a staple of the sociology literature (for example Lipset 1959, Cutright 1963, Cutright and Wiley 1969). Typically, this has been a question of establishing a correlation between, first, some quantified index of the stability of democratic institutions and, second, some measure of development – usually gross national product per capita. Significantly, from the standpoint of the argument in this paper, ‘stable democratic government’ is the ‘dependent’ variable in these studies: the effect of ‘development’, in other words. One can score easy points by pointing to the crudity of these exercises, but the relationship is a strong one and calls out for interpretation. As Rueschemeyer *et al.* (1992, p. 29) conclude, after a lengthy review of this literature, ‘One massive result of these studies still stands: there is a stable positive association between social and economic development and political democracy.’

Several related claims can be made here. The first is that the conceptions of freedom and equality underpinning the modern democratic state – in both its modernity and its democratic institutions – are inseparable from the practices of generalised commodity exchange.² Marx himself was clear about it, if anxious to underline the essentially ideological character of the particular meanings of freedom and equality instantiated:

The sphere of circulation or commodity exchange, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, let us say of labour-power, are determined only by their own free will. They contract as free persons, who are equal before the law. Their contract is the final result in which their joint will finds a common legal expression. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. (Marx 1976 [1867], p. 280)

This is fundamental to the creation of a state that, while separate from civil society, has, as a primary function, the protection of these rights. As such it stands in stark contrast to the pre-modern forms of state that preceded it. It entails forms of representation, executive authority and judicial independence that are alien to them. Government could no longer be separate from some popular representation, however narrow that representation might initially be conceived, and, in virtue of an independent judiciary, neither could it act in violation of some body of law designed to protect fundamental rights. In short, capitals would henceforth not only be free to accumulate; they could also have their needs represented, paving the way for a state that would be a necessary part of an overall social division of labour, facilitating exchange, creating educational systems, enabling the construction of railroads and docks, and mitigating class tensions. It is, of course, the sort of state that is absent from most of sub-Saharan Africa.

Marx’s famous quote assumes the production of commodities with commodities: labour power is a commodity so the material practices of bourgeois freedom and equality are universalised. Even so, the proletarianisation of the population did not automatically result in democratic rights. Surplus value was initially extracted in what Marx called its absolute form, i.e. through extension of the working day. Workers’ gains in the form of a shorter working day were capital’s losses in the form of a reduced surplus and therefore reduced profits. As Fine and Harris make clear:

It can be too readily assumed that the establishment of wage-labour heralds the rights associated with freedom of exchange, but these are rights that have to be won in class struggle. The

restriction of those rights best serves the reproduction of absolute surplus value ... The (subsequent) systematic organization of the working class around a program for political and economic emancipation promised grave dangers for the bourgeoisie, unless they could be accommodated through a restructuring of capitalist social relations. (Fine and Harris 1979, pp. 113–114; see also Jessop [1990], p. 176 for a similar claim.)

And of course, those social relations were indeed restructured. This occurred through the introduction of machinery and that constant transformation of the labour process which became such a chronic feature of capitalist development. This is what Marx called the process of the real subsumption of labour to capital.

Democratic rights therefore had to be fought for, and capital only yielded once it felt secure. It is here that the arguments of Göran Therborn (1977) become important. Therborn recognises the essential role of the labour movement in the struggle for democratic rights, but also the fact that democratic rights could only be won in a context of real subsumption, and the displacement of surplus value in its absolute form by surplus value in its *relative* form; i.e. the surplus would be increased, not by extending the length of the working day, but by increasing the productivity of the worker through the capitalist's reorganisation of the labour process. The great fear in the nineteenth century had been that the extension of the franchise would result, through punitive taxation, in the liquidation of capital. However, this was to disregard what Therborn calls 'the elasticity and expansive capacity of capitalism ... Rises in productivity make possible a simultaneous increase of both rates of exploitation and real incomes of the exploited masses' (1977, p. 30). It is that same rise in productivity, moreover, which lays the basis for strong states with regulatory reach. So-called 'failed' states are universally states in which the basis for a sustained process of capitalist development has yet to be laid down and it is no accident that most of these, by common agreement, are located in Africa.

2. The case of sub-Saharan Africa

2.1. Theorising state institutions south of the Sahara

There are three major statements on the state in sub-Saharan Africa: those of Jean-François Bayart (1993), Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz (1999), and Mahmood Mamdani (1996). The first two are of a broadly culturalist persuasion, while Mamdani's understanding is much more statist. They are all informative, if ultimately unconvincing.

Chabal and Daloz focus on the weakness of the African state and a correlative failure of representative institutions. The immediate, though not fundamental, issue for them is a failure to structurally differentiate the state from the rest of society. Rather the state is treated as a private resource by public officials, elective and appointive alike; hence the rampant nature of corruption, nepotism, and downright fraud, as well as the diversion of resources that might otherwise go to building state institutions that would be more effective from the standpoint of economic development. Underlying this is something that they define as cultural, and specific to Africa: the pervasiveness of patrimonialism. State officials retain their positions and their legitimacy through the development of personal networks with clients and these are structured by considerations of kinship, communal affiliation, and ethnicity. They become 'Big Men' in return for a distribution of the largesse they are able to divert to themselves through occupying state positions.

Bayart has a similar view of the state in sub-Saharan Africa: a resource to be plundered for private purposes. At the centre of his analysis he places the same sort of patrimonialism that forms a key element in the interpretation of Chabal and Daloz. He hints, furthermore, at

a similar cultural interpretation when talking about the Big Men or, in his terms, those with 'big bellies' – a play on the sub-title of his book, *The politics of the belly*: 'A man of power who is able to amass and redistribute wealth becomes a "man of honor". In this context material prosperity is one of the chief political virtues rather than being an object of disapproval' (p. 242), although, as he adds, it has to be shared to be legitimate.

Mahmood Mamdani's interpretation is quite different and centres on what he calls the bifurcated state. What Mamdani offers, *contra* Chabal and Daloz, is a more political, even *politici*st, understanding than a cultural one. Under empire, the pattern of European rule was extraordinarily invariant. The colonial territory was divided into two. Indirect rule prevailed in one and direct rule in the other, hence the notion of bifurcation.

In areas subject to indirect rule, the crucial go-betweens were the chiefs who ruled according to some conception, albeit colonial, of the customary or the traditional. Here, the population was tribalised and remains so since this was the criterion according to which the colony as a territory was divided up for purposes of indirect rule and through which claims to land could be made. Tribal tenure was the rule with land allocated by the chief. In consequence, the only way in which market relations penetrated the areas of indirect rule was through migratory labour beyond their boundaries, and through the sale of agricultural products.

In the areas ruled directly by the colonial government, relations were not so much tribalised as racialised. Civil law prevailed and private property was largely in the hands of whites. Whites enjoyed rights of representation in a colonial assembly but Africans were excluded. In some cases this division corresponded to that between the urban and the rural, though in cases like Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, where there were sizeable numbers of white settlers, this distinction was less clear. Even so, Mamdani uses the urban/rural distinction to signal the jurisdictional separation brought about by the bifurcated state.

These arrangements facilitated colonial rule, and not just because indirect rule allowed economies to be made in the use of scarce European personnel. As we have seen, the bifurcated state divided the areas under indirect rule according to tribe. In addition, it introduced tensions between the urban and the rural which impeded the development of a resistance movement. On the one hand, the chiefs would support the continuation of white rule since they were its beneficiaries. Indirect rule provided them with all manner of income – court fees, forced labour and other exactions. On the other, the interests of detribalised Africans in the urban areas, and those of the more tribalised migrant workers from the rural ones, were not necessarily convergent. The migrant workers had limited interest in the struggle to improve African conditions of life in the urban areas since, as migrant workers, they had little to gain from it. African liberation movements were more often than not seen as a threat to their interests. At the same time, they targeted the chiefs as beneficiaries of the *ancien régime* and therefore elements to be swept away. Accordingly, the problem for the postcolonial state has been, in Mamdani's words, connecting the urban and the rural. Democratic institutions get confined to the 'urban' areas, while the 'rural', in the form of chiefs who marshal their tribal members through their power to allocate land, resists civil rule. At the same time, the chiefs try to tribalise conflict with the urban, defining the liberation movement as an ethnic one in disguise.

In sum, in both Chabal and Daloz, and Bayart³, development, or rather the lack of it, is seen as a consequence of state institutions. For Chabal and Daloz, the need to nurture networks forecloses the possibility of accumulation. Bayart is a little more guarded. While the gist of much of his argument is the parasitic nature of the state in sub-Saharan Africa, and the diversion of resources away from any serious development initiatives, he also talks

about the role played by low population densities as a condition for weak state institutions. This idea, however, is misplaced. Given property relations in sub-Saharan Africa these practices make absolute sense. Where immediate producers remain in possession of the means of production, money cannot do its developmental work. As Marx emphasised, money only becomes capital where there are markets in labour and in the means of production so that workers and the necessary instruments and objects of labour can be brought together. These markets are poorly developed over most of sub-Saharan Africa.

Mamdani is a little more complex. His book bears a strange relationship to the South African case. On the one hand, it is as if that particular example, especially the internecine struggles attending the dissolution of apartheid, were a major incitement to writing the book in the first place. Yet he admits that the strengthening of the structures of the bifurcated state under apartheid, involving the conversion of the former reserves into so-called homelands, were a response to anxieties about the political implications of an African proletariat: permanently settled in cities and severed from its links to the traditional social structures of the native reserves. These are anxieties that make no sense outside of a particularly vigorous process of capitalist development. What he does not say is that the common view in South Africa, and well before apartheid, was that migratory labour was an essential precondition for the profitability of the mining industry (Wolpe 1980), and that, in turn, the native reserves, through their – albeit deteriorating – capacity to provide for the reproduction of workers' families were an essential precondition for the cheapness of migratory labour. This, of course, suggests that far from a particular state structure conditioning development, it was the other way around.

In other words, and in our view, it is the process of capitalist development that should be at the centre of our interpretation when we try to understand political development, not just in Africa, but elsewhere in the world. The obstacles to capitalist development in the subcontinent are the key to its political specificity. It is to an understanding of those obstacles that we now turn.

2.2. The weakness of capitalist development in sub-Saharan Africa

In a nutshell, and as per the quotation at the beginning of this paper:

Africa has 'suffered' not from being exploited, but from not being exploited enough; not enough capital has been invested; too few Africans have ever been employed productively enough to create relative surplus value; the reinvested surplus has been too small. (Saul and Leys 1999, p. 17)

Capitalism has assumed a stunted form over most of the subcontinent. This is due to the fact that for the most part the necessary conditions have been missing. There cannot be capitalism unless immediate producers are separated from the means of production and forced to sell their labour power for a wage to those who have the money to reunite them with the means of production. It is this process that necessarily entails accumulation; the development of worker productivity; that growth in state revenue that allows the state to function as an effective part of capital's overall division of labour; and the emergence of a labour movement pressing for that extension of democratic rights that would allow some mitigation of the social risks its members face.

Given the fact that over most of Africa immediate producers still enjoy rights of possession in the land, i.e. rights to the use of the land but not to sell or rent it out, which precludes using it as security against credit, we should not be surprised at the difficulties that the

accumulation process has faced. This does not mean that there has not been considerable individualisation of land tenure and some impetus towards accumulation through the sale of agricultural products. Bernstein (2007) refers to the emergence of what he calls 'vernacular' land markets: rental and sale without formal legal recognition. There are land transactions in the form of gifts, exchanges and rental, as well as sales by the traditional authorities and significantly conflicts over land, regardless of the dominance of tribal forms of tenure, are in the ascendant (Berry 2002).

These conflicts are in part an expression of an accumulation process, though only in part, since the ownership of land is also seen as desirable in political environments that are often chronically uncertain. Nevertheless, accumulation is occurring and Bernstein (2007) and Peters (2004) have drawn attention to the increasing differentiation among farmers that this has entailed. However, there are clearly also limits to this. Since land cannot be offered as collateral it is hard to secure bank financing to expand farming. This may be the reason why, as Bernstein (2007) points out, 'relative success in labour markets and salaried employment is typically key to the viability (reproduction) of petty commodity production in farming' (Bernstein 2007, p. 18). In other words, earnings from elsewhere substitute for loan finance. Even then, conflicts over access to land, and continuing customary rights, can and will inhibit investment. Accordingly, the differentiation process to which Bernstein refers is likely to be slow. No one can be forced off the land, so the formation of a wage labour force, except in the form of migratory workers leading a semi-proletarianised existence, is extremely difficult.

This incidentally seems to be the major implication of the extensiveness of indirect rule in sub-Saharan Africa. It froze property relations in pre-capitalist forms over vast areas, limiting, as Mamdani recognised, the penetration of market relations, though he did not draw out its implications for blocking capitalist forms of development. The extensiveness of pre-capitalist property relations, and its implications for capitalist development, however, is obviously not an original claim. Others have made the same point (for example, Boone (1994), Saul and Leys (1994), Leys (1994), and Phillips (1977)). Our contribution has been to show how it sheds light on processes of capitalist state formation.

We should also add that it is in substantial contrast to those views of African development that draw on what can be called, after Brenner, neo-Smithian forms of Marxism which privilege the sphere of exchange. Dependency theory has had its advocates for the African case, as in the work of Walter Rodney (1972). By the same token we would not expect, *pace* some optimists, that recent waves of Chinese and Indian investment in minerals as well as the surge of investment in oil will bring lasting development outside of new enclaves. The point is that it is difficult to see how they are going to transform existing production relations.

This does not mean that the more global context has not been important, just that it has not been important in the way that dependency theorists suggest and have continued to suggest (Bienenfeld 1988, Amin 2006). After all, the fact that sub-Saharan Africa is dominated by social formations of a pre-capitalist nature requires explanation, and the colonial experience is certainly part of that. As Mamdani pointed out, tribal tenure was a very significant aspect of the bifurcated state. In those areas under indirect rule, tribal chiefs had the authority to allocate land, typically to married males; private property rights were excluded.

The story of tribal tenure is a little more complicated, however. It was not just a matter of solving an administrative question where Europeans were spread very thinly on the ground. According to Anne Phillips (1977), in the years leading up to the Second World War, the creation of an African proletariat shorn of its connections to countryside and tribe was something feared by the colonial authorities. In the mind of the colonial

administrator, the land question and that of detribalisation were closely connected. In this context, the semi-proletarianisation offered by migrant labour rooted in access to the land was a more attractive one.

Catherine Boone (1994) has come to similar conclusions with respect to postcolonial regimes. Anxieties over the maintenance of political stability have continually trumped the project of an autonomous process of capitalist accumulation. Rather tribal chiefs and clan leaders became absorbed into clientelistic networks of the sort emphasised by Chabal and Daloz, and Bayart, drawing on such resources as foreign aid and the indirect taxation of peasant producers through marketing boards; the latter was especially the case in West Africa. From this angle, Mamdani's thesis assumes further significance. The bifurcated state, and the subsequent incorporation of rural leaders into patrimonial networks, become means through which *évolués* in charge of central organs of the state can maintain control and, simultaneously, line their own pockets through their control of connections with the world outside: control of import licences, of foreign aid, of concessions to mining companies, even of emergency food aid.⁴ In this regard, and parenthetically, there is no problem of connecting the urban to the rural: Mamdani's 'rural' in the way he describes it is a godsend to the 'urban'. But, more generally, the colonial experience casts a long shadow over sub-Saharan Africa, though not in the way envisaged by dependency theory.

2.3.1. *The case of South Africa*

In the context of pressing home these claims, the South African case is in many regards key. First, it is the one country of sub-Saharan Africa that *has* experienced a strong process of capitalist development and a concomitant proletarianisation of immediate producers. There is still some subsistence production in the former homelands, but it is relatively insignificant. For the vast majority of the population of South Africa, even allowing for the substantial informal sector, working means working for a wage. It is the one part of the subcontinent in which the claims of Chabal and Daloz, and Bayart, that class is virtually absent, are palpably untrue. Second, of all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa is the one that can most defensibly claim to have achieved relatively stable representative institutions, and a strong state that has achieved a high level of penetration of civil society. And, despite current anxieties, it has remained relatively free from the sort of parasitism so prevalent elsewhere in Africa; the distinction between state and civil society remains a clear one.

Over sixty years ago, at the dawn of apartheid, the country was already clearly equipped with a state with a deep and far-reaching regulatory power. Much of this was, admittedly, mobilised for seemingly⁵ racial ends. But it was also a major presence in, among other things, white agriculture; industry through parastatals; city planning; and the creation of a modern infrastructure of railways, airports, water and sewerage provision, and seaports. All of this was made possible by a relatively successful national accumulation process, at least until the late 1970s. To this have been added democratic institutions of seeming stability. South Africans have enjoyed a non-racial franchise since 1994. South Africa is the closest that sub-Saharan Africa comes to a successful modern, stable and democratic state.

It is no accident that this has been built on a strong capitalist base. Dispossession of indigenous people has been a constant in South African history. Through superior access to fire-power, and to techniques of governmentality, most of the land surface of what is now South Africa had fallen into white hands by the time it was declared an independent country in 1910. Even so, and significantly for the history of democracy in South Africa and the relative slowness with which it came about, in the areas of white possession there were

large numbers of Africans who enjoyed access to the land, albeit mediated by the white landowner. These were the sharecroppers, known also as 'squatters', and the labour tenants; the latter provided labour services to the white landowner in exchange for access to some land. Completing the process of primitive accumulation was to be a long and painful process.

Accordingly, the expansion of gold mining that laid the basis for modern South Africa was fraught with obstacles. Money capital could be attracted from outside the country, but creating a wage labour force at the low wage rates necessary if the mining of ore with very low gold content, and at considerable depths, was to be profitable, was not easy. A fundamental element of the solution hit on was migrant labour.⁶ This was facilitated by taxes on Africans payable in money and, with the passage of time, increasing land hunger in those areas in which Africans still enjoyed access to land through tribal tenure. Through migrant labour, wages could be kept within the tight margins of profitability confronting the industry in South Africa by reducing the miner's reservation wage; the practice of migrant labour did the trick here since the wage demanded did not have to cover dependants who lived off the land in what were coming to be known as the native reserves.⁷

Nevertheless, and *pace* Mamdani's interpretive framework, the connections between the urban and the rural were not kept within those confines. There was *always* permanent urbanisation of the African in South Africa. It was in substantial part the increasing African presence in cities that led, as Mamdani correctly saw, to the attempt of apartheid governments to intensify the structures of the bifurcated state. This, however, was part of a much larger social engineering project that was eventually to be highly consequential for democratisation in the country.

The ultimate goal was to produce a wholly white South Africa, with Africans enjoying citizenship in what were to be independent homelands erected on the geographic basis of the native reserves. This in turn required a huge effort to expel them from the 'white' rural areas. There were still very large numbers of Africans on white farms enjoying some sort of access to the land; these were Africans that white farmers-cum-landowners could not yet dispense with. The contribution of the South African government, in what was known as 'whitening the platteland', was to complete the process of primitive accumulation and, eventually, the proletarianisation of the African. To reduce the need for African labour on white farms, the government granted subsidies to white farmers for a massive programme of mechanisation. This in turn produced what the apartheid authorities referred to as 'surplus people', who were then 'repatriated' to appropriate homelands-in-the-making.

The effect, however, was to turn migratory labour into the practice not of semi-proletarians who enjoyed some access to land in the reserves but into full-blown proletarians the families of whom could not survive without the continual wage work of some family members in the city. For, in the massive 'resettlement' of Africans into the homelands, there was to be no provision for access to land. This paved the way for the so-called 'career' migrant worker (Crush 1989, pp. 19–20; 1995, p. 25) involved in repeated, year-in, year-out labour contracts. This was in stark contrast to what had prevailed hitherto, where, although migrant workers were engaging in longer and longer periods of migratory labour, this labour was still discontinuous in nature. The initial effect of this was to give enormous impetus to the African labour movement and, ultimately, to the anti-apartheid movement. The number of Africans in unions soared in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Deprived of land, 'resettled' Africans faced a new horizon of uncertainty. At the same time, the fact that wage labour was now their permanent commitment meant that changing conditions of work assumed a new relevance, if not urgency. And while it is true that the national as opposed to the class pole of the liberation struggle came to dominate, the

union movement was of immense significance. Nor was the latter restricted to just the support it gave to the township-based civic organisations, particularly in terms of work stay-aways to put pressure on the government. The union movement secured marked pay increases so that the balance of consumer power began to shift in an African direction: not of dramatic proportions but enough to give Africans firepower in the consumer boycotts which became part of the arsenal of weapons drawn on in struggles with local government in the 1980s, thus sending a message to white small business in particular that the game was up.

This is a history of dispossession, capitalist development and subsequent democratisation repeated nowhere else in sub-Saharan Africa. Over most of sub-Saharan Africa immediate producers remain confirmed in their access to the means of production, with access mediated by the tribe. According to Catherine Boone (2007), some 80% of all arable land in sub-Saharan Africa is currently held in some form of 'customary' or non-statutory tenure. Private property in land, which would open the way for social differentiation, technical development and the creation of a wage labour force, remains a distant dream. This does not mean that workers, however limited in numbers, are politically marginal or destined to lose. We outline below, in the case of Zambia, their significant achievements in the historical struggle for democratisation. Yet, the domination of customary access to land and the reproduction of bounded enclaves of capitalist accumulation put tight limits on class politics.

2.3.2. The potentials and limitations of the working class: the case of Zambia

Of the remaining countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Zambia perhaps best illustrates the potentials of, but also the structural limitations facing the working class as an agent of democratisation. Due to the early development of capitalist copper mining, Zambia has had a vibrant working class, if one that still remains a small minority of the immediate producers. Organised class politics led by the unions was instrumental in the Zambian struggle for independence in the early 1960s and in the popular mobilisations that led to the institution of multiparty democracy in 1991, and continues to play an important role in the country's polity. However, the structural constraints to the universalisation of capitalism in the country ensure, among other things, that class is unevenly developed, and the democratising tendencies of working class politics, despite its significant achievements, fulfilled only partially. This section develops this argument through a brief history of working class politics in Zambia.

Historically, the Mineworkers' Union of Zambia (MUZ) has been the best-organised and often the most radical element of the Zambian labour movement. Copper mining was established in the British colony of Northern Rhodesia, as Zambia was then known, at the turn of the previous century, but its large-scale expansion occurred only in the late 1920s; despite a temporary setback resulting from the Great Depression, it accelerated throughout the 1930s. In turn, the first major militant labour actions occurred in the form of the mineworkers' strike in 1935, and then again in 1940. A lot can be understood about labour politics from the comparative trajectories of these two strikes (Henderson 1973, 1975), particularly regarding the replacement of ethnicity by class as the hinge on which workers' politics operated. Very briefly, the 1935 strike was a response to increased poll taxes that every adult African was supposed to pay. After reducing the tax during the Depression to account for the downturn, the administration's decision to raise them again led African workers to strike. The action was called by 'tribal' elders, who were the elected leaders of tribe-based worker groupings, a system that viewed Africans through a tribal lens and was, in part, created by mine managers to divide workers along ethnic

lines (Rasing 2002 , pp. 79–81). A leading part in the action was played by the Mbeni Dance Society, one of several such groups representing members from particular ethnic groups, which was responsible for conducting rituals and ceremonies in the mining towns. The strike began in Mufulira but soon spread to other towns on the Copperbelt, in part due to the Dance Society networks already present in those places. In 1935, therefore, workers' organisation had a decidedly ethnic tinge.

The 1940 strike, on the other hand, was precipitated by the perceived insufficiency of wages and therefore came to be known as the 'ten shilling strike'. There were also several more general discontents that helped to spread the strike, including the persistence of the job colour bar, whereby many skilled positions were reserved for white workers. It is interesting to note that the leading role in the 1940 strike was played by the 'boss-boys', or the class of native workers picked out for special training, and which assisted European supervisors. Though relatively better off than other native workers, the boss-boys felt the effects of the colour bar most directly, as it prevented their advancement in the workplace despite the fact that they were well trained and experienced. Further, and crucially, the striking workers removed the tribal elders from their erstwhile role as spokespersons for the workers. The comparative trajectories of these two strikes suggest that class became increasingly salient in workers' actions and consciousness in the Copperbelt. Although precipitated by contingent issues, these actions set the basis for future unionisation and for representation in the state which, in the colonial context, translated into a struggle for political independence. In contrast to many other anti-colonial contexts, where labour was not a significant force and rebellions originated in the countryside, the militancy of labour unions paralysed the Zambian economy throughout the 1950s and was crucial to the freedom struggle in the country (Rakner 2003, p. 49). Workers pressed for the overthrow of the colonial state in the expectation that an indigenous state would take the claims of the labour movement more seriously, apart from redressing pressing matters, such as unfair taxes and racial discrimination. Certainly, after independence in 1964, these and other demands of the labour movement were fulfilled. The other side of the coin, however, was that there was considerable pressure on mineworkers to tone down their workplace demands and accept exploitation in the interest of the nation (Larmer 2002, p.104). Worker organisation in the new one-party state created in 1969 was limited to a single, state-recognised labour union, and the labour movement thus came into increasing confrontation with the state, demanding greater freedom.

Workers continued to be politically active throughout the Kaunda-led one-party state. They were in the forefront of the protests against the initial imposition of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-induced structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1986 which, among other things, withdrew food subsidies, leading to the overnight doubling of the price of mealie-meal (corn flour). They were also at the forefront of the successful campaign to end the one-party state in the late 1980s (Rakner 2003, p. 63), under the umbrella of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD).

Nevertheless, and despite their important role in the broader movements placing democratic demands on the state, overall class politics is limited by historical and structural constraints. The relative numbers of proletarianised workers in African countries are low overall because of the limited extent of capitalist expansion. Among workers, the number of unionised workers has witnessed a decline as a result of the structural adjustment programme, which led to massive retrenchments as the state cut back its involvement in the economy. Even during periods of strength, however, class politics has had an uneven geography, and this corresponds to the unevenness of capitalism in Zambia. As in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, one finds in Zambia a patchy geography of capitalism.

The extractive industries dominate the capitalist economy but are confined to certain enclaves that are intimately connected to global markets and remain mostly independent of the political economy of the countryside. The incorporation of the latter, in turn, occurs as a reserve for labour. The development of the working class, therefore, follows the uneven geography of capital, which means that organised labour as an agent of democratisation is almost exclusively a phenomenon limited to the capitalist enclaves.

Apart from the numerical weakness imposed by this patchiness, it also reproduces the conditions constitutive of the continuing salience of ethnicity and ‘tribalism’ in politics (see Posner 2005), divisions that are used by capitalists to undermine class-based challenges to processes of exploitation. Fieldwork conducted by one of the authors in the North-Western Province in Zambia affirms this assertion. Here, a newly constructed copper mine – the largest in Africa – has set up a system of recruitment for over 1500 unskilled positions that privileges local Kaonde applicants and works through their ‘traditional chiefs’. This tribal system is legitimised by the argument that the Kaonde must benefit from the resources within their ‘homeland’, since they are a tribe that is generally considered ‘backward’ because of the historical exclusion of the region from capitalist development (Crehan 1997).

In contrast, migrants, mainly Bemba-speakers from the more urbanised Copperbelt Province, point to the ‘tribalism’ implicit in the arrangement and appeal instead to the promise of equality latent in their national citizenship. Apart from causing ethnic fissions, this system ensures that the unskilled/skilled division within the workplace is also at the same time a Kaonde/outsider divide, erecting real barriers in the practice of class politics. On the whole, while the labour movement has been a force for democratisation in Zambia, this case, and the unevenness of capitalism more broadly, point to important constraints to the full development of the working class, and with it the potential for universal emancipation.

Conclusion

Inevitably, therefore, the conclusion to this paper has to be rather bleak. There are no shortcuts to development and neither, therefore, are there shortcuts to democracy and away from state weakness. Capitalism has proven itself to be the great motor of development but, in the rather clinical terms of classical Marxism, the dispossession of immediate producers is a necessary precondition and this will generate resistance. A sweeping away of patrimonialism, if that were possible, or of the powers of the ‘traditional authorities’ ensconced in Mamdani’s bifurcated state in favour of a far-reaching democratisation, just will not do the trick; if anything, it will be counter-productive, since it will simply reproduce the barriers to the necessary dispossession and to the disruptions and oppressions that are sure to follow in the wake of a subsequent capitalist development process. The recent histories of South Korea and Taiwan are object lessons in this regard: no democratic road for them.

It is a truism that Africa has been the victim of history. But this is so in more subtle and differentiated terms than might be realised. As a result of a global privileging of ideas of human rights and bourgeois democracy, laying down the foundations of capitalist development has become much more difficult. The end of the Cold War has not helped either. While, as Marx argued, freedom and equality were ideas embedded in the practices of commodity exchange from the start, it would take struggle over a lengthy period of time before they became constitutional ideals. Dispossession occurred in South Africa long before there was a United Nations or global media insisting on what seems to us the futile mission of democracy for all, and on spreading such democracy around the world, regardless of relations of production. The process was completed there but perhaps only just in time;

the ‘whitening of the platteland’ and concomitant ‘resettlement’ could occur without massive rehearsing in the popular media and scrutiny from the angle of human rights. It also benefited from the support offered to the apartheid state by Western governments more concerned about Communist takeover than the sufferings of literally millions of Africans. The same applies, of course, to the cases of South Korea and Taiwan, where severe limits on democratic rights were also supported. From the African standpoint, Fukuyama’s ‘end of history’ must sound like a sick joke; for them, and from the standpoint of that capitalist history that lays the foundations for bourgeois democracy, it never started.

Over most of sub-Saharan Africa, therefore, the immediate future at least of development seems to hold nothing much better than the sort of enclave development we have described in the case of Zambia, and a slow rotting away of the old pre-capitalist relations of production that prevail outside those enclaves. Modernity in the sense of the consumer delights and technical fixes of late capitalist development has penetrated deep into the African hinterlands. As monetisation extends into the hinterlands, intensified by the demands of state taxation, this might release sufficient labour power to provide the basis for some industrialisation. The absence of an agrarian revolution in the countryside, however, will be a severe limit, placing upward pressure on food prices and therefore on wages. There seems no easy way out if sub-Saharan Africa is to acquire those democratic institutions so earnestly desired by most observers, both academic and lay, even while they misconstrue their significance.

Notes

1. Although, as Bernstein (2007) has pointed out, growing numbers are too poor to farm, lacking the money to secure inputs or the kinship networks through which they could lay claim to the labour of others.
2. ‘Generalised’ in the sense that commodity exchange includes the sale and purchase of labour power.
3. In the critical remarks that follow, we treat the three statements on their own terms. They are all generalisations about sub-Saharan Africa and they are all carefully supported by empirical materials from throughout that area, but with appropriate qualifications. The geographical diversity of materials drawn on by Bayart is quite extraordinary. Mamdani, likewise, is keen to demonstrate the universality of his bifurcated state: a feature of colonial rule by *all* the European empires. The one striking exception to their generalising claims is South Africa, and that is taken up below.
4. This might seem to suggest the existence of that comprador class foregrounded by some dependency theorists (e.g. Baran), but in this instance they are situated with respect to a particular set of production relations, a context with which dependency theorists have typically been cavalier.
5. ‘Seemingly’, because the ultimate agenda was a class one (for example, Callinicos [1981], Lacey [1981], Saul and Gelb [1986].)
6. The significance of the migratory form of labour for keeping costs down in a context of gold deposits that posed production challenges is underlined by Crush *et al.* (1991): ‘If large numbers of low-wage, unskilled workers had not been recruited from throughout the subcontinent, there would never have been a deep-level gold mining industry in South Africa. The world’s largest supplier of gold would have been, at best, a minor producer pecking away at the surface outcrops of enormous deep-lying reefs. If a . . . [similar] ore body had been discovered in Australia, Canada or the United States it would almost certainly have been left in the ground because of the inability to mobilise the right kind of work force’ (p. 1). However, it was not the whole solution. In order to prevent wages moving above the migrant worker’s reservation wage, the mines, through the Chamber of Mines, organised what was essentially a monopsonistic hiring organisation, with each mine to which workers were allocated agreeing to pay the same wage (Callinicos 1981, Chapters 8 and 12).

7. Even then, this is probably an over-generalisation. The incentive framework for migratory labour changed quite substantially over its history and with different trajectories in different parts of South Africa. In the early phases of industrialisation in South Africa, in the late nineteenth century and possibly up until the 1920s, there was a thriving African peasantry bent on accumulation through expansion of land under cultivation and the application of modern agronomic understanding. Earnings from mining were a way of raising additional money for this expansion. Fathers would, in effect, borrow money by using the son's future earnings in the mines as security. Only later, as this peasantry was squeezed by legislation, and as land hunger started to grow in the reserves, did migratory labour shift to include married men, and for longer stints of time, than had been customary hitherto.

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BRIEFING

Briefings reloaded: tell us about it

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Editorial Working Group of Review of African Political Economy

Africa is changing rapidly. Cell phones are used to organise cattle-rustling in northern Kenya. A fishing boat registered in Togo fishes illegally in Norwegian waters and sells the catch into Hong Kong. Yet some things have not changed. Despite having roughly 12% of the world's population, Africa still only has around 1% of world trade and GDP. Partly for this reason, some of its states are still subject to limits imposed by structural adjustment programmes (SAPs).

Yet the context in which such SAPs are operating is changing. While the policy probably originated in Russia, Chinese support for the issuance of IMF special drawing rights (SDRs) seems to be part of the shift in economic power to Asia that will probably give African countries a greater say in their own future in international arenas. Prior to the current global economic crisis, the international financial institutions (IFIs) were already beginning to look increasingly irrelevant in the rest of the Global South, as demand for lending was reduced in Asia and Latin America. That meant that they had come to depend institutionally on Africa to justify their existence, while still peddling the same old discredited policies. Now the context for their actions has changed, and they will have to adapt to the new

circumstances. The recent changes agreed at the G20 imply a re-invigoration of the IFIs, but only at the cost of a greater weight in policy-making being given to countries outside the G8.

This seismically altering landscape, which will force analysts to rethink, is one of the reasons for changing the *Briefings* section of *ROAPE*. Given the growth of access to online information about Africa, this section of the journal would lose much of its rationale if it were not able to respond positively to such major shifts in issues and events and to the reconfiguration of economic and political power. This means that postings in the *Briefings* section about events and new forms of analysis are required to keep abreast of the profound processes now affecting most African countries.

Among the major changes being faced are the arrival of the peak in world oil production (which seems to have happened already, contrary to mainstream opinion) and the world crisis of food production. These factors will interact with each other. For example, peak oil means that international agribusiness, which depends on oil for fertilisers, pesticides, transport, and storage will become increasingly unviable. Yet the major economies of the world are not responding to this problem, except by treating parts of Africa and elsewhere as sources of land to increase their own food security. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) food summit, which

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ended in Rome in November 2009, agreed that greater emphasis must be placed on food self-sufficiency for the Global South, but failed to agree to fund the annual bill of US\$44 billion which the FAO stated was necessary to make this a reality.

While we have a view on what issues affecting Africa will be important in the coming years, the *Briefings* section is not here to impose an agenda. We shall undoubtedly be surprised at future developments. Contributors are encouraged to send in material on new developments, whether they be resource wars, El Niño,

access to information in Africa, or whatever.

* * *

Our *Briefings* are intended to stand out from the ephemera one might find on the internet: more reflective, politically engaged, and better equipped to stand the passing of time. The *Briefings* section includes debates and perspectives pieces that will allow for people to take a stance and initiate discussion. We welcome pieces of up to 4000 words, which should be sent to our new Briefings Editor, Gary Littlejohn, at email: work@garylittlejohn.com.

BRIEFING

Nigeria: politics and the end of oil¹

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Discourses on oil are controversial globally. As Chamberlain Peterside has noted, hydrocarbons remain a predominant source of energy supply for the global economy and have occupied the centre stage for over half a century (Peterside 2004), and it is no less the case in the Nigerian context. The case of Nigeria may be accounted for in a number of ways. One, Nigeria is reliant on oil for about 99% of its foreign exchange earnings. Two, the exploration and exploitation of oil have had continuous deleterious effects on the environment and wellbeing of the people in the oil communities. Three, oil exploration and exploitation and the lopsided allocation of its proceeds has consequently led to internal crisis as a result of agitation by the oil-owning communities for a greater share of the proceeds from oil and the adherence to international environmental standards. The crisis has taken on a new militarism – or, in the language of Nigerian state actors, ‘militancy’ – which has had far-reaching effects on the prices of oil in the spot market as well as overall oil exports from Nigeria. It is common knowledge that attacks on oil facilities by Niger Delta freedom fighters had until the current lull cut Nigeria’s crude exports by half. Nonetheless, threats to oil exploitation are by no means from the insurgents alone; more compelling are the realities of alternatives to oil.

Political scientists glibly remark that politics is about the state and what it does. This assertion has continued to vindicate itself in both advanced and peripheral countries. Not even the vaunting of globalisation with its ‘roll back’ mantra has been able to tame the state. What rarely merits emphasis currently is the impact of the base or substructure on the formation of the state. With ‘the end of history’, this is understandable. The claim however does not deny the reality of existing relations of production on a global scale. Indeed oil has largely shaped the nature of the Nigerian state. The various ways in which it has shaped the political economy of the Nigerian state has been described by Teresa Turner (1978) as one involving the multinationals, compradors, and state elites. This is perhaps why Professor Biodun Jeyifo (2009) observed that Nigeria’s political economy is underpinned by oil, which is the basis of its insertion into the global capitalist economy. The Nigerian state by virtue of its sole reliance on oil is a rentier state. The state collects rents from sales of oil and these are merely distributed through the bureaucratic mill where they are appropriated, misappropriated, and stolen outright. Unlike Algeria and Angola, local participation in the production process is negligible. It explains the dependency on expatriates in the sector and the country’s continuing reliance on imports of refined oil products into the country, to the detriment of the country’s current account balance.

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To be sure, nowhere else can the politics of oil be understood better than in the state's relations to the oil industry, the oil-owning communities, and the general citizenry. Apart from the oil majors with whom it is in partnership, the state allocates oil blocs on the basis of patronage or political considerations. Oil theft, so-called illegal bunkering, is perpetrated largely by persons connected to the apparatus of the state. The Ogomudia Special Security Committee referred to them as a "cartel or mafia" composed of highly placed and powerful individuals within society'. These powerful individuals include 'a few criminally minded former military personnel' (*The Constitution* 2007). Furthermore, local consumption of refined oil products such as petroleum, kerosene, and diesel has been influenced by the imaginary economics known as oil subsidy. Often driven by agencies of global governance such as the IMF and the World Bank, it has continued to fuel circles of inflation in an economy in which the informal sector is preponderant.

Lest we forget, the dynamics of oil exploration and exploitation is underpinned by a panoply of legal frameworks such as the Petroleum Act of 1969 which vests the entire ownership of all petroleum in the state. The Land Use Decree of 1978 also vests land ownership in the state. In 2003, the controversial onshore/offshore dichotomy sought further aggrandisement of the federal authorities. In addition, the 13% derivation enshrined in the 1999 Constitution and the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), with promises of a new fiscal regime, transparency, and accountability in the oil sector, also swell the legal nexus. The politics of oil, especially the appropriate derivation formula, stalemated the 2005 National Political Conference that sought to address critical national questions dogging the federation. The dynamics of oil are such that we can in fact talk about the permeability of oil in ways in which Senator Charles W. Tobey conceived of it

in the American context: 'Oil permeates a great deal of our life; it permeates the halls of legislatures, it permeates the Congress' (Engler 1961). Similarly, the Nigerian narrative can be said to be about oil in all things.

In the last decades of oil exploration and exploitation, Nigeria has made over US\$500 billion dollars from oil, but this has not changed the fortune of its citizens as the earnings are in the hands of a tiny percentage of the population who have stolen much of it. According to Paul Lubeck, Michael Watts, and Ronnie Lipschutz, citing Michael Ross, 'Nigeria offers an archetypal example of the "paradox of oil" by which vast oil wealth begets extravagant corruption, deep poverty, polarized income distributions, and poor economic performance' (Lubeck *et al.* 2007).

Given the global crisis which oil consumption has generated, advanced countries have begun in earnest to look for alternatives to hydrocarbon as a source of energy. As Michael Klare has rightly noted, 'given the right investment and research policies – and the will to apply something other than force to energy supply issues – oil's historic role as the world's paramount fuel could relatively soon draw to a close' (*The Economist* 2005, Klare 2008). The United States has made the search for viable alternatives to oil the cornerstone of its energy policy, and production of hydrogen fuel and biofuels like ethanol, methanol, and others is already proceeding at an industrial rate. The last US administration projected the production of about 35 billion gallons by 2017.

As for Nigeria, its proven reserves are estimated at 40 billion barrels. This figure could be augmented by new offshore findings. At the rate of 2.5 million barrels per day, the life index of the oil can be put at about 43 years. This merely brings home the fact that oil is finite and that the well will one day dry up. It is in this

sense that we can talk about oil peak. I have even elsewhere predicted the transformation of oil as energy source in the not-too-distant future (Odion Akhaine 2008).

Fundamentally, the question is: what will be the shape of Nigeria where oil constitutes about 99% of the country's export revenues, 88% of government income and 50% of the GDP? Peterside (2004) also posed the same question and said:

It is safe to expect that in the lifetime of the current under-20 and -30 generation, Nigeria might run out of oil – ‘the goose that lays the golden egg’. What would then be of the body politic? Nigeria losing its oil wealth before ever achieving a significant stride toward industrialising, sufficiently diversifying its economy or creating a viable socio-economic platform for sustainable growth would portend serious trouble of unimaginable proportions. It would mark a truly ‘crude awakening’.

Alanna Hartzok of the US-based Earth Right is more optimistic. To survive a post-oil age, ‘Nigeria will decentralise into economic bioregions. The shape of the future, if we survive, is local-based economy, bioregions, and a degree of global governance.’²

All hope is not lost. However, if the current minders of the state remain in power, the journey may be long. All things being equal, 43 years is enough for a great leap forward. It can be realised with an intense class struggle in which the current minders of state are displaced and replaced by progressive elites who must necessarily reorient the Nigerian economy from its current external orientation. I sincerely hope the new century will not pass us by.

Note on contributor

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Notes

1. Keynote paper delivered at the Second National Consultation Conference on Environment, organised by Environment Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 25–26 November, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Alanna Hartzok, quoted in *The Punch* newspaper, Lagos, 13 July 2006, p. 3.

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BRIEFING

Frelimo landslide in tainted election in Mozambique

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Mozambique's president Armando Guebuza was re-elected on 28 October 2009 with a record vote of nearly three million, while the opposition fell below one million votes for the first time. Frelimo won 191 of 250 parliamentary seats, its highest total in four multi-party elections.¹ Turnout was 45%, similar to 2004, but much lower than 1994 and 1999. The election however was tainted by misconduct, unfairness, and secrecy that brought sharp criticism from both domestic and international observers², and was similar to criticisms made about previous elections. Frelimo's landslide meant that the improper actions were totally unnecessary.

Afonso Dhlakama, guerrilla leader of Renamo in the 1980s and presidential candidate in all four elections, fell from his peak vote of 2.1 million in 1999 to only 650,000 votes this year. Dhlakama retains very tight control over Renamo, and party organisation has collapsed almost completely. He has expelled or marginalised anyone who showed organisational competence or electoral popularity, apparently out of fear of challengers. This led to an important newcomer to the national political scene, Daviz Simango and his Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM, *Movimento Democrático de Moçambique*).

In 2003 local elections, for the first time ever, Renamo mayors were elected in five of 33 municipalities, including the important port cities of Beira and Nacala. Daviz Simango won high praise in his tenure as mayor of Beira, and it was assumed that he would stand again. But at the last minute, Dhlakama chose someone else. Outraged supporters of the popular mayor put together an independent candidature in less than a week. Daviz³ won with 62% of the vote (on a high 57% turnout), compared to 34% for the Frelimo candidate and a derisory 3% for the official Renamo candidate. Expelled from Renamo for standing as an independent, Daviz and his supporters formed the MDM, which attracted some of the more articulate people remaining in Renamo. As a presidential candidate, Daviz gained nearly 9% of the vote – much less than he had hoped for, but more than any third-party presidential candidate and considered a good basis for a party that had fewer than six months to organise. Daviz did not have time to establish a national presence, and his votes seem largely to have been taken from Renamo. In his home province of Sofala (which includes Beira) he won 25%, and exceptionally in Maputo city he won 15%. The MDM will have eight seats in parliament, and three of those were won in Maputo city; one was taken from Renamo but two were taken from Frelimo. This points to Daviz's potential appeal to younger, urban voters.

Frelimo's overwhelming victory on a relatively low turnout of 45% points both

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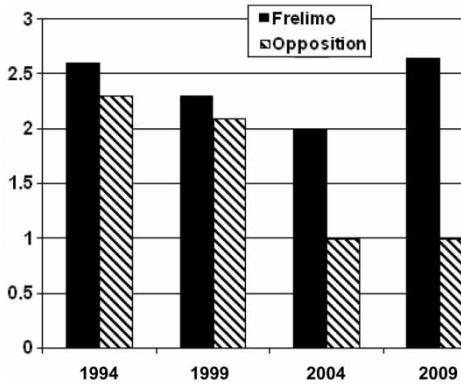


Figure 1. Presidential vote in four elections.
Source: National Elections Commission (Comissão Nacional Eleições (CNE)).

to continued support for Frelimo and to Renamo's collapse, which in turn is due to lack of organisation and its failure to present itself as a credible alternative government. In 2008 local elections⁴, Renamo lost all its mayoral posts, in part because it provided no support to local candidates, who had to run their own campaigns. In Nacala the incumbent did well enough to force a second round, only to lose in the re-run; with proper national support, he probably could have won. In the national election a year later, at a press conference on 3 November 2009, Renamo distributed an internal Frelimo campaign document, to demonstrate improper conduct. The paper was similar to instructions handed out by any well-organised party, calling for canvassers to ensure that known supporters actually voted, that polling station agents were correctly trained, and so on. For Renamo, however, good organisation was seen as blatantly unfair.

Secret and unfair

Domestic and international observers praise the actual organisation of polling day, and the structure of voting and counting is particularly open. Each polling station has a single register book of up to 1000 voters and operates independently; when polls close, the polling station staff immediately count the votes in the presence of party delegates, observers, and press. The results are posted on the polling station door, which makes good parallel counts possible. This year there were two parallel counts: the Electoral Observatory, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) coalition, did a statistically valid 7% sample count, while the state-owned Radio Mozambique spent the entire day after voting simply reading off all the results they could get to. Both produced good projections within 18 hours of polls closing. This both prevents any significant manipulation of the results and gives early indicators of problems. Since 1999, however, observers have criticised the secrecy of the subsequent tabulation process, and in particular the unique aspect of electoral law which allows the National Elections Commission (CNE) to change the results, in secret, without saying what changes are made, and without explanation. Secrecy extends to other issues as well; a full list of candidates and a complete list of polling stations were never published.

Ballot box stuffing and spoiling of opposition ballot papers also appeared to be worse in this election, taking place in an estimated 6% of polling stations. There was significant ballot box stuffing, with turnouts of 100% or more (and nearly everyone voting for

Table 1. Mozambique presidential vote, 28 October 2009.

	Valid votes	Percentage of valid votes
Daviz Simango	340,579	8.59
Armando Guebuza	2 974,627	75.01
Afonso Dhlakama	650,679	16.41

Source: National Elections Commission (CNE).

Table 2. Parliamentary seats in four elections.

	1994	1999	2004	2009
Frelimo	129	133	160	191
Renamo	112	117	90	51
Other	9			8

Source: National Elections Commission (CNE).

Frelimo) in at least 2% of polling stations, particularly in Tete, Gaza, and Niassa provinces. Even the CNE accepted that there were problems, and excluded 104,000 votes (including one-sixth of all those in Tete province). This was done in secret, without any statement or explanation, and was only detected by journalists comparing the results announced by the CNE with those announced by provincial election commissions. Similarly, in at least 3% of polling stations, staff were invalidating votes for the opposition, largely by putting an ink fingerprint on the ballot paper to make it look as though the voter had improperly put marks for two candidates. At least 40,000 votes for the opposition were spoiled in this way; fingerprints should provide obvious evidence, but rather than trying to pursue the perpetrators, the CNE destroyed the evidence. A study of the 2004 Mozambican election carried out by the London School of Economics Crisis States Research Centre reported that: 'The evidence presented favours the conclusion that ballot-box stuffing, improper ballot nullification and organisational failure did indeed take place on a large scale' (Hanlon and Fox 2006).

In this election, the CNE came under heavy criticism from the European Union, Commonwealth and Electoral Observatory for a combination of secrecy, incompetence, and unfairness. The issues came together when a law was passed in April 2009 which required every candidate to present five documents, instead of two as required under the prior law. Officials delayed giving these documents to some opposition candidates. Despite ample time to plan, on 29 July, the final day for

submission of candidates' documents, the CNE was genuinely surprised to receive boxes containing more than 5,000 files, each with five documents. No system had been organised to receive the documents and, as required by law, give receipts for what was submitted. No system had been created to check the submissions, so parties often discovered that submissions were not accepted only when the CNE posted the approved lists, several days late, in early September. In the most controversial decision, MDM was only allowed to stand in four of 13 provinces. MDM appealed against the decision to the Constitutional Council, which ruled in favour of the CNE and against the MDM purely on the basis of a secret CNE document never seen by the MDM or press, and which is contradicted by public CNE documents and was later shown to have errors. Other CNE errors included mistakes in the declaration of final results, and at least two parties listed as standing in the wrong place. One small party, the PDD (Partido para a paz, Democracia e Desenvolvimento – Party for peace, Democracy and Development), was put on the ballot paper for the provincial assembly in a Zambézia district, even though it had not submitted a candidates' list, and won enough votes to gain a seat.

A smell of unfairness hangs over the process. 'There is a general lack of trust in the independence of the CNE, due in particular to insufficient measures to improve transparency', comments a European Union observer mission report. 'The work of the National Elections Commission, as a public institution, must be public. It is the only way to ensure confidence', said

Mark Stevens of the Commonwealth observer team. But Frelimo and the CNE do not agree.

Why?

When Frelimo has won such large victories in 2003, 2004, 2008, and now in 2009, why does it continue with an electoral system which draws such international criticism? The election results show that Mozambicans again placed their confidence in Frelimo, and show that 'the Mozambican people demonstrated a high level of political maturity', said the Frelimo Secretary for Mobilisation and Propaganda, Edson Macuácuá.

In 1999 however, the voters did not show such a high level of maturity, and the vote was very close. Officially, Joaquim Chissano beat Afonso Dhlakama by 204,678 votes, but, curiously, 240,800 more people voted for president than voted for parliament. In Nampula, 80,461 extra people voted for president (Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral, 2001), nearly one in ten of all voters, yet no observer in Nampula ever mentioned a voter putting a ballot paper in the box for president but not putting one in the box for parliament. In Namapa district of Nampula, one-third of voters did not vote for parliament, but no one noticed. Where did the extra votes come from? Former US president Jimmy Carter headed the Carter Center team monitoring the 2004 election, and he publicly questioned the results of the 1999 election (Mozambique Political Process Bulletin 2004).

All that can be said for certain is that the 1999 result was much closer than the official 4.6% of the vote. This was traumatic for Frelimo, and thus some in the party may feel the need to keep additional tools

in reserve, in case in future elections voters do not show the same level of maturity and support.

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Notes

1. Source: National Elections Commission (Comissão Nacional Eleições (CNE)).
2. There have also been three multi-party municipal elections.
3. More details are available from the *Mozambique Political Process Bulletin*, which published 39 special issues during the election period. These are posted on <http://www.elections2009.cip.org.mz>.
4. There is a permanent name confusion: Daviz Simango (with a z) is mayor of Beira and heads the MDM. David Simango (with a d) was elected mayor of Maputo in 2008 and is a rising star within Frelimo. Daviz is not related to David. Daviz is the son of Uriah Simango, a founder of Frelimo who later fell out with the rest of the Frelimo leadership; Uriah backed the 7 September 1974 unsuccessful settler coup attempt against Frelimo and was secretly executed, probably in the early 1980s. There is thus an historic hostility between Daviz and Frelimo.

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BRIEFING

South African farmers in the new scramble for African land

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The Republic of Congo has offered approximately 11 million hectares of farmland – six government farms of 135,000 hectares in the Niari Valley plus 10 million hectares – to South African farmers in an effort to increase the country's food security. This initiative was announced by the Congolese agriculture minister Rigobert Maboundou in April 2009. In the current situation the country, devastated by years of political tensions and economic looting of its resources through a rentier politics, imports 99% of its food, mainly from France.

The size of the area, which amounts to a third of the country (formerly known as Congo-Brazzaville), is approximately twice that of Switzerland, and is said to be suited to producing maize (of which South Africa is the main African producer), soya bean, cotton and coffee, as well as supporting poultry, cattle, and dairy farms. These territories offer favourable climatic conditions, with two growing seasons that would allow commercial farmers to produce two harvests a year.

The agreement – set up among other purposes to attract South African farmers – has been enthusiastically welcomed by Theo de Jager, the deputy president of the farmers' union Agriculture South Africa (AgriSA), in the light of the fact that total South African arable land is only six

million hectares. The agreement is very favourable: it includes leasehold for 99 years at zero cost, while other enticements involve a five-year tax holiday on corporation tax and the dismantling of taxes on the import of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, machinery, and other farm needs (Reuters 2009a, Sustainable-Business.com 2009). This means that commercial farmers would be able to import a John Deere tractor for less than the cost in South Africa, as there would be no tax or import duties. The farmers will be allowed to take all their profits out of the country, and although the project is being labelled as a food-security initiative, they are under no obligation to sell their output on the domestic market. However de Jager argues that 'there is little danger that a large part of the food produced will leave the country again ... The food prices on local markets in the Congo are high. Hence, it will be more attractive for farmers to sell their products there' (Reuters 2009b). It is assumed that any surplus products will leave the country towards the bigger market of the nearby Democratic Republic of Congo and/or to the EU. Furthermore, in order to secure the investments a bilateral agreement was recently signed between South Africa and the Congo that stipulates compensation for expropriation. In such a case, the tenant has to be compensated for investment in infrastructure and loss of income and must receive another piece of land with equal production and income potential (*Farmer's Weekly* 2009). The

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agreement also stipulates compensation in the case of losses due to war, armed conflicts, riots, and other similar situations.

In such a context, what are the benefits for Congo? Besides the fact that the Congolese government will probably not have to import food from abroad for the consumption of its elites because it will be available locally, the government will allegedly benefit from the upgrading of transport infrastructure (harbours, railways, and roads), technology transfer, foreign investment, and access to the credit market. The World Bank and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization have pledged to help with the establishment of new infrastructure and the development of new markets. At first glance, rather than benefiting Congolese communities these kinds of investments seem to be highly favourable in terms of profitability to capital, in view of the *carte blanche* they have on the terms of exploitation of natural resources, including water, the very low cost of rural labour and as a result of the fiscal concessions and duties exemption included in the 'package'. In theory this kind of capital and farmers' expansion, as paraded by the promoters, will bring development. In practice, however, these types of economic and political interventions, implemented in land grabs, are highly unsustainable in ecological and social terms, thereby increasing the vulnerability of local communities.

Furthermore, while in such a context it is likely that South African farmers would find it convenient to exploit the low cost of the Congolese labour force, it is important to notice that their spread will bring the establishment of a pattern of highly mechanised commercial agriculture, with its requirements for fertilisers, technology, times of work, and standardised large-scale production, implying minimal absorption of the existing labour force. In addition nothing is said about the rural communities who used to produce cassava for their own consumption, and who will be removed from their natural environment and

separated from their means of production in order to make room for the new commercial farms, as the land involved in the project is classified as 'underutilised'.

The land deal will be the largest in recent African history, resembling the practices of the colonial concessionary companies that emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century under the ferocious reign of Leopold II of Belgium. This similarity, and the striking continuity with an allegedly past pattern of colonial exploitation, sounds an alarm bell for the future of the continent in the face of a new scramble for African land. In fact this is just a part of a wider process that is taking place on the continent. The conjunctural coincidence in high food prices and low land prices has pushed many 'food insecure' governments to invest heavily in land, and countries that rely on food imports to feed their people are snatching up vast areas of farmland abroad for their own offshore food production. The Gulf States and China are among these, while in Africa it is mainly Egypt and Libya (GRAIN 2008). In addition, the depth of the financial crisis has spurred many food corporations and private investors in search of profits to look to foreign farmlands as a source of future revenue. In this way land is becoming increasingly privatised and concentrated into few hands, giving rise to a neo-colonial, agro-imperial pattern of domination and exploitation. This could be defined as a new wave of accumulation by dispossession, or primitive accumulation going on in the midst of acute global financial and food crises and impelled by the neoliberal attack on the state control of agriculture. Other descriptions further show the plan to be a form of permanent dispossession or plundering, and an ongoing feature of the development of capitalism as a world and socio-historical system.

Returning to the South African farmers' expansion, this will give the farmers the chance to spread risk, delocalise agro-commercial production, and further extend

their reach across the continent. This movement of capital and settlers/farmers, which resembles that of recent years towards Mozambique, Tanzania, and other southern African countries, seems to be among other things also a consequence of internal South African dynamics, such as land restitution, rising production costs, low protection, and other political factors. The dramatic outcome is the undermining of local indigenous modes of subsistence and social reproduction, and the increase in the category of poor and landless people in Africa.

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BRIEFING

After the rainbow: following the footprints of the May 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa

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In May 2008, African immigrants were attacked across South Africa. The violence was captured in a horrifying image of Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave, a 35-year old father of three from Mozambique, who was burnt to death. He had arrived in Johannesburg just three months before the 18 May attacks, hoping to find work in the building industry. The image of this human fireball drew haunting reminders of necklacing during the apartheid years (*The Times* 2008). The May 2008 xenophobic attacks resulted in the death of just over 60 people, a third of whom were South Africans. According to official reports, some 342 shops were looted, 213 gutted, and 1384 people arrested (Crush *et al.* 2008, p. 11).

Much has been written on the factors that led to the violence of May 2008 and the response of the state and civil society to the violence (Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC] 2008, Misago 2009). However, once thousands of immigrants had been bundled off to their countries of origin and the camps dismantled, the researchers and media began to write about the violence in the past tense. Alongside this, both the state and much of civil society stopped any support work once those displaced left the camps. This *Briefing* traces developments after the May 2008 attacks with a particular focus on the

impact on the lives of African immigrants. In a limited number of areas the state sought to reintegrate those displaced. In many of the instances the South Africans rejected attempts at reintegration.

Journalist Victor Khupiso wrote of how ‘on Friday nights in Ramaphosa squatter camp, it’s time for what locals call their “*Kwerekwere*-Free (Foreigner-Free) Society” campaign’. In haunting detail Khupiso chronicles how groups of young people spread out over the camp to hunt down foreigners. One of the young people told Khupiso that he could ‘proudly say foreigners had decided to leave our area because they know what would happen to them if they are found. They would burn. Hell is waiting for them. We have stored some tyres’ (Khupiso 2008). These were not empty threats. The example of Francisco Nobunga who fled the Ramaphosa shack settlement in Ekurhuleni during the May xenophobic attacks was a clear signal. He returned to his dwelling with his South African-born wife, Sylvia Nosento, and survived three weeks before he was killed. He produced a South African identity document, as demanded by his attackers, but it had a Mozambican address (*The Star* 2008).

Nyamnjoh vividly unpacks the significance of the use of the word *Kwerekwere* in his 2006 book, *Insiders and Outsiders*:

To demonstrate that these ‘illegals’ clearly have little to offer, South African blacks, perhaps reminiscent of the Boers

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who named the local black communities ‘Hottentots’ to denote ‘stutterers’, deny black African migrants an intelligible language. All they claim to hear is ‘gibberish’ – a ‘barbaric’ form of ‘stuttering’, hence the tendency to classify them as *Makwerekwere* ... as used in South Africa it means not only a black person who cannot demonstrate mastery of local South African languages, but one who also hails from a country assumed to be economically and culturally backward in relation to South Africa ... In terms of skin pigmentation, the racial hierarchy ... *Makwerekwere* are usually believed to be the darkest of the dark-skinned, and even to be less enlightened. (2006, p. 39)

The violent attacks continued long after May 2008. On 4 January 2009, a horrific attack took place in the centre of Durban. Three African immigrants were thrown out of the fifth floor of a building; two died, while the third, Eugene Madondo, only survived because he fell on top of the bodies of his two friends. Madondo alleged that the local African National Congress (ANC) councillor, Vusi Khoza, led the group that threw him out of the building. In November 2009, Vusi Khoza appeared in court with three others, all of them charged with public violence. The local newspaper captured the first day in court:

While Zimbabwean national Eugene Madondo told the Durban Regional Court how he was forced out of a fifth-floor window to land on top of a lifeless body on the pavement below, city councillor Vusi Khoza laughed and smiled. (*Daily News* 2009a)

Madondo told the court that he heard Khoza tell the group, ‘We are tired of *kwerekweres*. We want to teach them a lesson.’ Madondo alleged that when the group found him, Khoza instructed the group to ‘throw this thing outside’. Madondo was pushed out of the window and, looking down to the pavement, could see ‘motionless bodies’: ‘I knew I was going to die’ (ibid.). Madondo tried to hang on to a pipe next to the window, but one of the group smashed

the pipe and he landed ‘on top of one of the motionless bodies’ (ibid.) He suffered a broken leg and a fractured spine. The case continues.

In the small space of the inner city, tensions accumulate, concentrate, and erupt. The Community Policing Forum (CPF) has equated crime with the presence of African immigrants, and using this institutional base they have raided flats where immigrants live and have thrown them out. Once on the streets, the police move in to harass and force the immigrants to keep on the move until finally they leave the area altogether. The police too, according to Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR), have taken to raiding flats and simply confiscating the goods of immigrants, regardless of whether they have purchase receipts or not. The situation in the Albert Park area is particularly acute because the CPF and the ward councillor have a close relationship and their power reaches into City Hall. Classically, in the Albert Park area one group of ‘local’ poor were positioned as policing agents against poor African immigrants.

The organisations supporting the immigrants at Diakonia Centre have their hands full. Both the LHR and the Refugee Social Services (RSS) are contracted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR). On any one day the queues are long and resources short. Their work is about papers, legalities, and treating each case in an individual way: they are not about collectives and mass mobilisations. These organisations, for example, were opposed to the concentration of immigrants at Albert Park. They could not fathom the strategy of the immigrants: how the immigrants’ stubborn presence exposed the lack of support from the city authorities; how their tents staked out a place in the heart of the inner city; how their continuing resistance in the face of their tents being pulled down and harassment by the police drew attention to the ongoing xenophobia in the city; and how their use of bin bags (intended for rubbish) as shelter exposed the lack of

state support. For the city manager it was a 'problem' that had to be got rid of, and he warned that while the support of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the public was to be commended, 'we also have to take care that we do not perpetuate the situation longer than necessary. A growing refugee problem is something we must try and avoid at all costs' (eThekweni Municipality Durban 2008).

For the UNHCR-supported NGOs, this was just a 'game' that the immigrants played because they wanted to demand a camp so that this would facilitate their rendition to a 'first world country' (Interview with LHR, Durban office, June 2009). For them the rudimentary shelter was not an act of desperation and fortitude but a place of opportunism and conspiracy.

If on the one hand refugee support has become technicised and individualised, the recognition of refugees in the city on the other has resulted in a professionalisation. Amisi and Matate, for example, point to the fact that in its early years the commemoration of World Refugee Day in Durban was organised by the refugee community itself. However on the last two World Refugee Days, the community was replaced in this work by service providers supported by the government. This changed the complexion of the commemoration into 'one for the poor and the refugees often without food or drink, and usually in a tent; and another one for the agencies in comfortable venues such as City Hall, with expensive food and drinks.' As Amisi and Matate laconically reflect, the service providers developed 'a commemoration to celebrate themselves' (Amisi and Matate 2009).

The killings in January 2009 were at the peak of the high-intensity xenophobia in Albert Park, and to some extent the court case has reduced tensions, but there is a low-intensity threat every day on the streets. The city is supporting plans to revamp blocks of flats into sectional title units that will sell for between R250,000 and R400,000. African immigrants without access to papers and

credit will not be able to take advantage of these developments, and the relocation of Metropolitan Police Headquarters will make Albert Park increasingly inaccessible to immigrants. It is one of the last of the commons where African immigrants can meet, lay in the sun, have a view of the harbour and receive a meal from individual 'do-gooders' or faith organisations.

In Johannesburg thousands of those displaced by the violence live in bushes and makeshift shelters. It is estimated that some 30,000 refugees live in terrible conditions in the inner city alone. Some 2000 live in the Central Methodist Church alone (*The Sowetan* 2009).

Takawira Moyo was one of those displaced by the violence of May 2008 (Interview with T. Moyo, Johannesburg, October 2009). He arrived in South Africa from Chegutu, Mashonaland West Province, on New Year's Day 2007 on the run from ZANU-PF youth and intelligence officials of the Mugabe government. He was chairperson of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in the area while working as a clerk at a local bakery. ZANU-PF youth had previously frog-marched him out of his house and beaten him, and this time when he heard that he was to be taken to Harare for questioning, he decided to make for South Africa. After a long trip via Bulawayo, he finally got to the Central Methodist Church in downtown Johannesburg. Already a known figure in Zimbabwean exile circles, Moyo decided to lay low for six months.

After six months Moyo made his way to Springs on the East Rand of Johannesburg and sought to build a business doing painting and welding jobs. He also secured a shack in Paineville and set about building a home. The business began to expand and Moyo started employing three other Zimbabweans. He used some money to start a tuck shop alongside the shack. In 2008 he decided to go back home and bring his wife and two young children to live with him. On the way back to South Africa he was robbed of

all his possessions. He left his wife in a village in Venda and walked from the Limpopo River to Polokwane, a distance of just over 200 kilometres. There he worked for R10 a day until he secured R130 to make his way back to Springs. His younger brother Wisdom had looked after things while he was away. It was May 2008. He later recalled that:

At midnight I heard a noise at the door. I had on a tee-shirt, shorts and socks. I could only wear socks because the long walk from Limpopo River to Polokwane had left me with sores on my feet. The banging on my door continued. I opened the door. The first thing I got was a hard slap. People rushed in. They ransacked my shack. My fridge and television were the first to go, and then all my clothes and the goods in the tuck shop. My brother was stabbed twice in the back. We just ran for our lives.

Moyo ended up at the local police station. He estimates that some 3500 people, mainly Zimbabweans, arrived at the police station. After a week of sleeping in the open they were housed in a big hall in the town centre. Moyo was elected chairperson, representing what he estimates were by then 4000 people. He managed to ensure that his wife and two children joined him.

From the hall the refugees were transported to the Selcourt Camp. The food was often 'rotten' and many people got sick, while health conditions were 'terrible': the toilets were overflowing and had never been cleaned. People avoided the toilets and used the bush, thus adding to the problems. Moyo charges that a lot of things were donated to the camp, but were stored by the site manager and sold off to local people.

Moyo participated in a series of meetings with residents of Paineville to reintegrate displaced foreigners, but the residents refused to allow them to return. The Ekurhuleni Municipality decided to build shacks for many of the displaced in Extension 10 Kwa-Thema, some distance from Paineville.

Currently, Moyo is desperate to find a job to feed his family. There are however other concerns, the most pressing of which is documentation. The Moyos have three children who cannot get birth certificates, as neither parent has an identity card or passport. For them to get a passport, Mrs Moyo has to go back to Zimbabwe; for an emergency passport they will need to pay R2000 and for a long-term one they will have to pay the equivalent of R1500. The eldest child is due to start school, but to register him they need to have a birth certificate. The one document that the Moyos hold on to is Takawira's MDC membership card. He says it is what gives them some hope that one day they will return to a free Zimbabwe.

Thembi¹ arrived in Johannesburg on 2 May 2007 from Zimbabwe (Interview with 'Thembi', Johannesburg, October 2009). She made her way to Nigel, as her mother had once lived and worked in the area and knew a few people with whom she could find temporary accommodation. She shared a garage in Duduza Township with two other Zimbabweans and got a job doing hair braiding. She has a young daughter back in Zimbabwe as well as an elderly mother. Whatever spare cash she had, Thembi sent back home to them.

In May 2008 Thembi heard of attacks in nearby Tsakani. All three occupants of the garage decided to flee that night. They went directly to the police station and from there were taken to Nigel town hall. That night there were no blankets and nothing to eat, and by the morning there were some 300 people in the hall, a mix of Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, and a small contingent of Ethiopians. Thembi was anxious to secure her belongings, however by the time she got back to the garage the place had been ransacked.

After a month they were transferred to the Springs camp. However Thembi's problems really began once she left the camp. She had lost all her belongings and could not restart her braiding business. She

eventually found a job guarding repossessed houses, working seven days a week for R850 a month. When she was in the camp, the residents were asked to apply for asylum, but everyone was refused. Her passport that gave her permission to stay in the country for three months has expired. The card issued by Home Affairs has also expired. For Thembi to get her passport stamped for a further period means going back to the border and paying R800, money that she does not have. She lives 'in pain and fear', as she has not seen her daughter, now aged five years old, for two years. The word on the streets is that after the 2010 World Cup there will be a 'gnashing of teeth', and all foreigners will be chased out of South Africa.

This fear of attacks, especially expressed by Zimbabweans, was brought to the fore by a series of attacks on Zimbabweans in the Western Cape town of De Doorns beginning in mid-November 2009. Most of the South Africans involved in the attacks accused the Zimbabweans of 'stealing their jobs'. The Zimbabweans were prepared to work for between R30 and R40 a day, while the South Africans were usually paid about R60 a day. One of the attackers told a journalist that the farmers were 'scoring', both in terms of wages and working conditions, because the Zimbabweans were prepared to 'work on Saturdays and Sundays and on holidays' (*Daily News* 2009b). One of the Zimbabweans attacked seemed to confirm this resentment: 'They hate us because we work harder than them and we work every day' (*ibid.*). The complaint of the De Doorns residents was apparently simply that 'they are taking our jobs'. It is clear that the Zimbabweans were prepared to work for less than the sectoral rate of R70 and also labour over weekends. The locals responded in a fashion usually extended to those who cross the picket line during a strike. In a country with an unemployment rate of over 30%, where even the most basic elements of bare life have been commodified, if one does not have access to

welfare grants, a job becomes the only legitimate source of cash.

Harold Wolpe's 1972 essay on capitalism and cheap labour power in South Africa describes the apartheid system as not only one of racial exclusion, but also a system of domination and control intrinsically bent on reproducing and elaborating capitalist relations by maximising cheap labour with little financial burden on the state. The increase of economic migrants and refugees in South Africa has a strong parallel to the world described by Wolpe. In this case, however, it is a cheap labour pool *without* rights *within* a cheap labour pool of black South Africans, once again creating a situation in which some members of society are denied rights, without recourse to the state, subjected to a bare life, and in this case policed through violence *both* by the state *and* by other poor South Africans who see themselves as bearers (and possible beneficiaries) of certain rights and concessions through the ANC-led state. In De Doorns, for example, the community was involved in violent protests against the government around the lack of service delivery and consultation over development initiatives. Yet, given the way the demands were framed as 'houses for residents of De Doorns', their concerns translated into a demand for the 'real' residents, i.e. South Africans, and in places like Alexandra and De Doorns fed into xenophobic sentiments.

Meanwhile, while only a minority of the vast African diaspora living in South Africa was directly affected, wherever these people now move – through township street or inner city alley, standing behind a counter in a shop or presenting themselves for work in the Western Cape farmland – the memory of the May 2008 events and the constant threat of further violence lie close to the surface for hundreds of thousands of African immigrants residing among fellow African citizens of South Africa.

Tens of thousands of African immigrants' lives were destroyed by the May 2008

violence. Thembi has not seen her child for two years and, on a meagre wage, will not be able to get to Zimbabwe in the near future. Those evicted at De Doorns live in camps, their shacks destroyed. The Moyos live without documents, in fear of another attack.²

While there was a significant outpouring of support in the immediate aftermath from South Africans for those affected by the May 2008 violence, xenophobic attitudes are widespread. The South African Migration Project (SAMP) surveys conducted in 1997 and 1998 on the attitudes of South Africans toward immigrants and immigration point to strong and growing xenophobic attitudes, as the views expressed were held across class and race lines. In the 1997 survey, 'people living in neighbouring countries' were seen by 48% as a criminal threat, 29% of those surveyed thought they brought diseases and 37% believed they were a threat to jobs. In 1998, some 53% of those surveyed wanted a 'strict limit on the number of foreigners allowed in the country' (Mattes *et al.* 1999). By 2006 the SAMP survey showed a deepening of attitudes, with nearly 50% of those surveyed supporting the deportation of foreign nationals, including those living legally in South Africa: only 18% strongly opposed such a policy. Some 74% supported deporting anyone who is not contributing economically to South Africa; close to 75% were against increasing the number of refugees; and some 50% said they would support refugees staying in border camps (Crush *et al.* 2008).

John Berger writes of photos taken at a shelter for refugees in France, giving us a sense of:

... how a man's fingers are all that remain of a plot of tilled earth, his palms of what remain of some riverbed, and how his eyes are a family gathering he will not attend. (2007, p. 115)

In post-apartheid South Africa most African immigrants will identify with these words, while many South Africans, as the surveys indicate, will have little empathy.

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Note on contributor

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Notes

1. A pseudonym; interview undertaken by author.
2. A focus on the way immigrants are organising is beyond the remit of this paper. Suffice it to say that some communities are organised better than others. The Somalis, for example, have a very powerful Somalia Association of South Africa (SASA) and networks that inform their members of possible attacks. The Zimbabweans on the other hand, with much larger numbers and worried about surveillance by the agents of the Mugabe government, are less organised.

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