

Sudan's uncivil war: the global–historical constitution of political violence

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It is commonplace to characterise political violence and war in Africa as ‘internal’, encapsulated in the apparently neutral term ‘civil war’. As such, accounts of political violence tend to focus narrowly on the combatants or insurrectionary forces, failing to recognise or address the extent to which political violence is historically and globally constituted. The article addresses this problematic core assumption through examination of the case of Sudan, seeking to contribute to a rethinking of protracted political violence and social crisis in post-colonial Africa. The article interjects in such debates through the use and detailed exposition of a distinct methodological and analytical approach. It interrogates three related dimensions of explanation which are ignored by orthodox framings of ‘civil war’: (1) the technologies of colonial rule which (re)produced and politicised multiple fractures in social relations, bequeathing a fissiparous legacy of racial, religious and ethnic ‘identities’ that have been mobilised in the context of post-colonial struggles over power and resources; (2) the major role of geopolitics in fuelling and exacerbating conflicts within Sudan and the region, particularly through the cold war and the ‘war on terror’; and (3) Sudan’s terms of incorporation within the capitalist global economy, which have given rise to a specific character and dynamics of accumulation, based on primitive accumulation and dependent primary commodity production. The article concludes that political violence and crisis are neither new nor extraordinary nor internal, but rather, crucial and constitutive dimensions of Sudan’s neo-colonial condition. As such, to claim that political violence in Sudan is ‘civil’ is to countenance the triumph of ideology over history.

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It is commonplace to characterise political violence and war in Africa as ‘internal’, encapsulated in the apparently neutral term ‘civil war’. Usage of this problematic notion is ‘partly habitual’ but the concept of civil war ‘might also be ideologically and politically convenient’ (Cramer 2006, p. 10). Categorical distinctions such as so-called civil wars are not simply descriptive or definitional frames but rather shape the production of knowledge, including ‘*what* is viewed and *how* it is interpreted’. As has long been argued by critical scholars, ‘classification systems are generally determined by some purpose – they are not “natural” and they should always be questioned’ (Cramer 2006, p. 51). Analytical borders are therefore

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at the heart of much debate (and policy formulation) in the social and other sciences. . . . This is very much the case in the study of violent conflict. Here too what matters is whether or not a set of categories hides more than it reveals. (Cramer 2006, p. 51)

This article contends that the ideology of ‘civil war’ and the assumption that the principal causes of political violence are intrinsic to the ‘domestic’ sphere (that is, predominantly internally constituted) excludes from consideration global structures of economic and political inequities as well as those of social and cultural exclusion. Orthodox accounts of political violence tend to focus narrowly on the combatants or insurrectionary forces, failing to recognise or address the extent to which political violence is historically and globally constituted (Hanlon 2006a). As such, the assumption and privileging of internality lends credence to imperial narratives which aver that the degrading conditions of the vast majority result solely from the ineptitude of certain despotic and self-serving rulers and/or fanatic primordialist groups – while casting the Western-led ‘international community’ as the ‘unconditional protector of all civilian victims, the impartial agent of peace, the zealot of the rule of law, and the promoter of reconciliation’ (Feher 2000, p. 40).

The ideology of ‘civil war’ and the privileging of internality have attained particular salience in the post-cold war period. From the end of the Second World War until the late-1980s, Western powers and their Soviet bloc rivals had systematically projected the logic of the cold war onto most conflicts, thereby investing virtually all wars and insurgencies with a political and ideological stake (Feher 2000). The assessment of these conflicts was influenced by the political allegiance of the concerned parties but the political character and the role of ‘external’ forces in such ‘proxy wars’ was readily evident. With the end of the cold war and the ‘end of history’, accounts of international disorder could no longer be ascribed to an ‘expansionary communism’. Thus, various explanations have emerged to account for conflict and crisis – explanations that ‘have been largely internal’ (Hanlon 2006a, p. 5). Indeed, Chester Crocker, former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, is explicit in foregrounding internality: with the end of the cold war the very nature of conflict changed. ‘Conflicts became internal’ (Crocker *et al.* 2001, p. xv).

Particularly pervasive amongst these parochial explanations of conflict has been the ‘primordialism’ thesis, whereby conflicts are officially attributed to ‘the existence of old and intractable “bad blood” between neighbouring or intertwined communities’, and in a related way, ‘the exploitation of these ingrained feelings by ruthless warlords’ (Feher 2000, p. 40). Although the relative significance of group antagonisms and the actions of self-serving elites varied across conflicts, throughout most of the 1990s,

the leading members of the international community contended that all post-cold war conflicts were about ‘tribal’ disputes – over land, resources, ethnic or religious supremacy, and so forth – rather than rival ideologies and adverse political projects. (Feher 2000, p. 40)

Essentialist accounts of identity politics continue to exert considerable sway (cf. Horowitz 2000, Gurr 2001, Fearon and Laitin 2003). ‘Constructivists’, meanwhile, have argued that identities are not fixed and immutable but rather socially constructed. As such, identities are said to be exploited by avaricious elites for their own individual ends (cf. Brown 1996, 2001, Walter 1999, Nafziger and Auvinen 2002). Despite apparent differences, both narratives nonetheless excogitate ‘identity’ as ‘an internal root of war’ (Hanlon 2006b, p. 110).

Related to this, Malthusian arguments have posited an escalation of inter-group conflict as a result of increasing population levels, environmental stress and scarcity (cf. Homer-Dixon 1994, Kaplan 1994), as have accounts which focus on resource abundance or the

'resource curse' (cf. Ross 1999, de Soysa 2000), as well as explanations based on relative deprivation and pronounced 'horizontal' inequalities between social groups (cf. Addison and Murshed 2002, Nafziger and Auvinen 2002). However, with neoclassical economists increasingly on the analytic warpath, the centrality of individual behaviour and the self-serving actions of elites have tended to dominate accounts of political violence – manifest particularly in the claim that 'greed' trumps 'grievance' as a prime cause of conflict (cf. Collier and Hoeffler 1998, Collier 2000). More recent versions of World Bank analysis have modified this claim, arguing that 'greed' perpetuates war (rather than initiating it), as the imperative of war-financing spawns 'entrepreneurs of violence' (Collier et al 2003, p. 79). Nonetheless, the enduring theme of 'bad leaders' echoes the extensive literature on violent predation and 'warlordism' (cf. Ellis 1998, Reno 1998), such that theorists of post-cold war violence claim 'new wars' to be apolitical: 'Violence has freed itself from ideology.' Contemporary 'civil wars', which constitute a form of 'political retrovirus', are 'about nothing at all' (Enzensberger 1994 in Cramer 2006, p. 77).

The purpose of this article is not to engage in an exhaustive critique of orthodox accounts of 'civil war'. Rather, the article addresses the problematic core assumption of internality which underwrites such narratives. Following Hanlon (2006a, p. 5), it argues that previous accounts of conflict 'have been largely internal.' Moreover, to the extent that 'non-civil' factors are examined, the article contends that the relationship has been construed as external and contingent (cf. Brown 1996, Reno 1998, Levy 2001, Kaldor 2001), thereby failing to grasp the complex organic set of social relations that constitute the global political economy. As such, orthodox accounts of 'civil war' are predicated on an atomistic social ontology which endorses notions of artificially disaggregated and bounded classificatory systems and analysis, whereby given social phenomena can be allocated and therefore understood in one 'domain' or another – in this case externally related 'sovereign' states. Thus, the narrative of 'civil' war rests upon the highly problematic conception of the state as a reified entity, with interests and capabilities analytically separate from the totality of global social relations within which states inhere.

By contrast, the article argues that the sources of the production and reproduction of political violence and war are to be found not only in the 'internal' characteristics of individual states but in their globally and historically constituted social relations. In particular, that political violence is to be located within the long history of imperialism, understood as a system of unequal global relations of power that has prevailed over the past several hundred years, through which the subaltern is individually and collectively governed and through which surplus is extracted and accumulated. This 'power to rule' (Fieldhouse 1999, p. 71) has been and continues to be embodied variously in regimes of governance and authority, military power, finance, property, socialisation, knowledge, and so on. The article does *not* seek to argue that domestic factors are simply derivative of a state's location within the global imperial order. Indeed, accounts of cold-war era 'proxy wars', in subsuming local disputes within the grand narrative of the struggle against 'communism', constituted another means of obfuscating the political stakes of such conflicts (Feher 2000). Rather, the article argues for an understanding of political violence and war as globally and historically constituted, with the 'global' understood not in a Waltzian discrete levels-of-analysis sense, but rather as *mutually constituted* by local, domestic, regional and international relations and exchanges. Accordingly, the abstraction of 'internal' factors constitutes a form of (analytical) violence in that it disassembles and falsifies reality.

Such abstraction does not constitute simply benign neglect. Whilst empirically unsustainable, the claim that the principal causes of conflict are intrinsic to the 'domestic' sphere underpins political *qua* civilisational interventions and world-ordering by Western powers

as the requisite condition for the attainment of the 'collective good'. This includes the articulation of biopower, or 'the right to make live and to let die' (Foucault 2003, p. 241), according to whether Western politico-economic interests are perceived to be at stake. That is to say, the ideology of 'civil war' enables the self-appointed 'international community' to adopt, selectively, a position of 'powerless righteousness' in favour of a professed 'humanitarian', 'impartial' and 'conciliatory engagement' (Feher 2000, p. xi). As such, the ideology of 'civil war' affords a legitimating function in the long history of imperial recourse to moral obligation or duty cloaked in the language of salvation, emancipation, modernisation, development, good governance, democratisation, human rights, peace-building, and so on (Grovogui 2002).

Critique of the ontological primacy of internality is developed through examination of the case of Sudan. As Harir (1994) has noted, 'civil war' in Sudan is commonly portrayed according to essentialist differences between groups based on 'racial', ethnic and religious antagonisms, and/or to the self-seeking behaviour of local elites. Such accounts reproduce the orthodox portrayal of post-cold war violence and war. Esses and Jackson (2008), for example, characterise conflict in Sudan as resulting from ethnic differences between an Arab, Muslim north and a non-Arab or Black African Christian and animist South. Huntington (1993) similarly focuses on the clash between 'Islamic' and 'African' cultures, while Peterson (2000) documents religious antagonisms. Others privilege 'racial' enmities: 'Race – not religion – is the fundamental fault line in Sudan' (Mutua 2004, p. 10), while Lind (2004) invokes ancient and immutable hostilities, claiming that conflict arises from people's fighting for 'their primary loyalty' to tribe and race, as they have done since 'history's dawn' (in Johnson 2006, p. 92). Environmental scarcity factors have also been foregrounded. Sachs (2006) argues that conflict in Darfur 'has roots in an ecological crisis', as does the UN's Ban Ki-moon (2007): 'the Darfur conflict began as an ecological crisis.' Sudan also figures prominently in portrayals of the criminality of 'warlords' and as an example of the predatory social condition/s of the 'new war' economies (Duffield 2001, Kaldor 2001).

The article contends that such accounts are highly partial and analytically inadequate. It argues for an analysis of the global–historical constitution of crisis and war in Sudan. As such, the central purpose of the article is not to proffer new empirical material but rather to contribute to a rethinking of how we understand and make sense of protracted political violence and social crisis in post-colonial Africa. The article interjects in such debates through the use and detailed exposition of a distinct methodological and analytical approach. Specifically, it interrogates three related dimensions of explanation which are ignored by orthodox framings of 'civil war': (1) the technologies of colonial rule which (re)produced and politicised multiple fractures in social relations, bequeathing a fissiparous legacy of racial, religious and ethnic 'identities' that have been mobilised in the context of post-colonial struggles over power and resources; (2) the major role of geopolitics in fuelling and exacerbating conflicts within Sudan and the region, particularly through the cold war and the so-called 'war on terror'; and (3) Sudan's terms of incorporation within the capitalist global economy, which have given rise to a specific character and dynamics of accumulation, based on primitive accumulation and dependent primary commodity production. In examining these questions, the article also engages the more critical literature on Sudan. Such accounts have tended to focus on one or more of the strands of analysis detailed in this article but neglected other aspects. Mahmood Mamdani's (2009) high-profile *Saviors and Survivors*, for example, focuses primarily on the construction of identities and aspects of global geopolitics but remains curiously silent on fundamental issues of production and accumulation. This article seeks to bring the three dimensions together as organically related aspects of Sudan's post-colonial crises and political violence.

Late colonialism and the forging of group identities

As noted above, conflict in Sudan is perceived, experienced and executed, in large part, along 'racial', ethnic and religious lines. To the extent that such narratives ascribe to a primordialist viewpoint of 'timeless antagonisms', they affirm the problematic culturalist account whereby pre-modern culture is proffered as the explanation for ('senseless') political violence (Mamdani 2003, p. 140). Rejecting such essentialisms, the article argues that political violence is made comprehensible by locating it within a global–historical context. As such, 'identities' are significant but we need to understand the process through which group identities are produced, reproduced and (potentially) transcended: 'Even if the identities propelled through violence are drawn from outside the domain of politics – such as race (from biology) or ethnicity or religion (from culture) – we need to denaturalize these identities by outlining their history and illuminating their links with organized forms of power' (Mamdani 2003, p. 136).

*Legacies of the imperial past; or 'when the world was spoiled'*¹

It is in the context of modern colonialism, the process of state formation and Sudan's integration in the capitalist world economy, that salient 'social and economic problems found, if not their origin, then certainly their expression in terms of the modern state' (Khalid 1990, p. 39). With the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest, Britain's interests became paramount in the Nile valley, engendering the radical transformation of Sudan's politico-economic structure: colonial rule and its attendant processes of capitalist accumulation spawned the profound inequalities of wealth, nascent class formation, factional conflict, sectarianism and 'retribalisation' of state and society, uneven development, problems of regional integrity and disunity of the 'nation', that characterise modern Sudan (Khalid 1990, Mamdani 2009).

Across colonial Africa, specific 'native' institutions were forged through which to rule subjects with 'tribal' leadership either 'selectively reconstituted as the hierarchy of the local state or freshly imposed where none had existed, as in "stateless" societies' (Mamdani 1996, p. 17). Colonial technologies of government thereby fractured and containerised 'the singular, racialized and majority identity, *native*, into several, plural, ethnicized, minority identities – called *tribes*' (Mamdani 2003, p. 137). Sudan was no exception but the fracturing of 'tribal' identities was compounded and at times overdetermined by religious, 'racial', regional and class formations, producing complex and multiple fissures.

The colonial regime in Sudan maintained its rule through a combination of brutal military repression together with strategies of divide, 're-identify', co-opt and rule (Mamdani 2009). In establishing its own conditions for exploitation and privileging particular groups, the colonial regime exacerbated tensions between the different regions, and widened disparities between, on the one hand, avaricious modern as well as 'traditional' elites, and on the other, less privileged sectors of society. This, 'inevitably, set the ground for post-colonial class formation and the rise of the northern bourgeoisie that has since dominated Sudanese politics' (Khalid 1990, p. 73). From the outset this was not only a racialised project of colonist and 'native' but also one which adapted antecedent socio-political racialised hierarchies to colonial ends, privileging and co-opting a narrow northern elite which self-consciously identified as 'Arab' (Idris 2004, Sharkey 2008). As such, the *Jellaba* – northern riverine Arab(ised) Muslim religious leaders, merchants, 'tribal' notables, and latterly higher civil servants and politicians – emerged as the 'better class of native' through which the colonists sought 'to influence the whole population' (Kitchener in Medani 1993, p. 204). Their politico-economic fortunes heightened

through British patronage and the manner in which independence was negotiated, these ‘traditional and modern elites have held, for the greatest part of Sudan’s history, a total monopoly on political power, garnering all the wealth derived from the exercise of such power’ (Khalid 1990, p. 11).

Dominance through the colonial policy of divide, co-opt and rule was evident also in the politicisation of religion (Khalid 1990). Indeed, a ‘consciously institutionalised Islamic policy in the Sudan is a British invention’ (O’Fahey 1993, pp. 30–31). Fearful of the Sufi religious orders (*tariqah*) and the possibility of a resurgent Mahdism, the colonial powers opposed mystical Islam and sponsored rival religious orders, exacerbating antagonisms, particularly between the Ansar and Khatmiyya. These sectarian loyalties became the basis of political support for the mainstream (northern) political parties, the National Union Party and the Umma party, giving rise in the post-colonial period to a politics of ‘deep sectarian rivalry based on the mobilization of Islam as a basis for identity in national politics’ (Woodward 1988, p. 3). Christianity meanwhile was also used as an instrument of colonial politics in an attempt to reduce the influence of Islam and its perceived association with nationalist sentiment (Khalid 1990).

In addition to religious leaders, also co-opted were the merchant elite that had prospered throughout the Turkiya and Mahdiyya. Whilst import–export was dominated by foreign traders, northern Sudanese merchants accumulated considerable funds from the export of key commodities – gum, livestock, oilseeds and cotton (Niblock 1987). Likewise, the politico-economic status of northern ‘tribal’ leaders was also considerably enhanced through indirect rule. Reinstated with a highly authoritarian bent, the ‘customary’ authority of ‘chiefs’ (*sheiks* and *omdas*) was vested with specific administrative and judicial powers to dispense certain aspects of ‘customary’ and *shari’a* law largely at the behest of the colonial administration. Able to extract only limited tribute prior to Anglo-Egyptian rule, ‘traditional’ leaders now accumulated funds through control of trade licences and the privatisation and leasing of land – predominantly for large-scale colonial agro-commercial schemes (Niblock 1987, Johnson 2003).

Throughout the vast marginalised ‘peripheries’, the ideology of indirect rule prevailed – particularly in the wake of the nationalist uprising of 1924. As the colonial regime sought to ‘preserve’ the ‘innate’ qualities of native cultures, it sharpened and essentialised inter-ethnic divisions (Salih 1990). Moreover, as elsewhere in Africa, the reconstitution of ‘tribal’ authority in Sudan was frequently ‘an anomalous attempt to “tribalize” people who had no memory of tribal authority or desire to recall it’ (Daly 1987, p. 367). Across the south, indirect rule was deployed following particularly brutal ‘pacification’, but the lack of executive authority within acephalous societies stymied colonial attempts to work through so-called native structures. Differing administrative patterns emerged between the agricultural and pastoralist communities but the administrative structures created ‘owed as much to British innovation as to indigenous custom’ (Johnson 2003, pp. 12–13). Similarly, annexed in 1916, Darfur was subjected to a ‘new regime that was insistently reactionary and determined to rule through “traditional authority” even where there was none’ (Daly 2007, p. 117). After decades of dislocation, destruction and forced migration as a result of colonial conquest, ‘many of Darfur’s tribal units were unviable alone and dispersed from their original *dars*’² (Daly 2007, p. 132). The attempts at amalgamation and hierarchical reordering resulted inevitably in the accession and despotism of ‘supra-tribal overlords’ whose authority was conferred by the colonial power rather than derived from kinship (Daly 2007, p. 133). Moreover, in reorganising the province as an ‘administrative mosaic of tribal politics’, British rule discriminated against so-called ‘settler’ tribes in terms of entitlements to land and posts in the native administration. Such systems fuelled ethnic

tensions between residents in every *dar*, based on discriminatory political and land rights. More fundamentally, it separated ‘tribes with a *dar* from those without.’ It was this ‘tribal’ division pertaining to rights of access to productive natural resources that erupted in the Darfur crisis of the mid-1980s (Mamdani 2009, pp. 166–169, 244).

Related to the ideology of indirect rule was the policy of institutionalised neglect, with the vulgar conservatism of indirect rule inhibiting education and economic development (Daly 2007). In Darfur, for example, modern education was actively discouraged with the partial exception of the sons of *sheiks*. Meagre allocations to the outlying regions for health, agriculture and communications, trapped ‘the poorer regions in a cycle of poverty from which they could not escape’ (Khalid 1990, p. 64). Indeed, Darfur, ‘subsumed statistically with “the North”, arguably suffered even more than the famously neglected south’ (Daly 2007, p. 137). In the latter, the Condominium maintained long-standing practices of exploitation, notably of cattle and ivory, with commerce controlled almost exclusively by foreign and northern Sudanese merchants. Intent on maintaining the separation of north and south, the ‘Southern Policy’ mandated regional *qua* racial segregation, whereby ‘the South was to be developed along “African”, rather than “Arab” lines’ (Johnson 2003, p. 11, Idris 2004). Institutionally segregated as so many ‘tribes’, and isolated from the economy of the north, economic development of the south was severely impeded; formal education was also actively discouraged with the exception of mission schools. Accordingly, when for reasons of political expediency Britain bequeathed independence to a unitary Sudan – rescinding on earlier assurances to the south – far greater disparities prevailed between the north and the south than had existed at the close of the Mahdiyya (Johnson 2003).

Meanwhile, infrastructure, public works, social services and large-scale commercial production schemes were concentrated almost exclusively in the central riverine regions of Sudan dominated by the *Jellaba*. Facing competition from German and US textile production, Britain determined that centralised, large-scale, irrigated cotton production, concentrated in the large-scale Gezira scheme, would ensure a reliable source of high-quality cotton to its industrial mills. Such schemes disrupted agro-pastoral production and rural economies undermining, for example, the pastoral economy of the Beja in the Red Sea region (Pantuliano 2006), and led to widening disparities between the merchant–investor class, and peasants, labourers and (ubiquitous) unfree labour, establishing the framework for social relations in an independent Sudan (Mahmoud 1984, Niblock 1987, Barnett and Abdelkarim 1991).

The colonisers’ technologies of rule and expropriation bequeathed therefore a fissiparous legacy of politicised group identities founded on divisions of class, ‘race’, religion, ethnicity and region. These ‘identities’ constitute important *explanans* of the dynamics of the conflict, but the privileging of ‘identity politics’ *per se* naturalises these socio-historical constructs, abstracting questions of identity from power and history. The British used the policy of divide-and-rule ‘to great effect’ (Khalid 1990, p. 54) and post-colonial regimes have mirrored such technologies of rule: ‘elites have mastered the divide-and-rule tactics inherited from the colonial era through their territorial organization of the modern Sudanese state’ (el-Battahani 2006).

The imperial present: ‘a house divided’³

In contrast to much of colonial Africa, Sudan attained formal independence largely as a result of international rivalry, rather than through the mobilisation of a nationalist mass movement (Freund 1998). Seeking to thwart the Egyptian Crown’s long-standing claim

to sovereignty, and compounded by widespread disaffection in the south and the 1955 mutiny, Britain circumvented the legal process established between the *co-domini* and granted formal independence based on a temporary constitution drafted by the British – eschewing the exigent issues of whether Sudan would become a unitary or federal state and with a secular or Islamic constitution (Johnson 2003).

Embroiled in the rival ambitions of Britain and Egypt, Sudan's nationalists aligned with the two dominant (northern) religious sects to mobilise electoral support, eroding the possibility of developing a broad-based national political movement. Both the Graduates' Congress and the labour movement (by association) thereby succumbed to party political and sectarian influences, being unable to establish organisations which transcended ethnic and religious affiliations (Holt and Daly 2000). The politics of the 'centre' were thus determined by social relations forged in the earlier colonial period. Those who had not been part of these original assemblages of power were largely denied a voice in national affairs. Southerners, for example, were largely excluded from constitutional negotiations and the 'Sudanisation' process. The crisis of national identity which ensued has beleaguered the Sudanese polity, with attempts to 'define and constitute a viable nation' from the colonial legacy of 'many Sudans within a single state' seeking to mobilise social forces behind nation-building projects defined variously as: Arabist; secular and territorial (Sudanist); Islamic; and African. Each of these movements has propagated exclusive as well as inclusive narratives of the nation, fuelling the dynamics of political conflict (Mamdani 2009, p. 174).

The Arabist project constituted the first attempt at nation-building in post-independence Sudan. In coalescing around 'Arabisation', Sudan's political elite echoed the specious narrative of the colonial intelligentsia that 'civilization in Sudan had been mainly an exogenous affair, narrowly a product of "Arab" immigration and intermarriage and broadly an outcome of "Arabization" of the indigenous population of Sudan' (Mamdani 2009, p. 200). Successive parliamentary and military regimes thereby sought to define Sudanese national identity along Arab-Islamic lines, equating national identity with cultural particularity (Khalid 2003, Jok 2007). But as state-sponsored Arabisation (*ta'rib*) sustained a self-consciously Arab power at the centre, it also engendered widespread resistance in the peripheries (Johnson 2003, Sharkey 2008). However 'fictitious its actual base', pan-Arab ideology connected 'local groups to a wider international community and offer[ed] them an opportunity to mobilize that support for internal conflicts' (Johnson 2003, p. 141). For example, the central governments' appeals 'to wealthy Muslim states for military hardware in the face of "anti-Arab" insurgency in the South' and 'the alliance of "Arab" tribes in Darfur' appealing to Libya and other Arab communities (Harir 1994, Johnson 2003, p. 141).

Influenced by the modernist developmental projects sweeping post-independence Africa, nation-building through Sudanism dominated the political agenda of the Nimeiri era. Intent on overcoming the colonial legacy, the Nimeiri regime sought successive alliances with the Communist Party, the southern insurgents, and finally the political Islamists (Khalid 1990). These different allies all championed a 'modernist' agenda as the means to overcome sectarian politics and the forces of 'tradition'. Whilst premised on an increasingly autocratic political foundation, the ill-fated reforms of the May regime nevertheless constituted an attempt to address the profound fractures generated through colonial governmentalities (Mamdani 2009, p. 185). This included not only the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 which ended the first phase of the war with the south, but also attempts to fundamentally reform the local government system inherited from colonial rule. However, extending regional autonomy to the northern provinces and reforming the laws pertaining to landholding and local governance had a destabilising effect – most notably in Darfur where it

exacerbated internal political competition and the 'fuller ethnicization of politics in the region', intensifying local disputes such as the Arab-Fur conflicts of the late-1980s and the Arab-Massalit conflict of the late-1990s (Mamdani 2009, p. 188).

The Omar Bashir-led coup of 1989 and the ascent of the National Islamic Front (NIF), dominated by Hassan al-Turabi, marked the culmination of attempts to characterise the nation along Islamist lines (el-Affendi 1991, Sidahmed 2004). Despite significant differences with other modern Islamic movements, the NIF embodied the post-war global rise of Islam as a state project (*dīn*) – marking a 'radical shift in political Islam, from a society-centred (with a focus on the *ummah*) to a state-centred ideology' (Mamdani 2007, p. 119)⁴. Turabi's pan-Islamism received widespread support from Islamist movements from Algeria to Asia (Elnur 2009). Within Sudan, Turabi's 'seismic impact derived from the distinction he made between the universalism of Islamic principles and the parochialism of Arabic cultural practices' (Mamdani 2009, p. 196). This distinction accounted for the NIF's initial support from many non-Arab groups. The breakdown of the distinction and blatant ('Arabist') sectarianism also contributed to the split amongst the Islamists (Mamdani 2009, p. 196). Turabi was explicit on Darfur, for example, as early as 1992, that the Islamists of the 'Negroid tribes' had become the enemies of the movement; the 'plan of the Islamic Front' was thus to arm the Arab tribes and to disarm and forcefully relocate the Fur and Zaghawa from Darfur (quoted in Suliman 2008, p. 22). Turabi's highly politicised Penal Code outlawing apostasy (*al-ridda*) was also crucial in identifying opposition to the government as an expression of 'anti-Islamism'. Such developments set the context for the ultimate extension of *jihad*, giving legal sanction to continued violence, including war against Muslim populations in the north (Johnson 2003, 2006).

A final nation-building initiative has been the rise of an oppositional if, at times, inchoate 'Africanism' (Sharkey 2008, p. 24). Africanism in Sudan has deep connections to continental and diasporic relationships and histories, but its expression as a political project in Sudan is most evident in the struggles of the south. Whereas the first phase of the war embodied a southern separatist agenda, the subsequent phase led by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)/Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) demonstrated an ability to transcend 'sacrosanct ethnic boundaries' to include marginalised peoples of the north (Mamdani 2009, p. 203). Rejecting monoculturalism and assimilation, the SPLM/SPLA under Garang extolled the possibility of a New Sudan – a Sudan that would be ethnically pluralistic and socially inclusive, and inherently 'Africanist' (Sharkey 2008, p. 38, 42). However, as with the rival notion of Islamism in Sudan, questions remain about the reorganisation of state and society along 'African' lines (Mamdani 2009, p. 201), and the SPLM/SPLA remains somewhat ambiguous on its position *a propos* separatism.

Geopolitics and spheres of influence

These multiple attempts to 'define and constitute a viable nation' from the colonial legacy of 'many Sudans within a single state' (Mamdani 2009, p. 174) did not exist autonomously of contemporaneous global processes and trends. Following the 1967 Arab–Israeli war, Sudan had aligned more closely with the Arab League and successive 'Arabist' regimes pursued interventionist foreign policies in the region, supporting, for example, the Simba rebellion in Congo, as well as the Eritrean separatists. Regional governments responded with military support to the separatist Anyanya movement in the south, as did Israel, through the clientelist regime of Idi Amin (Johnson 2003, Jok 2007). Nimeiri's coup and his initial alliance with the Communist Party resulted in backing from the Eastern bloc,

but the communist-inspired coup attempt in 1971, repulsed with international support, led to the resumption of closer ties with the West (Johnson 2003). The period to the mid-1970s marked the American struggle over the strategic geopolitical 'Bridge', as the US endeavoured to contain 'communism' and Nasserism, pursuing a strategy of informal (non-territorial) imperialism which sought to co-opt Sudanese forces as part of 'the scrupulous cultivation of pro-capitalist orientation and the installation of pro-Western regimes in the area.' By 1976 Sudan had been officially designated as the chief anchor of US policy in the Horn of Africa, drawing the region squarely into the cold war (Yohannes 1997, pp. 262, 306). As elsewhere, US patronage propped up the increasingly repressive regime, which, furnished with arms, subsequently used this military arsenal against domestic opponents. As part of a tripartite alliance with the US and Egypt, Nimeiri also facilitated the shipment of weapons to Chad via Darfur, participated in military operations and provided a rear base for Chadian forces as part of US proxy warfare against Libya. Qaddafi countered by furthering relations with the Soviet Union and the arming of proxy forces, such as the 'Arab Gathering' (*Tajamu al Arabi*). The regionalisation of proxy wars as a 'flashpoint in the Cold War' resulted in a massive influx of Chadian political refugees, as well as a heavily militarised environment, with devastating consequences for Darfur (Yohannes 1997, Mamdani 2009, p. 211).

Faced with economic crisis and the declining legitimacy of his regime, Nimeiri effected a degree of reconciliation with the Islamists. The US position was initially favourable – corresponding with the Reagan administration's attempts to harness radical versions of political Islam in the fight against 'communism'. Indeed, Sudanese political Islamists were valued by Washington for the CIA-backed contribution they had made in Afghanistan (Yohannes 1997). But, as elsewhere, the US cold war strategy empowered the political Islamists (Mamdani 2004) and when the NIF seized power in 1989, US hostility increased as the regime developed contacts with Libya, Iraq and Iran. By 1991 Sudan was considered the epicentre of an 'Islamist revolution' within the Horn, extending into sub-Saharan Africa, presaging a declining role for Sudan within the circuits of Western capital and as a key US ally. In response, the US terminated assistance, except limited 'humanitarian' aid, and pressured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to do likewise. The George Bush administration instigated 'two counter-offensive strategies: the diplomacy of famine and human rights, and the use of the SPLM as a pro-insurgency force against the Khartoum regime' (Yohannes 1997, pp. 327–328). The Clinton administration furthered such strategies, seeking 'ways to bring about [regime] change in Sudan': it classified Sudan as a state-sponsor of 'terrorism', increased military aid to proxy neighbours (Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea), increased direct assistance to the armed opposition National Democratic Alliance and SPLM (through the Sudan Peace Act), and sought to construct 'civil society' (through, for example, the Sudan Transitional Assistance and Relief programme), in addition to cruise missile strikes on the al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum North (Woodward 2006, p. 94). Sanctions were also imposed – although gum arabic, Sudan's principal export to the US, was exempted, due to pressure from Coca-Cola and other US corporations (Cramer 2006).

Not successful in effecting regime change and with the opportunities for the exploitation of Sudan's oil dominated by Asian and European interests – US companies being excluded in the wake of sanctions – one of the George W. Bush administration's earliest foreign policy objectives was to secure a peace agreement between the SPLM and Khartoum (Dixon 2004). The US also continued long-standing (covert) collaboration with the government of Sudan on intelligence and 'counter-terrorism', particularly with the declaration of the 'war on terror' (Silverstein 2005, Woodward 2006). With the intensified violence

in Darfur, labelling the conflict ‘genocide’ sought to provoke United Nations action through the Security Council-sanctioned African Union monitoring force, furthering the ‘new’ ‘international regime of total paternalism’ underwritten by an external ‘responsibility to protect’ (Mamdani 2009, p. 284). With the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrant for al-Bashir, the major powers of the Security Council continued to arrogate to themselves the powers of interventionism and world-ordering, including the long-standing subordination of international law to the dictates of power (Grosvogui 1996, Anghie 2004, Mamdani 2009).

Sudan’s mal-integration in the global political economy

Analytically much neglected but organically related is the (mal-)integration of African states in the global capitalist economy (Amin 2002). War in Sudan is a means to effect, as well as a result of, the unprecedented exploitation of resources – including fertile land, oil, minerals, water, and cheap labour – carried out by the Sudanese capitalist class, prompted by their assimilation into the global political economy in the restricted role of extractors of primary wealth. The international financial institutions (IFIs) have furthered the restructuring of resource utilisation away from local needs and towards the international market. In creating a dependent ‘class of local resource-extractors’, the (mal-)integration of Sudan in the global political economy has directly impoverished both the environment and the majority of the population of Sudan, precipitating a profound and enduring social and ecological crisis (Suliman 1994, p. 5, 2008, p. 2).

Whilst at the time of independence, primary identification was almost certainly with religious or ‘tribal’ associations, Sudanese society comprised three broad groupings: ‘the incipient “bourgeoisie”’; an intermediate stratum of sub-bourgeoisie; and the broad mass of the urban and rural poor.’ The ‘rising classes’ had a vested interest in the maintenance of the socio-economic system, for it was the source of their standing and profit (Khalid 1990, p. 75). As such, although political power was transferred to the national bourgeoisie, the *forms of production and appropriation did not change*. The principal difference was that capitalist penetration was now subject to various forms of neo-colonialism (Mahmoud 1984, Freund 1998). The hegemony of colonialism affected this incipient bourgeoisie ‘from its very origins’, and the opportunities for accumulation have continued to be determined by the degree of dependence on foreign capital (Mahmoud 1984, pp. 3–4). As such, accumulative strategies have sought the intensification of Sudan’s (mal-)integration within the global political economy through the expansion of capitalist relations of production and the subversion of non-capitalist production to the imperatives of capitalist accumulation (Mahmoud 1984). Modernisation strategies have consistently emphasised production for the international market, in particular through the expansion of export-oriented commercial agriculture (Niblock 1987, Elnur 2009).

The period since 1972 and the ‘open door policy’ (*infatih*), in particular, have witnessed the abandonment of all attempts at independence from international capital. Rather, external factors have come to play a ‘far more important role in the shaping of national policies and strategies’, restructuring the Sudanese economy and shifting resource utilisation increasingly from the domestic needs to the imperatives of global capital (Mahmoud 1984, Elnur 2009, p. 40). The creation of a more conducive environment to foreign capital included denationalisation, suppression of trade unions and the introduction of new investment acts. Through such policies and widely available petro-dollar loans, Sudan dramatically expanded mechanised agricultural production as its ‘breadbasket strategy’ prioritised ‘export-oriented products ... based on the accelerated expansion of large-scale

capitalist farm[ing]' (Elnur 2009, p. 48). Despite the rapid increase in the land under cultivation and the increased export capacity, the breadbasket strategy failed (Suliman 1994, Johnson 2003). With the systemic crisis of global capitalist accumulation in the 1970s, Sudan saw the value of its primary commodities decline on international markets, and oil prices soar, as debt and debt-servicing obligations increased. The crisis reached its nadir in 1977–78 as Sudan became reliant on the US to negotiate the rescheduling of debt and further loans from the IMF, and became the largest recipient of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa.

As a result of conditions imposed by IFI-sponsored structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), Sudan's 'open-door' policy reduced the state budget, privatised state-owned enterprises, devalued the Sudanese currency, and promoted export cropping (Johnson 2003, Elnur 2009). But in prioritising the expansion of mechanised cash-cropping at the expense of staple food production, reducing the land available to subsistence farmers and pastoralists whilst devaluing their monetary assets and reducing subsidies for basic needs and social services, 'the whole edifice of agro-pastoralism, the livelihood of 14 million Sudanese, began to collapse' (Suliman 1994). Thus, as the national economy was further integrated within and subjected to the imperatives of global capitalist accumulation, the crisis of the subsistence economy deepened, with the interaction of ecological and socio-economic factors producing widespread poverty – evident in the severe famine of 1984–85 (Duffield 1990).

Investment in mechanised commercial agricultural schemes by the northern bourgeoisie has a long history (Niblock 1987, Suliman 1994) but the Nimeiri regime's local government reforms, including land reform and the abolition of Native Administration, facilitated the reorientation of the economy towards production for the international market, undermining local peoples' access to land and resources as 'customary' rights of land use and access were abolished, and the central state further empowered to lease land for large-scale commercialised agriculture (Johnson 2003). The land available to subsistence farmers and pastoralists has consequently declined substantially as huge tracts of land have been reallocated to large-scale mechanised agricultural production, frequently owned by absentee landlords. The expansion of mechanised farming rapidly exhausts the soil. In the degraded lands, yields of sorghum, millet and groundnuts have fallen by as much as 80%, and some 17 million hectares have been denuded by soil erosion. In some areas the land has been depleted within three to four years. As such, the 'appetite for new land is rapacious and continuous', hence the relentless expansion into the 'peripheries' (Suliman 1994, 1998, Elnur 2009).

In the Nuba Mountains, the 'new land war' was a major factor in the outbreak of conflict, with increasing amounts of fertile land in the Nuba plains expropriated throughout the 1970s and 1980s to facilitate the expansion of commercial agriculture under the World Bank-sponsored Mechanised Farming Corporation (MFC). Similarly, land in southern Blue Nile was expropriated as Gulf investors provided loans to the MFC to establish commercial agricultural schemes in the lowlands, in addition to timber and mineral extraction in the uplands. In eastern Sudan, land was increasingly appropriated for cotton plantation schemes and mechanised farming (Johnson 2003, Suliman 1998). Meanwhile, as the populations of northern and central Darfur have been forced to migrate southwards in response to drought, the commercialisation of agriculture has disrupted long-standing symbiotic relations between farmers and pastoralists as the enclosure movement has limited access to pasture and water and blocked established migration routes (Mamdani 2009).

In addition to conflict over land, hostilities also emerged over the exploitation of oil and water resources in the south. Draining the Sudd marshes through the construction of the Jonglei canal by a Sudanese, Egyptian and French joint venture, was motivated in part

by demand for more water downstream – itself part of interstate tensions regarding the distribution and utilisation of water between the ten riparian countries of the Nile basin (Klare 2001, Yohannes 2008). But also intended was the expansion of mechanised agriculture in the vast tracts of fertile land drained by the canal (Johnson 2003). Absent within the scheme was provision for the local people – approximately 1.7 million Dinka, Shilluk, Nuer, Murle, Bari and Anuak affected by the project (Suliman 1994). Moreover, in the early 1980s, commercial deposits of oil were discovered in southern Sudan – as Western countries sought to diversify their supplies of oil in the wake of Saudi Arabia’s embargo and the Yom Kippur War (Patey 2007). Initial plans were made to process the oil in the south but, with Chevron’s patronage, the Nimeiri government opted instead to pipe the oil to the north. The response to these schemes based on oil, water and land resources in the south was the formation of the SPLM/SPLA. But northerners, including people from the Nuba Mountains and southern Blue Nile, also joined the SPLM/SPLA which claimed to be defending the whole of rural Sudan against the ‘onslaught of the *Jellaba*’ (Suliman 1993, p. 108).

With the plans of the ‘resource bourgeoisie’ frustrated by the war in the south and the general crisis of primary production, ‘the call for “strong” government . . . began to spread’ (Suliman 1994). In response to the declining profitability of agricultural and mercantile capitalism, using the state as an instrument for economic empowerment has increased in importance (Elnur 2009). Indeed, one effect of the austerity measures and currency devaluations of the SAPs had been the ‘impoverishment of the middle classes and a marked polarisation among the *Jellaba* themselves. In the new economic atmosphere only the *Jellaba* with strong connections to finance capital and to state power could prosper’ (Suliman 1994). Control over the Islamic banking system has been central to this new economic regime, finding its political expression in the NIF: ‘The Salvation revolution was the era that witnessed a complete fusion between the Islamist empowered businessmen and the state’ (Gadir 2006 in Elnur 2009, p. 76). As a result, commodity speculation and rentier activity, including taxation of remittances as well as the traditional agricultural sector (particularly livestock), have increased in importance (Elnur 2009). The latter impacted significantly on the government’s alliances in the West, with livestock constituting Darfur’s principal contribution to the national economy and the *Jellaba* acting as middlemen for the internal market and the international livestock trade (Suliman 2008).

Also central to accumulative strategies has been the exploitation of oil, with the NIF coup ‘carried out with an eye on the potential oil wealth . . . as the financial pillar’ for the regime (Suliman 2001b). With the advent of oil exports in 1999, the ruling elite has acted as the agent of foreign corporate interests in Sudan, whilst obtaining advantages for its own class interests through rentier activities parasitic on Western and Asian capital. Oil thus became the ‘main objective’ and the ‘most potent of all the causes’ of conflict (Suliman 2001b, Human Rights Watch [HRW] 2003, p. 48). Oil revenues have also enabled the government of Sudan to dramatically increase military expenditure, expanding and upgrading its military hardware and developing a domestic arms industry, as well as utilising oil infrastructure to prosecute war (HRW 2003, Sharkey 2004, Taylor 2009). By 2007, concessions had been granted across Sudan, significantly increasing the opportunities for primitive accumulation and its attendant violence in the exploitation of oil as well as the projected mining of natural gas, gold, silver and uranium (European Coalition on Oil in Sudan [ECOS] 2007, Suliman 2008). The entry of Russia, China and other Asian states into the exploitation of Sudan’s oil has increased such opportunities. Mirroring the US, China has defined the procurement of imported oil as a matter of national security and sought to diversify its dependence on oil suppliers. Sudan ranks as one of China’s most

important energy endeavours: 'In no other country does China play such a prominent role in the energy field' (Klare 2004, p. 171). With the establishment of a new US African Command (USAFRICOM) and its key role in furthering US access to energy resources in Africa, Sudan looks set to become further engulfed in a 'new Cold War' (Foster 2006, Hunt 2007).

The intensification of primitive accumulation has also resulted in the increased appropriation of vast tracts of agricultural land in the 'peripheries' (Suliman 2001a). In the Nuba Mountains conflict increased from 1992 with the NIF government's declaration of *jihād*. Once again, economic imperatives held sway as the government announced 'the sale of new parcels of land in the Nuba Mountains and received 40,000 bids ... Since that time large areas of the plains have been cleared of their original population and sold off to the regime's supporters' (Johnson 2003, pp. 131–33). Similarly, in Darfur, vast areas of land have been appropriated. In one single public announcement in 1993, the government distributed some 7 million hectares in southern Darfur alone (Suliman 2001a, 2008). More recently, the rise in global commodity food prices has seen land in southern Sudan (as elsewhere in Africa) appropriated by foreign investors, including post-colonial Africa's largest private land deal between US Jarch Capital and partner company, Leac, run by the eldest son of long-time Khartoum ally, Paulino Matip (Blas and Wallis 2009).

As a result of such accumulation strategies, millions have been forced to abandon their homelands and livelihoods. Population displacement 'is not an incidental outcome of the fighting but is one of its objectives; it involves not just the removal of whole groups and individuals from their home areas, but the incorporation of those populations either into competing armies, or into a captive labour force' (Johnson 2003, pp. 152–157). Renewed slaving, the targeting of 'relief' centres in order to accelerate labour flight, and the forcible resettlement of the 'war displaced' have contributed to the formation of this captive labour force, with the dispossessed often resettled in so-called 'peace villages' near agricultural schemes where they work as poorly or unpaid labourers, or are 'managed and manipulated' to attract external resources from a complicit international 'aid' industry (Duffield 2001, Johnson 2003, pp. 152–157).

Finally, an essential element of the resource bourgeoisie's primitive accumulation has been the skilful manipulation of factionalism and the fomenting of proxy wars through the use of 'tribal' militias – techniques appositely compared to colonial strategies of rule (Sharkey 2004, Mamdani 2009). Post-independence governments initially co-opted and later established local militias to pursue destabilisation, displacement and counter-insurgency strategies. The ideology of 'tribalism' has been exploited therefore 'by the interacting interests of the Sudanese post-colonial bourgeois parties, governments and capitalists ... in order to maintain political power, accumulate capital and guarantee the continuity of tribalism in the process of societal reproduction' (Mahmoud 1984, p. 13). Following the NIF coup, the Islamist junta elevated tribal militias from a local to a national phenomenon, the Popular Defence Forces, legalising war by proxy (Salih and Harir 1994, Mamdani 2009).

In the North–South borderlands, the government sponsored both the 'Arab' *Murahileen* militia of southern Darfur and Kordofan, and the Rufa'a militia in southern Blue Nile. The militia strategy was subsequently extended to 'the heartland of the south', arming 'tribal' militias, such as those of the Murle, Toposa, Mandari, Acholi and Nuer, as well as former Anyanya II, to fight the SPLA. This divide-and-rule strategy was particularly effective following the 1991-split in the SPLM/SPLA, as the government fomented South–South differences increasingly articulated in a 'tribal idiom' (Johnson 2003, p. 115). Militias have often times been mobilised to execute a two-pronged strategy of 'divide and displace' (HRW 2003, p. 67), thereby furthering processes of primitive

accumulation. In the 1980s, Nimeiri's regime adopted 'scorched earth' tactics including attacks by government troops and the *Murahileen*, seeking to depopulate the initial oil exploration areas in Upper Nile. This tactic has continued in the oil-rich regions with coordinated attacks displacing the population of the oilfield regions, enabling the government to create a *cordon sanitaire* around concessions to facilitate the foreign exploitation of oil (Amnesty International 2000, Christian Aid 2001, Gagnon and Ryle 2001, HRW 2003).

Similar tactics were also used to depopulate areas of agricultural land. In its 1992/93 assault on the Nuba Mountains, the government defined its objective as forcibly relocating the entire Nuba to 'peace camps' (Mamdani 2009). The government also sought to sabotage local peace agreements between militias and insurgent forces following a series of local peace accords (Suliman 1998). Similar tactics, including proxy wars and forced population transfers, were repeated with devastating consequences in Darfur, where militias on the ground were supported by the central government's military intelligence and aerial bombardment campaigns (Sharkey 2008). The deadly tactic continues with support to militias in the south, seeking to destabilise the region in advance of the referendum on self-determination. Notwithstanding widespread evidence of government sponsorship of militias, successive regimes and their foreign corporate collaborators have sought to dismiss fighting as merely 'tribal clashes' (Harker 2000, HRW 2003). Yet, despite the articulation of 'tribal' and *jihadist* ideology, many 'militia leaders have no "tribal" base at all, but are from the merchant class and have gone into the raising of militias ... as an extension of business' (Johnson 2006, p. 97).

Conclusion

Sudan is mired in a profound and highly intractable social crisis, manifest not only in the increasingly fragile 'peace' in the South and ongoing 'low-intensity' violence and mass displacement in Darfur, but also in tensions and conflict within the eastern, northern and central regions. However, as the article has sought to elaborate, key dimensions of current conflict and crisis constitute temporal permutations of events and structures that can be traced through the history and process of modern state formation and the institutional legacy of colonial governmentalities, geopolitics and spheres of influence on the continent, and the global economic relations of Sudan's dynamics of capitalist accumulation. This continuation of processes which are both historical and structural includes, *inter alia*, (1) discrimination based on those who 'belong' and those who do not, evident not only at the local level (such as those with a *dar* and those without) but also who 'belongs' in the various exclusionary imaginaries of the nation; (2) associated with this, the politicisation of religion, 'racialisation' as a mode of governance, and the naissances of an exclusionary essentialist ethnicism; (3) the use of paramilitaries as a key instrument of political power and ordering, in the interests of capital and in the context of the geopolitics of the moment; and (4) the circumvention of democracy and local legitimacy as a requirement of domestic and global imperatives of accumulation. As such, political violence and crisis are neither new nor extraordinary nor internal, but rather, crucial and constitutive dimensions of Sudan's neo-colonial condition. To claim that political violence in Sudan is 'internal' or 'civil' is to countenance the triumph of ideology over history.

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Notes

1. The violent exploitation of south Sudan in the nineteenth century was, ‘as the Dinka remember it, “when the world was spoiled”’ (Markakis 1987, p. 29).
2. The term *dar* is commonly understood as ‘tribal homeland’. The ‘conventional understanding of historical Dar Fur . . . [as] a collection of tribal homelands (*dars*)’ is challenged by Mamdani, who argues that land in the Dar Fur Sultanate was held under different arrangements, from tribal and communal to individual, with various forms in between (2009, p. 114). The issue of land use, access and ownership within Darfur remains highly contested, cf. the debates on ‘Making sense of Darfur’, <http://blogs.ssrc.org/darfur/category/darfur>
3. Khalid (1990, p. 69).
4. Within Islam, the *ummah* is understood as the world community or diaspora of Muslims.

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Local violence and international intervention in Sudan

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The efforts of the international community to build peace in Sudan have been frustrated by the failure to stop the violence in Darfur, continuous setbacks in the implementation of the 2005 peace agreement, and a failure to remain sufficiently engaged with processes at the root of the violence. This applies particularly to local conflicts and the ways in which they interlock with national and regional conflicts. This paper highlights the role that land issues have played both in poverty generation and in driving and sustaining protracted conflict. The challenge is to take the current complexity into account, not by perceiving local conflict dynamics as merely a manifestation of macro-political cleavages, but as being motivated by both top-down and bottom-up agendas. As Sudan is drifting towards increasing fragmentation, an approach to peace-building is required that can address multiple arenas and sources of conflict in a much more integrated way than has been the case so far.

Keywords: Sudan; Darfur; peace-building; violence; livelihoods; land

Introduction

When the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudan government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) was signed in January 2005, many Sudanese and international observers hoped that it would also positively affect the situation in Darfur and elsewhere, and that peace and stability would finally come to the country.

However, large numbers of people have died since the official ending of the war, and not only in Darfur. Whereas bombs stopped raining on civilian targets in Southern Sudan, and the South–North armies stopped engaging each other in all-out combat, the distinctions between war and peace were blurred by the armed violence resulting from ethnic feuds, the brutalities carried out by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)¹, tensions between the armies of the South and North, and general lawlessness. In Darfur, fatalities from violence have decreased, but the political crisis has become increasingly complex and difficult to solve.

The efforts of the international community to help build peace in Sudan have been an uphill struggle, frustrated not only by the failure to stop violence in Darfur and the continuous setbacks in the implementation of the CPA, but also by increasing divisions within the international community itself, most recently over the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for President Omar al-Bashir (Sørbø 2009).

Assessments that have been made also reveal that aid and peace-building efforts in the country remain segmented, fractured and insufficiently engaged with processes at the root of violence in Sudan (e.g. Lotze *et al.* 2008). This applies particularly to local conflicts and the

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ways in which they interlock with national and regional conflicts. Thus, according to a study of reintegration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees returning to Jonglei State in Southern Sudan, the structure and process of local conflicts and instability have been poorly understood, and ‘one-dimensional negative images of pervasive chaos’ have dissuaded actors to fully engage with the fundamental issues (Pantuliano *et al.* 2008, p. 76). Similar images appear to prevail in the case of Darfur. It is not always clear, as David Keen writes, ‘whether it is the violence that is mindless, or the analysis’ (Keen 2008, p. 13).

Writing on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Severine Auteserre has argued that the most powerful peace-builders – diplomats, donors and international organisations such as MONUC (the UN Mission to the DRC) and the World Bank – largely ignored the fact that much of the violence in the DRC was motivated by long-standing grass-roots agendas, whose main instigators were villagers, chiefs, or ethnic leaders. ‘Local manifestations of violence’, Auteserre writes, ‘although often related to national and regional struggles, were also precipitated by distinctly local problems’ (Auteserre 2009, p. 260). Even issues usually presented as regional or national questions had significant local components which fuelled and reinforced the regional and national dimensions. However, international peace-builders failed to address local issues, because of discursive ‘frames’ which authorise and justify which actions and areas are relevant and appropriate for intervention (*ibid.*).

In the same paper, Auteserre also suggests that international intervention in Sudan presents interesting parallels. In her view, the widespread interpretation of Darfur as an ethnic, Arab vs African war prevented international interveners from understanding the complex local dynamics of violence. International actors ‘based their understanding on a simplified good vs evil framing of the conflict and ended up involuntarily fuelling existing antagonisms’ (*ibid.*, p. 276).

This article further explores this issue and its implications for efforts to build peace.² Conflict patterns that have emerged in Sudan to a large extent reflect local and regional peculiarities. In fact, inter- and intra-community fighting has become a key source of violence and insecurity in Southern Sudan and in large parts of Darfur and neighbouring Kordofan. Such conflicts currently threaten the implementation of the referendum over the future status of Southern Sudan scheduled for 2011. They also fuel the debate over whether Southern Sudan would be viable as an independent state.

Local conflicts, however, have increasingly become part of a complex interconnected conflict ‘system’ that includes the wider struggles between the North and South, between the Khartoum government and Darfur rebels, and between competing southern interests. As we have seen both in Darfur and Southern Sudan, the system also transcends national boundaries (Tubiana 2008a, Giroux *et al.* 2009). Local militias ally themselves with regional and national actors and local agendas provide the latter with allies on local levels who are crucial in maintaining military control, continuing resource exploitation, or persecuting political and ethnic enemies. Local and regional conflicts are also continuously being reconfigured. As they evolve, what may appear as original or ‘root’ causes may change over time.

The challenge to peace-builders is to take this complexity into account, not by perceiving local conflict dynamics as a mere manifestation of macro-political cleavages, but as being motivated by top-down causes (regional or national) as well as grass-roots agendas. As Alex de Waal has argued, disorder and crisis in the Sudanese peripheries is part of an overall picture where the dominant elites in Khartoum, despite internal divisions, have used the state as a vehicle for their own economic and political interests, through ‘retail politics’ and processes of bargaining and co-optation (de Waal 2007a). However, the causes of violence vary, within and between Sudanese states, and on different levels,

and acts of violence are often perpetrated by local actors accountable to no one but themselves and their followers. As the country is drifting towards increasing fragmentation, an approach to peace-building is required that can address multiple arenas and sources of conflict in a much more integrated way than has been the case so far.

Local violence in Sudan

Successive Sudanese governments have often argued, as they do now for Darfur, that the violence in the country is largely caused by local-level, ethnic conflicts mainly arising from pressure on a diminishing resource base. On their side, rebel groups in Darfur, as in other parts of Sudan, quote the marginalisation and underdevelopment suffered by all Darfurians, regardless of their ethnic background, as the main reason for taking up arms against the central government.

Many local conflicts in Sudan, particularly in marginal areas, have traditionally been largely unrelated to the state. Sudan is home to the highest concentration of traditional pastoralists in the world and the combination of scarcity, a need for mobility and recurring droughts makes conflict inevitable between different pastoralist groups and between pastoralists and farmers (Markakis 1994, p. 219).

There continue to be a number of essentially local conflicts of this kind in most parts of Sudan, and many people are often killed in clashes between clans, 'tribes' or ethnic groups. For example in Equatoria (Southern Sudan), there are innumerable inter-tribal conflicts – between Mundari, Bari and Dinka; between Acholi and Latuka; and between Toposa, Didinga and Murle. Some of them have deep historical roots, while others flare up because of intricacies of revenge and competition over resources (Schomerus 2008). Within 'tribes', there may also be severe conflict. Often, the motives for violence are related to local issues such as access to grazing and raiding of cattle. Several groups have traditionally developed socio-political institutions that facilitate *ad hoc* mobilisation of local personnel for defence and raiding, often on a fairly large scale.

During the last three decades, and particularly after the National Islamic Front (now National Congress Party) came to power in 1989, such conflicts have increasingly become absorbed into, enmeshed with or at least affected by the wider struggles between the North and South or between competing southern interests.

Anthropologists have done much to document such developments. The largely unpublished works by the late Paul Wani Gore on local conflicts in Sudan reveal how the fragmentation of centres of political power, the divide-and-rule strategy of the Khartoum government and the divisions between the elites of different ethnic groups helped weaken local administrative structures and traditional mechanisms of conflict management and resolution, and sharpened ethnic differences and competition over resources. In an analysis of eight conflict areas in Sudan, Wani Gore argued that local conflicts have generally taken on a much wider political dimension, changed their character and, increasingly, a culture of violence has been established in large parts of Southern Sudan, South Kordofan and Darfur (Wani Gore 2003).

Sharon Hutchinson has analysed how the rapid polarisation and militarisation of Nuer and Dinka ethnic identities during civil war in the 1990s led to a deepening of the Nuer/Dinka divide and to a reassessment of women's and children's former status as immune from attack (Hutchinson 2000). She has also described how rival southern military leaders, greatly assisted by the machinations of the Khartoum government, endeavoured to transform earlier patterns of competition between Nuer and Dinka communities over scarce resources into politicised wars of ethnic violence (Hutchinson 2001).

Traditional flashpoints have become more dangerous with the ready supply of weapons, and the jobless youth disaffected by the lack of development in the South. One consequence of arms acquisition in Southern Sudan has been the increasing involvement of youth in broader South–South and North–South conflicts. Thus, in central Upper Nile, cattle camps were transformed into a ‘white army’ that was generally aligned with the Khartoum government after the split within the SPLM in 1991. After the signing of the CPA, the SPLM’s need to eliminate competing armed groups set the stage for a struggle of dominance. The white army was destroyed, resulting in the loss of many lives, the destitution of communities and the breakdown of civil order and traditional authority among the Nuer (J. Young 2007). The Upper Nile region continues to suffer from inter- and intra-tribal violence and killings.

As Sara Pantuliano and her colleagues have argued, an assessment of current conflicts in Southern Sudan must begin by making reference to the manner in which Sudan’s second civil war was prosecuted (Pantuliano *et al.* 2008, p. 55). The integration of local grievances and agendas into the freedom struggle bequeathed a difficult legacy as the region witnessed a proliferation of internal divisions and conflicts that have continued until today. Because the livelihood base of civilians was frequently targeted, as in Darfur, local communities were vulnerable to manipulation and easily co-opted by armed groups. As political disagreements developed, including inside the SPLM, civilians were armed to protect themselves and both the spread of small arms and communal conflicts increased (*ibid.*, p. 56).

During 2009, there was an increase in the occurrence of local violence in several states in Southern Sudan, and large numbers of people lost their lives. This has continued into 2010. Land and natural resources are increasingly contested, including tribal borders. Conflicts relate to the return of IDPs and refugees; urban expansion and increased competition for land and access to natural resources; and limited administrative and political capacity or will to address the issues. This is illustrated by the 33 people killed in tribal clashes between Shilluk and Dinka over the ‘ownership’ of Malakal town (*Sudan Tribune* 2009). Furthermore, while it was first rumoured that the shooting of the government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) Minister of Agriculture in November 2009 was plotted by Khartoum or enemies of the SPLM, it was probably a result of a wrangle among leaders of a local administrative unit (Wonduruba Payam) regarding whether this particular unit should fall under the administration of one or another (Juba or Lainya) constituency (*Juba Post* 2009).

Local politicians and strongmen are using such issues in their struggles for power. There also appears to be a general increase in armed robberies, rape and abductions. Some incidents may be attributed to the delay in or complete lack of pay to soldiers from the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), as well as a general increase in military mobilisation within local communities as a consequence of the escalation of violence, including attacks by the LRA and by formally disbanded members of so-called Other Armed Groups. Hostilities between different groups within the SPLA and local populations have also led to violence. The lack of confidence in the state’s capability to protect the local population and to deal with perpetrators, combined with people’s ability to mobilise for defence and raiding, has also resulted in lawlessness and vigilantism. This explains the village militias (‘arrow boys’) established in order to fend off potential attacks by the LRA. Although established for understandable reasons, such groups may easily become new security risks in large parts of the South (Rolandsen 2009).

While the central government has been blamed for cynically exploiting internal divisions in Southern Sudan, not all the culprits can be traced to Khartoum. Southern politicians and former militia leaders are clearly also involved, using local ethnic and

other tensions for their own ends. Recently, there have been signs of splits within the SPLM, as leading figures try to strengthen their fiefdoms ahead of national elections in 2010. Thus, Lam Akol, one of the leading figures in the 1991 split within the SPLM and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, formed a new breakaway faction in June 2009, the SPLM for Democratic Change. Soon afterwards, he was accused of arming fighters from his Shilluk tribe and attacking neighbouring groups – an accusation he has denied.

In Darfur, a major cause of conflict has been a proliferation of local conflicts over land and other resources combined with the unwillingness of the central government to mediate and, more ominously, its manipulation of land issues and concomitant manipulation of administrative subdivisions (Tubiana 2007). As in the South, such divisive policies on local and regional levels have created growing regional subcultures of ethnic violence (this is developed further below).

Livelihoods under siege: development and conflict in Sudan

Livelihoods under Siege is the title of a report on Darfur by a research team from Tufts University and Ahfad University for Women (H. Young *et al.* 2005), but is an apt description of the situation in many other parts of Sudan as well.

Aside from the Khartoum area, which saw major violence following the death of John Garang (2005) and the attack of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) on Omdurman (2008), most of the violence in Sudan has taken place in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas. Populations from these areas also constitute the main source of street children, poor female-headed households, displaced persons and refugees. They come from three broad regions: (1) the areas struck by drought and famine during the 1970s and 1980s; (2) the areas that saw an expansion in mechanised farming during the same period; and (3) the former ‘closed districts’ of the colonial period, i.e. South Sudan.

The civil strife that has spread throughout many parts of Sudan since the 1980s should be seen as part of a pattern of violence where the Sudanese state – as a vehicle for special interest groups – has played a major role. In brief, the country suffers from the combined effects of two sets of crises that are closely interrelated: (1) a crisis of governance; and (2) a livelihoods crisis. The conflicts that result from these crises take place on different levels and are also interrelated.

Since the colonial period, the Sudanese state has owned, managed or effectively controlled the modern economic sector. State resources have been concentrated in the central Nile areas in the North, reflecting the longstanding political dominance of groups from this area. A process of uneven development and economic dislocation began during the colonial period and became acute in the 1970s. The shift from subsistence agriculture to export-oriented, mechanised agricultural schemes had its greatest impact in the so-called ‘Transition Zone’ between North and South – along Southern Kordofan, Southern Darfur, Blue Nile and the Sudan–Ethiopia border region, resulting in the dispossession of small-holder farmers from their customary rights of land, the erosion of land-use rights by pastoralists, and the creation of a large force of agricultural wage-labourers, whose numbers were increased through displacement by drought and war in the 1980s and 1990s. While the transfer of assets, which began before the war, was accelerated after 1989, the development strategy has essentially been the same (Johnson 2003).

A vital factor was the passage of laws undermining the control that local authorities and local people were able to exert over land. The 1970 Unregistered Land Act abolished customary rights of land use and the authority vested in native administration with respect to land allocation, thereby allowing for the leasing of land to large farms by the state.

Land is a central issue for both rural and urban communities in Sudan, as a means for livelihoods and survival, and with profound cultural and socio-political dimensions. It is fundamental to understanding the way in which the Sudanese conflicts and humanitarian crises have evolved, and it has been fought over in many different ways (de Waal 2009a). Land dispossession has been used by successive governments as part of their drive towards modernising agriculture (mechanised rain-fed and irrigated schemes), which has led to impoverishment, to displacement of large populations and to political mobilisation and serious conflict, as among the Beja in eastern Sudan or the Nuba in South Kordofan.

The politics of dispossession has also been applied in the southern region, particularly in the Upper Nile where the first agricultural schemes were introduced in the early 1950s, and more recently after oil was found in the Western Nuer region near Bentiu. This was one of the most populated areas in Southern Sudan, confirmed by the 1955 population census and the number of tribal courts (which were based on population size). The area was to a large extent depopulated through a scorched-earth policy on the part of the Sudan government that saw villages destroyed and unknown numbers of people killed. Those who remained were forced to move to other areas of Sudan. The eviction of local populations and the development of the oil fields in Bentiu were aided by government-supported militias drawn from Baggara Arab pastoralists. After the 1991 split in the SPLM, when groups led by Riak Machar and Lam Akol joined the government, militias recruited from southern groups also assisted in the clearing of the concession areas for oil exploration (Wani Gore 2006, p. 16).

An important government interest has also been to use land as loot, i.e. to reward clients of the government. This strategy, which has become particularly pronounced during the current regime, e.g. in Darfur and more recently in the Gezira Scheme, which is fast becoming privatised. In Darfur, land became a reward to the allies of the government and encouraged them to fight rebels and local villagers as proxy forces (de Waal 2009a, p. 13). In Gezira, which used to be the world's largest irrigated scheme under one management, clients of the regime are being favoured as traditional tenants are losing their tenancies due to changes in cropping patterns, lack of agricultural credit and indebtedness.

From the 1970s onwards, the agricultural growth model adopted in Sudan gave little or no consideration to those who were displaced or otherwise affected. The strategy also caused serious structural problems. While the area of land under mechanised farming increased from around two million *feddans* at the beginning of the 1970s to some 14 million *feddans* by 2003 (one *feddan* equals 1,038 acres), yields were hit by falling fertility, which in turn reflected continuous cropping and the expansion of semi-mechanised farming into increasingly marginal areas (Keen and Lee 2007, p. 513). Since the 1970s, there have been massive population flows out of the ailing traditional sector into urban centres mostly in the North. The Southern Sudanese economy remained basically subsistent, livestock playing a major role, and with a very limited modern sector. Even before the second civil war in 1983, the region was not self-sufficient in cereals and later, war and droughts had devastating effects on production and food security. In the South and, later, in Darfur, the targeting and uprooting of rural populations and their forced displacement became an integral part of the war strategies of rebel and government forces alike.

When the Islamist movement came to power in 1989, the structural foundation of the vast traditional sector had been eroded and the modern sectors had stagnated or declined. Following an aggressive post-coup consolidation involving extreme repression, mass arrest and a strategy of purging the higher and middle ranks of the state bureaucracy and replacing them with loyal party personnel, the Islamists launched the 'civilisation

project', which advocated self-sufficiency in food production and manufacturing. The drive to self-reliance was dictated largely by international isolation and a severe deficit in the balance of payments, as both exports and remittances declined due to rocketing inflation and the persistent conditions that led to the erosion of profitability in the commodity-producing sectors. Economic policies, therefore, were largely dictated by the regime's political survival agenda (Elnur 2009, p. 83).

The agricultural sector, however, continued to decline, and cotton for export never recovered from the unsuccessful shift to wheat for domestic markets. While profitability in the large irrigated schemes declined, unsustainable policies within rain-fed farming continued as before, development funding being routed through patronage networks and benefiting mostly the Islamist clients of the regime, but sometimes also foreign companies like in North Kordofan, where the Malaysian–African Agricultural Company was allotted 38,000 *feddans* to develop gum arabic production, lands formerly used by local agropastoralists and nomads (Babiker 2008). The National Islamic Front takeover in 1989 in fact witnessed a complete fusion between the Islamist empowered businessmen and the state. According to Elnur, the Sudan economy 'became their private property as they became the new ruling elite' (Elnur 2009, p. 76).

Faced with the deepening of the economic crisis and intensification of the civil war, the regime introduced sweeping macro-economic stabilisation and liberalisation policies. Between 1992 and 1998, expenditures were cut by more than 50% relative to GDP, causing considerable reductions in social services and infrastructure development.

When oil exports started in 1999, Sudan became wealthier, but poverty was accentuated by the fact that social services spending remained among the lowest in the world. The poor track record on development spending is paralleled by a very limited capacity at state and local levels to plan and manage projects. According to the Government of National Unity and Government of Southern Sudan's *Sudan Household Health Survey* (2006) and the World Bank (2007), key indicators of human development in Sudan's disadvantaged regions (including Darfur, the South, the Three Areas, and the East) rank among the lowest in the world, while Khartoum and some northern states along the Nile show performance well above the sub-Saharan average. For example, primary school attendance was 90% in River Nile State, but less than 10% in half the states in South Sudan.

Growth has also been accompanied by rising inequality among regions and among rural and urban dwellers. While per capita public spending was about US\$300 in 2007 (World Bank 2007, p. 6), little of this reached the poor and the marginalised regions. Traditional rain-fed agriculture, practised by the rural poor, has seen neither significant levels of investments nor increases in productivity. At the same time, defence expenditures have crowded out poverty-related expenditures, deepening the cycle of poverty (*ibid.*).

The history of massive forced population displacement in Sudan during the last two and a half decades resulting from agricultural policies, wars, droughts, famine and intertribal disputes is a clear sign of the overall political and socio-economic crisis in Sudan. By the time of the signing of the CPA, roughly 80% of the Southern population were no longer in their usual habitat. A new political, social, economic and cultural map emerged in both Northern and Southern Sudan that was quite different from the pre-war situation (Elnur 2009, p. 94).

Measures aimed at consolidating power through privatisation of the state and manipulation of tribal and ethnic differences ended up with an almost complete state collapse. The regime used the state and its institutions systematically to control the entire population. Administrative re-divisions were introduced at local levels in order to undermine support for the traditional political parties. Federalism, including the establishment of 26 states,

was introduced not primarily to decentralise decision-making (which was not implemented anyway), but in order to divide and repress regional movements and rebel groups in the peripheries. However, the regime's totalitarian nature stimulated divisions that helped promote fragmentation.

Darfur: an unfolding crisis

While the grievances of those who have historically been left behind in a dysfunctional process of development are a common feature, the contexts that have affected people's life situations are not the same everywhere. Despite, or rather because of the centrist bias of development strategies in Sudan, ongoing conflicts in places like Darfur, Abyei, Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains or Ekuatoria may be decisive for the future of the country as a whole. Hence, for example, the failure to agree on the future of Abyei will have implications not only for determining the North–South border, but also for the implementation of any Darfur peace agreement (Johnson 2008). Furthermore, the multiple local conflicts in Southern Sudan, compounded by the murderous activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), clearly threaten the sustainability of peace- and state-building in the South. The conflict patterns that emerge in different parts of Sudan reflect continuities of the kind analysed above, but also reflect local and regional particularities and, in several cases, are continuously being reconfigured.

Darfur provides an instructive example. It had a viable political order, first as a Fur-dominated yet multi-ethnic sultanate until 1916, and then as a region that, while prone to local conflict over resources, remained quite stable until the late 1980s. Its stability was based on what has been termed the 'Darfur consensus' (Fadul and Tanner 2007). Land was the linchpin of this consensus. The ethnic groups that make up a central majority bloc (Fur, Baggara [cattle holding] Arabs, Masalit, Zaghawa, Tunjur and many smaller 'African' tribes) came together in enjoying access to land under the *dar* and *hakura* systems. They shared a common view on the legitimacy of the land ownership and management system, in turn based on the native administration system of local government. The largest group that was deprived of land rights was the Abbala (camel herding) Arabs (*ibid.*).

According to Fadul and Tanner, most Darfurians contend that the current conflict constitutes an assault on the Darfur consensus. To a large extent, the factors that pushed the region over the edge were external and include the blowback from the Chadian wars, Libyan interference, destructive interventions by the central government, and severe drought leading to migrations (*ibid.*). One of the primary traits of the Darfur crisis can be described as a split between those members of the population with territories (*hawakir*) and those who have none (Tubiana 2007).

As Tubiana has argued, one of the early warning signs of conflict was a dramatic increase in violent incidents between farmers and herders. One cause for these incidents was the droughts of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, which forced herders to encroach on the lands of farmers. These clashes did not necessarily pit Arab versus non-Arab but they did lead, in 1987–89 to a wide-ranging conflict between the sedentary Fur and a broad coalition of both cattle- and camel-herding Arab tribes. For the first time, nearly all the Arabs of Darfur came together, united by a new pro-Arab ideology that was backed by Libya and successive governments in Khartoum from 1986. It was during these conflicts that the term *Janjawiid* first appeared (*ibid.*).

From 1994–95 onward, the Masalit of western Darfur became the next victims of Arab militias seeking access to land. By the time the two new rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), appeared in early 2003,

widespread intercommunity violence over land had already begun taking place across Darfur. While they made regional, and even national, claims that aimed to transcend ethnic cleavages with demands for a more equitable distribution of power and wealth for all of Sudan, their base was for the most part non-Arab, with heavy representation from the Zaghawa and the Fur (*ibid.*).

From 2003, local conflicts in Darfur started spinning out of control and among SLA and JEM, issues of land came to take second place to the overall development of Darfur. Part of the reason for this is that many of the rebel leaders were young urbanites who had lived outside Darfur for long stretches of time.

Over time, the fault-lines of conflict have become increasingly complex and intractable. Political and livelihood landscapes have changed dramatically. The number of rebel movements has proliferated and sends the message that it is less important to have a constituency than taking up arms, if you want to be invited to meetings and peace talks.

Moving down to local levels, there has been a series of violent intra-Arab conflicts between the Baggara and Abbala. Whereas until around 1970, both Baggara and Abbala remained almost separate in their habitats and annual cycles of movement, things started changing when drought hit Darfur for several years, both during the 1970s and 1980s. The Abbala started moving south at a time when others did the same (particularly Zaghawa), and the Baggara Arabs themselves were experiencing difficulties in coping with drought. Because the Zaghawa and others settled to cultivate, Baggara herding routes were blocked, and these changes took place during the absence of an effective native administration (see above).

Material collected by Yusif Takana shows that grazing and water rights have been the main causes of conflict in Darfur. From the early 1990s, the Abbala as well as other groups started to change their strategy. Acquiring lands for settlement could be done by political allegiance and support for the Khartoum government. This strategy worked, and a number of new administrative subdivisions (*nazirates* and *omodiyas*) were established at the expense of groups who had recognised traditional rights to lands and authority. Many violent, often intra-Arab, conflicts have accompanied such changes, with great losses of life (Takana 2008).

A recent study of Rizaygat camel nomads in northern Darfur shows that their livelihoods have gone through rapid transition due to restricted access to pastures which, to a large extent, are controlled by the Zaghawa. Some have diversified into 'maladaptive' strategies, including rapid militarisation and the use of intimidation and violence as a means of gaining access to natural resources while the majority have been displaced. Nomadic camel-based pastoralism is under threat as a livelihood system as a result of the developments sketched out above, and young men increasingly seek power through militarisation and education rather than through camels and camel herding (H. Young *et al.* 2009, p. 9).

In the case of the Zaghawa, whose traditional homelands are in northern Darfur, their southward migrations were not uniquely caused by hunger and drought. As Jerome Tubiana has argued, the educated Zaghawa elite, while promoting the development of their region of origin, quickly saw the possibility of massive movements to the South. The massive emigration, which was initially opposed by the traditional leaders, because they knew they would lose power that was tied to their land, helped to weaken the Zaghawa chiefdoms, especially since it also coincided with the decision to abolish the native administration (Tubiana 2008b).

The current conflicts extend into Chad. Efforts by the Chadian government to avoid taking sides were shattered in 2003–4 by the arrival of some 200,000 Sudanese refugees across the border and the establishment of rear bases in eastern Chad by Darfurian rebel groups. The rebels were strengthened by their membership of cross-border ethnic groups,

including the Zaghawa, to which the Chadian president Idriss Deby belongs. Violence similar to that in Darfur began emerging in eastern Chad and some of the perpetrators have links with Darfur. As a result, several crises are now increasingly interlinked, including the long-standing conflict in Chad between the Chadian government and a divided political opposition, and the proxy war in which Chad and Sudan are engaged through rebel groups and militias (Tubiana 2008a).

These snapshots clearly indicate that events and developments in Darfur must be understood in the context of a number of factors at different levels. On the micro level, as Gunnar Haaland has argued, processes that affect the formation of social identities and access to resources are of crucial importance. On the regional level, there are processes that change the scope for political leadership and mobilisation of groups – changes that have stimulated formation of alliances between traditional enemies (Fur, Masalit, Zaghawa). These alliances are vulnerable and may shift over time (Haaland 2005). On the macro level of state politics, Darfur has always played an important role and, more recently, the Sudan government has been clever in playing on differences between the different groups. But then there is also the larger international context, which affects the behaviour and decisions of local and national actors. This includes regional and cross-border dynamics (Chad, Libya, Central African Republic) as well as humanitarian aid and the increasing divisions within the international community regarding issues such as the ICC arrest warrant, Darfur and oil.

Implications for peace-building

Severine Auteserre has argued that addressing local issues was key to ending violence in the DRC, but that diplomats and UN agencies almost never got involved in local conflict resolution. The main reason, she writes, is that the peace-building discourse, or what she terms the ‘post-conflict peace-building frame’, shaped the international understanding of violence and intervention in such a way that only macro-political cleavages were addressed. Thus international actors saw the holding of elections, as opposed to local conflict resolution, as an appropriate and effective tool for state- and peace-building, and they believed that local violence was innate and therefore acceptable even in peacetime. The ‘frame’ authorised and justified specific practices and policies while precluding others, ‘ultimately dooming the peace-building efforts’ (Auteserre 2009, p. 249).

Peace-building in Sudan presents some interesting parallels. As in the DRC, the international engagement has focused on the macro-political divisions between the NCP and the SPLM, mainly concerning the implementation of the CPA, and between the Khartoum regime and an increasing number of rebel movements in Darfur. This implies, *inter alia*, giving priority to the forthcoming elections which are seen as an important step towards political reform and sustainable peace. In this perspective, local conflict, particularly in South Sudan but also in Darfur and South Kordofan, is regarded as an ‘inconvenience’ that needs to be worked around, rather than embracing a proactive and more holistic engagement and commitment to enhancing security for vulnerable local populations (Pantuliano *et al.* 2008).

Regarding Darfur, there is hardly a complex political emergency in the world where so much is known of the local political dynamics, the links to external actors and factors as well as issues related to livelihoods, land and access to resources (e.g. H. Young *et al.* 2005, 2009, de Waal *et al.* 2007b, Flint and de Waal 2008, Tubiana 2008a). Yet the low-energy mediation led by the African Union, the UN and other international actors has largely failed to move beyond macro-political divisions, despite rhetoric to the contrary (‘Darfur–Darfur dialogue’). One implication has been that rebel groups without constituencies are invited to join peace talks, thereby contributing to ‘a ceaseless carousel of

fighting and talking' (de Waal 2009b); another that the civilian population, including most Arab groups and constituencies (frequently demonised as *Janjawiid*), have largely been sidelined in the process.

The intractability of conflicts in Sudan derives from their complex local dynamics and the often-changing inter-linkages with national politics and developments within the larger region. In this paper, the role that land issues have played both in poverty generation and in driving and sustaining protracted conflict has been particularly highlighted. Conflicts over land may be communal and strictly local, but they have increasingly become entwined with political rivalries on a larger scale that include even neighbouring countries. As Sara Pantuliano argues, they are also 'ripe for political manipulation, as unresolved land disputes have consistently underscored wider conflict' (Pantuliano 2009, p. 167).

It follows that an approach to peace-building is required that can address multiple arenas and sources of conflict in a more integrated way, including a concern with poverty, land issues and livelihood support. This has been slow to emerge in the post-war reconstruction of Sudan for different reasons.

First, there has been a lack of a joint diplomatic and developmental approach. This division between politics and aid derives from the traditional separation of the two areas within ministry structures but also from the difficulty of merging and harmonising donor countries' political relationships with Sudan. In Southern Sudan, it means that there has been a failure to engage with fundamental political issues, particularly on local levels, and to design aid programmes that help to mitigate rather than exacerbate conflict (Lotze *et al.* 2008). This applies particularly to conflicts related to land and natural resources. There is a notable absence of an overall framework to deal with such problems.

Second, an overall strategic plan for recovery and development has been very late in coming, despite the fact that a number of assessments were made in advance of and after the signing of the CPA (e.g. the Joint Assessment Mission), and that the UN has been drawing up annual work plans since 2006. This is particularly apparent in Southern Sudan (which receives most of the aid funds), where the government has been working to a budget-sector planning approach, strongly supported by the international community, resulting in some ten budget-sector plans for 2008 to 2010. As government institutions struggle to fulfil a wide range of obligations, decision-making is more aligned to operational planning concerns than overarching strategic ones (Murphy 2007) and there is a sense that everything is needed which means that nothing may be particularly prioritised.

Third, given the complexity of the Sudan crisis, one might expect planning processes and assistance organisations to incorporate conflict-sensitive approaches regardless of whether they are directly addressing conflict issues in their work. This seems not generally to have been the case so far (e.g. Pantuliano *et al.* 2008). Despite the existence of a mandate authorising UN peacekeeping troops in Southern Sudan 'to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence', a narrow interpretation and a paucity of troops have combined to confine the blue helmets to monitoring the implementation of the military aspect of the CPA only. As one consequence, local communities remain largely unprotected.

It should be added that the international community, as Thomas has argued, was led into engaging on the details of the flailing implementation of the CPA, rather than trying to reframe the political process. For a considerable time, attention then drifted away from the CPA to questions about peacekeeping structures and logistics, 'as if helicopters or blue helmets alone could deal with the regional politics of ethnicity and marginalisation and the stalled progress on democratisation' (Thomas 2009, p. 32). The CPA has also been turned into one of a string of bilateral deals with the centre.³ Each bilateral deal undermined the possibility of a comprehensive approach to Sudan's problems, entrenching the

dominance of the centre, aggravating its imbalance with the periphery, and preventing an inclusive approach to peace-building (*ibid.*).

To argue in favour of more emphasis on local-level efforts and of rebuilding state–society relations through bottom-up processes rather than overly relying on a top-down approach does not mean that it would be advisable to deal with each micro-conflict in Sudan at its particular level only. Local peace initiatives are taking place in different parts of Sudan, including Darfur (H. Young *et al.* 2009) and deserve more support than they currently receive, but many such initiatives are also being undermined by external forces, including the government. The point to remember is that in countries where patronage and ‘retail politics’ are dominant principles for how they function, loyalties may be bought and sold in volatile client systems, which makes local interventions often unsustainable unless linked to macro-political processes (de Waal 2009b, p. 22).

Conclusions

War and conflict in Sudan have in large part been the result of a destructive process of development that is in danger of being reinvented.⁴ As Alex de Waal has argued, the combination of instability at the centre and centre–periphery inequity creates a state of perpetual turbulence, in which it is almost impossible to obtain the configuration necessary to resolve conflicts (de Waal 2007a). While the main route to stability lies through Khartoum, a growing number of serious local conflicts deserve more attention than they currently deserve. They often concern access to natural resources, with such resources often used for political manipulation, and they can establish pockets of discontent, enhance food insecurity, flare up into greater conflicts or be linked to other, larger-scale conflicts and macro-political cleavages. In a situation where there is a particular need to keep in mind the less visible drift towards the fragmentation of Sudan (Thomas 2009), there must be a more proactive shift from working around the ‘inconveniences’ of local conflicts to embrace a more holistic commitment to peace and public security. This is a tall order, as it must also include a critical review of a development process that has so far been both violent and dysfunctional.

Note on contributor

Gunnar M. Sørbo has just retired as Director and is now Senior Researcher at Chr Michelsen Institute. A social anthropologist by training, he has done research in Sudan on and off since 1970, and currently co-directs a Sudanese–Norwegian research and capacity-building programme, Micro–macro issues in peace-building.

Notes

1. The Lord’s Resistance Army is a sectarian Christian militant group based in northern Uganda, but also operating in parts of Southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants for its leaders.
2. The paper is based on research carried out within the framework of a joint research and capacity-building programme, Micro–macro issues in peace-building, carried out by the Chr Michelsen Institute (CMI), Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman and the University of Khartoum. It draws on many sources, and the author (who co-directs the programme) is grateful to Astri Suhrke and Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed for constructive comments on an earlier draft.
3. In addition to the CPA, the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed between the government and one of the rebel movements (SLA/Minnawi) in 2006. In the same year, the government also signed the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement with the Eastern Front.
4. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has also warned against the serious environmental effects of current policies (UNEP 2007).

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BRIEFING

South Africa – the ANC’s difficult allies

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South African President Jacob Zuma has ridden the crest of a wave of popularity.

A survey of 3500 South Africans carried out between October and November 2009 indicated that on a scale of zero to 10, Zuma’s popularity had risen from 6.1 to 7.6. The largest increase came from minorities – Indians, Coloureds and Whites, as profiled by the market researchers – who pushed Zuma’s approval from 2.3 to 5.4 points. The ANC is also increasingly popular, registering a 71% rating (Ipsos Markinor 2010).

In part this reflects relief that Zuma has proved to be an open, listening president with a common touch, rather than the aloof, paranoid Thabo Mbeki, who was unceremoniously deposed at the ANC’s Polokwane conference in December 2007. Zuma is just as at home dancing in leopard skins as he marries yet another wife, as he is in a dark suit, mixing with international business leaders at Davos. It is a remarkable skill. Having said that, it is clear that Jacob Zuma is struggling to hold together his increasingly fractious Alliance partners from the trade unions – the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the (relatively unimportant) civic organisation, the

South African National Civic Association (SANCO).

This tension reflects many things. The inability of the opposition (weak as it is) to hold the ANC to account in parliament means that the real debate has shifted to inside the Alliance. There is a struggle for influence that is both personal and political. Much is at stake in terms of jobs for friends and family, lucrative contracts and access to government funding. This has led to the most overt forms of corruption and cronyism creeping into the ANC and the government. Hardly a week goes by without some or other example being revealed in the press.

It is a problem that the ANC now acknowledges. As ANC Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe put it in his report on the state of the party to the National Executive Committee meeting held between 15 and 18 January 2010 (Mantashe 2010):

Ascent to power also impacted negatively on the outlook of the African National Congress. The main weakness that our movement must confront is the ‘inability to effectively deal with the new tendencies such as social distance, patronage, careerism, corruption and abuse of power. The lack of policy for dealing effectively with the intersection between holding office and business interest is fast corroding the moral authority of our movement in society’. The fact that this debate has now been opened is in itself positive.

But at the heart of the conflict within the Alliance is a failure of delivery. The ANC

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has, despite its continued popularity, frequently failed to provide the majority of the population with the basic necessities of life.

Perhaps the most honest assessment came in a searing indictment by the SACP delivered last December at an SACP special national congress held in Polokwane. Blade Nzimande, the Communist Party general secretary (and Minister of Higher Education and Training) speaking on behalf of the Central Committee, began his analysis with a blistering attack on the failure of the government to resolve the underlying problems facing ordinary people:

We need to help our movement and our country understand a major paradox, a cruel irony. Why, after more than 15 years of democracy, after 15 years of many earnest efforts, after 15 years of some real advances ... why do we still live in a society in which the legacy of apartheid appears to be constantly reproduced and even expanded? In 1994, unemployment in SA was at crisis levels of around 24%. So why, 14 years later towards the middle of last year, after what was heralded as a decade and more of 'unprecedented' growth, and BEFORE the current recession began to hit our economy ... why had we only managed to bring unemployment finally down to roughly the SAME figure of 24%? In 1994 our RDP [Reconstruction and Development Programme] document estimated that we had a housing shortage of 3 million. Over the past 15 years the state has built 3.1 million low-cost houses for the poor. So why is the housing shortage STILL almost the same as it was back in 1994? Why do we seem to be going around in a circle? Why is our GINI coefficient, measuring income inequality, still stubbornly amongst the very highest recorded in the world? And why does inequality remain so dramatically racialised in our country? This Congress must pose these awkward questions [emphasis in the original]. (SACP 2010)

This is strong stuff indeed. It is remarkable that a senior member of the Alliance – and

a government minister – should make these points quite so bluntly.

The ANC now finds itself with at least three factions competing for influence within the party, government and the wider Alliance. These can be characterised as firstly the Left (the Communist Party and the unions), and secondly the Right (ANC traditionalists, Africanists who resent the influence of ethnic minorities and the ANC Youth League [ANCYL], led by its mercurial president Julius Malema). Finally, there is a group around President Zuma, who is attempting to hold the middle ground, with repeated but increasingly ineffective calls for unity.

Just how bad this in-fighting has become can be judged by statements from the Communist Party accusing Malema of 'proto-fascism' – surely one of the worst epithets in the Left's lexicon – and the ANC Youth League threatening to settle matters on the streets.

An evolving conflict

Late last year reports surfaced suggesting that the ANC Youth League had decided to try to replace Gwede Mantashe as Secretary General of the party with someone more to their liking at the party's next conference in 2012. The Deputy Minister of Police, Fikile Mbalula, was mentioned. This was part of the Youth League's campaign to regain control of the ANC from what it sees as the dominance of the SACP. Mantashe – in addition to holding one of the top positions within the ANC – is chairman of the Communist Party.

There is, in effect, a low-intensity war between the Right in the ANC and the SACP. Most frequently this goes on behind closed doors, but the conflict is increasingly visible.

The issue that triggered an outburst of insults was the question of whether to nationalise South Africa's mines. It might have been assumed that this would be Communist Party policy, but although the SACP

might wish to go down this road one day, it certainly does not believe this is the right moment. So the party's general secretary, Jeremy Cronin, wrote a paper opposing the ANC Youth League's proposal for taking the mines into state ownership. The Youth League's plan was a typically ill-thought-out suggestion, made on the hoof, and designed to attract attention. Cronin said as much, describing the suggestion – made by the League's president, Julius Malema as an 'off-the-wall sound bite'.

Malema replied, describing Cronin's position as 'openly reactionary'. He went on to say that Cronin (who is white) was siding with white supremacists, and describing him as a 'white messiah'. Communists were stung into action, attacking Malema's remarks as 'disgusting' and 'racist'. Others went further. The SACP's Western Cape provincial secretary, Khaya Magaxa, said that Malema's statement smacked of 'spoilt, gangsterist, thuggish and cynical behaviour'. Cronin himself appeared to apologise, but only made matters worse by saying that he didn't realise that Malema 'had such a delicate skin'.

The gloves were clearly coming off. Allies, who came together to overthrow Thabo Mbeki, were falling out with each other.

As one perceptive columnist put it: 'Within the ANC, the centre has shifted leftwards, while a new "right" is becoming increasingly vocal in its support of traditional social values and opposition to socialist economics.' This Left–Right division pits African traditionalists against the Left, which unites elements within the trade unions and the Communist Party.

There is a populist, right-wing element in the ANC that includes people such as Tony Yengeni (who was jailed briefly for corruption) and Malema. Opposing them are ANC leaders aligned to the SACP, who have more influence within government than ever before. They include such figures as Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies, ANC Secretary-General

Gwede Mantashe, Deputy Transport Minister Jeremy Cronin and Deputy Local Government Minister Yunus Carriem.

Until late last year these differences had really been spats between allies. Most of the remarks had been made off the cuff and did not appear to represent fundamental divisions. In December 2009 this changed with the SACP congress. Two set-piece speeches laid out in detail the Left's attack on the Right within the ANC.

Blade Nzimande accused the Right of attempting to reassert the power they had lost when Mbeki was ousted. This alliance of right-wing and traditional elements within the ANC, and their business associates, had formed what the Left terms 'the 1996 class project' (Nzimande 2006). This refers to Mbeki's key economic policy – the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy – the neo-liberal economic policy introduced by Finance Minister Trevor Manuel in June 1996. It was seen by the Left as a decisive move away from the ANC's commitments to a more radical agenda. They have continued to denounce the '1996 class project' ever since.

For the SACP these conservative forces had been dealt a blow with Mbeki's defeat, but not a terminal defeat. Some right-wing elements within the ANC left to form the Congress of the People (Cope). Others remained within the movement and are accused of attempting to isolate and challenge the role of the Communist Party. As Nzimande put it (Nzimande 2006):

[This] anti-communism/anti-SACP tendency has been informed and influenced by ascendancy to state power and prospects of being part of (albeit a compradorial) emergent black sections of the capitalist class. In other words, whilst the anti-communism of the pre-1990 era was informed by a petty bourgeois ideological reaction to communism, the post-1994 anti-communism has been informed by the new emergent class interests accompanied by very real prospects of using state power or accumulated

dependent BEE [Black Economic Empowerment] capital to capture our movement. After the political dislocation of the 1996 class project, the new tendency has become more desperate, more brazenly Africanist, but without a coherent ideological outlook. Instead the new tendency is opportunistically using the historical documents and positions of our movement to try and assert its new positions (e.g. an opportunistic use of the clauses of nationalisation in the Freedom Charter and the vulgarisation of the characterisation of our revolution as that seeking to liberate blacks in general and Africans in particular).

Interestingly the seeming desperation of the new tendency is also influenced by the desperate conditions of BEE capital in the light of the current global capitalist crisis and its impact on South Africa. What in fact appears as an articulation of the progressive clauses of the Freedom Charter is immediately betrayed by the naked class interests of trying to use the state to bail out dependent BEE capital. Ironically, but not surprisingly, the bail out for black capital simultaneously becomes the bail out and strengthening of white domestic capital upon which the former is entirely dependent.

In other words, the SACP accused ANC members, clustered around the Youth League and Malema, of being seduced by the emerging black capitalist class. They were, in Nzimande's view, calling for the nationalisation of the mines because of the desperate economic situation that many BEE firms found themselves in (mainly through mismanagement and corruption). This, in turn, was strengthening the hand of white capitalists 'upon which the former is entirely dependent', as Nzimande observed.

Nzimande went on to attack those in the Youth League who had been courted by notoriously corrupt white businessmen like Brett Kebble, who had finally arranged his own assassination when his business empire was crashing down about his ears. 'This new tendency has its roots in what

we might call "Kebble-ism" – in which some of the more roguish elements of capital, lumpen-white capitalists, handed out largesse and favours and generally sought to corrupt elements within our movement in order to secure their own personal accumulation agendas,' said Nzimande.

The Communist Party was now openly attacking Malema and his associates for being corrupt politicians whose favours had been bought in exchange for an opulent lifestyle.

But there was one final insult to be hurled. Malema and his ilk in the Youth League were accused of 'proto-fascism' (Nzimande 2006):

We do not use the term proto-fascist lightly, nor for the moment should we exaggerate it. However, there are worrying telltale characteristics that need to be nipped in the bud. They include the demagogic appeal to ordinary people's baser instincts (male chauvinism, paramilitary solutions to social problems, and racialised identity politics). They also include the turning of politics into 'spectacle' (the German Marxist Walter Benjamin once said that socialists politicise theatre, fascists do the reverse – turning politics into 'theatre' - usually of a melodramatic kind). This, in turn, reinforces the nature of the relationship between 'leaders' and their popular base – the latter become 'spectators', who clap and cheer in admiration at their patrons, and boo and jeer at rivals. The mass base is mobilised on the basis of being perpetual 'spectator-victims' – not protagonists, not collective self-emancipators. Above all, however, it is the nature of the still rudimentary class axis at play here that should send out early danger signals. None of this means that we should simply abandon those involved in this tentative class-axis – the buffoonery is a source of increasing embarrassment to their current or erstwhile patrons and we should work to win over those BEE elements who have been tempted to explore this dangerous and ultimately self-defeating project. Likewise, the great majority of young militants who

have flirted with this style of long nights of long knives in bottom-baring conferences, with symbolic coffins for rivals, are not beyond constructive engagement. However, it is only a principled and broad-based worker-hegemony that can reconfigure these forces into a progressive project.

While Nzimande delivered this lengthy analysis it was left to Gwede Mantashe, the SACP chairman, to spell out the political implications. It should be remembered that Mantashe is also ANC secretary-general, although at a Communist Party conference he was speaking in his capacity as a Communist:

The Communist Party has accepted the leadership of the ANC during the National Democratic Revolution phase of our revolution. We moved away from seeing the ANC as just a bourgeois congress. Communists contributed in shaping the ANC into a revolutionary liberation movement that abandoned its loyalty to the British crown and became anti-imperialist.

All the members of the Party are expected to be active members of the ANC. In the ANC structures we must resist all attempts to relegate us into second-class members who serve at the mercy of other members. We must not be apologetic for being communists because we are put under pressure that we get elected to positions in the ANC to serve strong lobbies. There is an expectation that we will be the hardest working cadres of our movement in line with the reputation earned by our predecessors. This will distinguish us as not being entryist in our approach, where we wait in the wings and seize the opportunity to take over the ANC. Those who claim that there is a threat of a communist takeover in the ANC want to project us as being engaged in entryism. We must never play into their hands by proclaiming our own communist candidates in ANC elective conferences. Communists in the ANC are not communist members of the ANC, they are members of the ANC. When we campaign for them we must do so because they deserve to be

elected through their hard work. (Mantashe 2009)

Confrontation

The scene at the Communist Party conference was set for a showdown. This was the atmosphere into which the ANC delegation arrived, including ANC national executive committee members Tokyo Sexwale, Tony Yengeni, Billy Masetlha, Sicelo Shiceka and Julius Malema. They were a delegation from a fraternal party, but they found themselves booed and jeered by SACP delegates when they were introduced to the congress.

When Malema walked into the conference hall at the University of Limpopo, the delegates started singing *Asiyifun' i-agenda yamaCapitalists* (we don't want a capitalist agenda). For Malema, who is notoriously thin-skinned, but who demands and receives respect, this an extraordinary affront.

When the conference adjourned for lunch, Malema walked up to the stage and confronted Mantashe, who was chairing the meeting. 'I was asking for a platform to engage as a guest. I was to speak not on the political report but on the reception [that the ANC got]. We were insulted in front of the country', he protested. Mantashe told Malema: 'You [Julius] are asking for something wrongly.' Mantashe also told Malema that he [Mantashe] was not at the congress as the leader of the ANC, but in his capacity as the SACP national chairperson. By now, Yengeni and Masetlha had joined Malema in the protest.

This prompted Malema to turn to Masetlha and ask: 'Where is Tokyo?' [Sexwale – the most senior ANC member at the conference.] 'We are leaderless. The secretary-general [Mantashe] has just denounced us. He told us that he is not here on behalf of the ANC. This delegation is leaderless,' he said.

The Young Communist League (YCL), which had promised that they would 'meet

fire with fire' in defence of the SACP, described Malema as a 'drama queen'. Recalling Malema's description of Jeremy Cronin as 'white messiah', the National Secretary of the YCL, Buti Manamela, told delegates at the conference that those who insult the SACP and its leaders would be treated accordingly. 'Those who continue to call our leaders racist should never have illusions of receiving red-carpet treatment in this congress,' he said.

Soon the incident, and the humiliation inflicted on Malema, were circulating via the electronic media including SMS text messages and Facebook. Seething with anger, Malema and his associates stormed out of the conference. Malema then sent a chain of text messages to ANC and youth leaders, calling on them to 'defend' the governing party. 'There are no roses in a war, we are called upon to defend the ANC,' his SMS text said.

He sent an SMS to Jeremy Cronin saying: 'If you thought you have taught me a lesson, wait until you see what is coming [in] your direction.' Cronin went on national radio to acknowledge that he had received some threatening SMS messages, but said he did not believe Malema had been the sender. 'I can't actually believe they are from Julius Malema, but they are signed "Julius Malema". I find it hard to believe that he would send [them].'

Meanwhile, the ANC Youth League branches were circulating messages declaring their support for Malema. The Western Cape branch secretary, Tandi Mahambhala, said in the statement that the booing invoked 'disgust and disappointment'. 'We call on the SACP to stop convening forums posing as constitutional meetings only to find out they are meant to insult the leadership of the ANC.' The Northern Cape's provincial secretary, Dikgang Stock, said the booing was 'calculated and premeditated anti-ANC behaviour. The manner in which they attempted to humiliate our hard-working ANCYL president, Comrade Julius Malema, and member

of the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) Comrade Billy Masetlha, leaves much to be desired and it is a clear indication of how the SACP views our relation to them as the ANCYL and the ANC.'

Fallout

The question now was whether Jacob Zuma would attend the conference. In the end, despite attempts to persuade him to boycott the event, he did make an appearance, and spoke. His message was, as ever, unity.

Zuma said that many organisations and alliances fall apart because their members were too 'vociferous' in their statements. But this would not happen here, he assured his audience. 'The reason we are able to hold this Alliance together', he said, 'is the traditional focus on discipline, unity, respect for the autonomy of each partner and the respect for each member of the Alliance component regardless of their position in the movement.' 'We have also always said that the unity of the Alliance is paramount under the leadership of the African National Congress,' he said.

But the matter has not been laid to rest. Malema has neither forgotten nor forgiven the insults he has suffered. He is more determined than ever to unseat the most senior Communist within the ANC, Gwede Mantashe, when the next ANC conference is held in 2012. At an ANC national executive meeting held in January 2010, Malema is reported to have asked: 'Positions are contested in the ANC. Why can't [Secretary General] be contested?' This would fly in the face of Zuma's warning at the ANC executive committee meeting in September 2009 for members not to begin premature lobbying for the 2012 conference.

Who runs the economy?

These conflicts have reflected ideological differences within the ruling Alliance. They are matched and interwoven by conflicts over the direction of policy. One of

the key accusations made against Thabo Mbeki was that he had eliminated the Left's influence on economic policy with the development of the '1996 class project'.

With the arrival of the Zuma presidency in May 2009, the Left believed that its day had come. Yet soon there were disquieting signs that at least in the area of economic policy little was to change. Trevor Manuel, South Africa's long-serving Finance Minister, was elevated to serve in the Presidency. Manuel was regarded by the left as a key supporter of the 'Washington consensus' and a leading conservative.

The battleground was drawn around a green paper on national strategic planning, which was released by Trevor Manuel (Republic of South Africa [RSA] 2009). The paper was rejected by the union movement. COSATU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi said 'The green paper on national strategic planning reflects a massive turf battle in Cabinet.' The unions accused Manuel of attempting to sideline their key ally in government, Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel.

Union leaders expressed concern that Patel would be outflanked by conservatives in the Cabinet, leaving the left without real authority. Patel had no budget, which adds to fears that he could end up in much the same position as former COSATU General Secretary Jay Naidoo. Although appointed as the reconstruction and development minister by the then president, Nelson Mandela, Naidoo became a paper tiger with little or no influence on the government.

COSATU's concerns that Ebrahim Patel was being sidelined led to demands for him to be given new powers. The union movement's president Sdumo Dlamini is quoted as saying bluntly: 'We envisage a situation where micro- and macro-economic policy is guided by the Economic Development Minister and nothing else.' COSATU urged Patel to move with haste to assemble his team. 'In so doing, he must make sure to pick the best minds within the movement, so that

he begins the long process of undoing the policies of the 1996 class project,' another reference to the Mbeki government's conservative economic policies.

While the Left was fighting its corner, so was the Right. The Youth League president decided to open something of a can of worms by questioning just who should be the real beneficiaries of the post-apartheid settlement. Malema commented that the ANC's national democratic revolution emphasised the liberation of blacks in general and Africans in particular. He attacked what he called 'minorities' in the cabinet, particularly those serving on the economic cluster of ministries. Malema was referring to Pravin Gordhan, Ebrahim Patel, Rob Davies and Public Enterprises Minister Barbara Hogan. Malema also alluded to the appointment of Gill Marcus to replace Tito Mboweni as Reserve Bank Governor. All are either Indian or white. All are on the left of the Alliance or members of the Communist Party.

Jacob Zuma was forced to intervene. He said: 'The ANC has always balanced its very deep non-racialism and the liberation of blacks in general and Africans in particular – there's never been any contradiction. You cannot use "Africans in particular" to reverse the clock.' Asked whether Malema needed political education, Zuma said: 'He is young, he is still learning.'

But the argument didn't go away.

The Communist Party came to the defence of the ministers, issuing a statement saying it was pleased that senior ANC leaders had rejected 'opportunistic attempts to play an ethnic card'. It went on: 'While ugly, white chauvinistic attitudes persist in many places, sometimes brazenly and sometimes subliminally, and should be fought at all times, a counter, narrow Africanist chauvinism simply reproduces and feeds its counterpart. Such trends must be nipped in the bud.'

In November 2009, the Alliance met in a three-day weekend retreat to try to thrash out these testing issues. As the ANC Secretary

General, Gwede Mantashe put it when he emerged at the end of the meeting to address the media, the weekend had been 'long, complex and difficult'. In essence the ANC had stamped its authority on its Alliance partners, asserting its right to lead them and to decide on their main policies.

The ANC's partners were forced to back down from their demand to have Trevor Manuel barred from becoming chairman of the envisaged National Planning Commission. In reality this had already been decided by the ANC during the last meeting of the party's National Executive Committee, which met on 9 November 2009. A statement was then agreed, saying (ANC 2009):

- (1) There should be a National Planning Commission (NPC) in government to coordinate and align the work of various government departments;
- (2) The Commission will be chaired by the Minister responsible for NPC in the presidency;
- (3) External experts will constitute the NPC; and
- (4) All proposals of the NPC will be presented to our governance structures including Cabinet, for interaction and endorsement.

Trevor Manuel, now Planning Minister in all but name, would almost certainly have refused to settle for anything less, but the issue still had to be hammered home with the Alliance. The run-up to the summit had been dominated by a war of words between the unions and the ANC over what the labour federation described as Manuel's attempt to give himself 'imperial powers' to drive the state's economic development policies.

COSATU claimed that if the recently published government green paper on national strategic planning is adopted in its current form, Manuel would have 'super' ministerial powers while Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel, who is a former trade unionist and the current

darling of the Left, would be rendered redundant.

The federation wanted either President Jacob Zuma or his deputy, Kgalema Motlanthe, to head the commission. But, following three days of heated debates, COSATU and the SACP finally gave in. 'In particular, we agreed that there is a need for the NPC to be located in the Presidency, which will be chaired by the minister in the Presidency for the NPC (Trevor Manuel) and whose main responsibility will be to ensure integrated strategic planning across government,' the Alliance partners said in a joint statement.

The ANC Secretary General, Gwede Mantashe, said that the decision meant the debate over Manuel's role 'is now settled'. COSATU president Sdumo Dlamini agreed: 'We support the call that the NPC should be located within the Presidency. It is now settled. It's no longer an issue.' At the same time he insisted that there were issues 'that still remain which need to be nuanced and worked on' relating to the NPC.

In another victory for ANC traditionalists, COSATU and the Communist Party also abandoned their claim for equal status with the ANC in setting government policy and making appointments to office. The dispute arose early on in the weekend deliberations, when COSATU General-Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi proposed that the Alliance should be 'the centre of power', and not the ANC alone. This would have meant that the ANC could not decide government policy and appoint ministers and senior officials to positions without seeking the approval of its allies. In the end this was abandoned, with even the Communist Party's Blade Nzimande forced to admit that: 'It's an ANC-led alliance.'

The ANC's strange Alliance

Although the Alliance is probably one of the best-known political formations in

South Africa, it is remarkably little studied. What, for example, are its origins? What are its rules and regulations? Who are its office-bearers? To none of these questions is there a ready answer.

Having said this, some aspects of the Alliance are clear enough. Firstly, it goes way back in history, beyond the formation of COSATU, since the first relationship was between the ANC, SACP and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU).

Founded in 1955, SACTU was the labour arm of the ANC until 1961 when the ANC was banned, and although SACTU was never itself illegal, so many of its leaders were detained and killed that it effectively ceased to exist in South Africa itself. It was only with the rebirth of the unions after the 1973 Durban Strikes and the founding of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) that labour once more had an organised voice.

Even then, the question arises, when did FOSATU's successor, COSATU, replace SACTU as the third element within the Alliance? Was this agreed when Jay Naidoo led a delegation to visit the ANC in Lusaka in February 1986? Or did it come later? Formally the two organisations met several times. It was only in March 1990 that SACTU finally accepted the inevitable and was phased out (COSATU and SACTU 1990).

One of the most explicit outlines of the relationship between the three parties within the Alliance came in the speech by Oliver Tambo given in London in July 1981, on the 60th anniversary of the SACP (ANC 1981):

The relationship between the ANC and the SACP is not an accident of history, nor is it a natural and inevitable development. For, as we can see, similar relationships have not emerged in the course of liberation struggles in other parts of Africa.

To be true to history, we must concede that there have been difficulties as well

as triumphs along our path, as, traversing many decades, our two organisations have converged towards a shared strategy of struggle. Ours is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle ...

This process of building the unity of all progressive and democratic forces in South Africa through united and unified action received a particularly powerful impetus from the outstanding leadership of Isitwalandwe Chief Albert J Luthuli, as President-General of the ANC. The process was assisted and supported by the tried and tested leadership of such stalwart revolutionaries as Isitwalandwe Yusuf Dadoo and Isitwalandwe the late Moses Kotane, revolutionaries of the stature of J.B. Marks and Bram Fischer ...

Within our revolutionary alliance each organisation has a distinct and vital role to play. A correct understanding of these roles, and respect for their boundaries has ensured the survival and consolidation of our cooperation and unity.

As stated in its programme, the SACP unreservedly supports and participates in the struggle for national liberation led by the ANC, in alliance with the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Trade Unions, the Coloured People's Congress and other patriotic groups of democrats, women, peasants and youth ...

We need, in other words, to consolidate further our alliance and ensure its maximum effectiveness.

Apart from these rather elliptical remarks about being 'not created at a conference table' but being rather a 'living organism', this is of no great help, except in indicating that the Alliance goes back at least to the time of Luthuli, who was ANC president from 1952-67. But it does not explain the workings of the Alliance today.

There is one other useful indication of how the Alliance is meant to operate. This

was provided by Joe Slovo in a now defunct publication, the *World Marxist Review* (Slovo 1987). In it he explains at some length how the ANC cooperates with the SACP:

The alliance between the ANC and our party has very deep roots in our South African condition. There are no secret clauses and no hidden agenda in this alliance. The stability and closeness of the relationship and the participation of individual Communists in the leading echelons of the national, trade union and other mass movements has its roots in our party's historically evolved style of work in relation to the mass movements. We have always respected and defended the independence, integrity and the inner democratic processes of the mass organisations. To act otherwise is to suffocate them as creative organs and to confuse manipulation with leadership.

Slovo then goes on to say that the fact that the Communist Party's aim is socialism, while the ANC's is not, has not inhibited this relationship. He concludes:

Our alliance with the ANC coincides with this approach; it is not and should not be premised on the acceptance by the ANC or any other anti-racist force of socialism as the ultimate liberator. We have every reason to believe that in a truly democratic South Africa the advance towards real social emancipation may well be settled in debate rather than on the streets.

Tensions continue

So far the tensions indicated above, which led to the intemperate exchanges between Malema and Cronin, and the ANC and Communist Party youth wings, have remained no more than verbal exchanges. But the differences have not gone away.

On 1 February 2010, the ANC Youth League president, Julius Malema, told the media following a meeting of the organisation's executive: 'Anybody who has taken a posture and has defined himself as against the ANC Youth League ... such

an individual runs the risk of losing the support of the Youth League.' Far from abandoning its policy of nationalising the mines, the Youth League has issued a formal statement calling for this to be implemented (ANCYL 2010):

Guided by the aims and objectives of the Freedom Charter, the ANC Youth League conceptualisation of Nationalisation of Mines is that it should result in the 'the democratic government's ownership and control of Mining activities, including exploration, extraction, production, processing, trading and beneficiation of Mineral Resources in South Africa'. Mineral Resources refer to all the more than 50 non-renewable precious, industrial and chemical stones extracted from Mines in South Africa. This includes but [is] not limited to Gold, Platinum Group Metals, Chrome, Coal, Manganese, Diamond, Copper, Metals, Aluminium, and many other Minerals.

We specifically emphasise that Nationalisation of Mines includes the following:

- (1) Should be accompanied by a thorough transformation of state-owned enterprises.
- (2) Not generalised nationalisation, as it can assume various forms: it can be 100% public ownership, or 51% or more owned by the state, or established through partnership arrangements with the private sector.
- (3) Will involve expropriation with or without compensation.
- (4) Not meant to bail out indebted Mining Corporations.

The policy was repudiated by the Minister of Mineral Resources, Susan Shabangu. 'Nationalisation of mines is not government policy. In my lifetime there will be no nationalisation of mines,' Shabangu told a media briefing at a mining conference. This led to an immediate riposte from the Youth League, which said that: 'If these are really the views of the Minister, she is disingenuous, dishonest and does not understand the African National Congress. In our internal discussion with Minister Shabangu,

she said that she does not disagree with the ANC Youth League, but because she is now trying to impress imperialists, she changes her tone.'

Conclusion

This article has concentrated on the relationships within the ANC-led Alliance. This is, after all, the body that contains the real power brokers in South African society, whether in Parliament or in wider society. At the same time it by no means exhausts the political landscape. There is the role of the official opposition, where the Democratic Alliance under Helen Zille now controls the Western Cape and continues to mount a vigorous intellectual critique of the ANC's control of the country. The Democratic Alliance that she leads is also involved in cautious talks with other opposition organisations (including the Independent Democrats and the Congress of the People) to find a more effective form of opposition to the government.

There is also a vigorous press and a state-controlled and troubled, but still at times effective, public broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation. The universities and think tanks provide essential independent advice and analysis. Business and other interest groups continue to operate and can, at times, influence government thinking.

The real question, however, is who will in time come to provide a voice for the voiceless – who will represent the millions in the squatter camps and impoverished rural areas that have voted with such enthusiasm for the ANC since 1994? The opinion polls suggest that they still hold the movement in high regard and with considerable affection. But anecdotal evidence indicates a waning of ANC support.

When other movements have sprung up they have, at times, found the ANC a vicious opponent. On 26 and 27 September 2009, a gang of armed men attacked the Kennedy Road shack-dweller community,

an informal settlement in Durban. They chanted pro-Zulu and anti-Pondo slogans, threatening to kill the leaders of the shack-dwellers' organisation, Abahlali baseMjondolo. The gang that carried out these attacks was allegedly organised and led by local and regional ANC leaders, who received the support of the local police. When called, police arrested not the ANC attackers but 12 members of Kennedy Road Development Committee, Abahlali's local affiliate. The situation has been condemned by the churches, with one pastor describing South Africa as 'a one-party state' (Taruona 2010). Abahlali may, in time, grow to become a potent force. But at present it is one of a myriad of local organisations attempting to represent the poor – ground that the ANC and its allies have by no means abandoned.

The real contest at the present time is within the Alliance. Divisions, described above, now run deep and there is an evident hostility between Left and Right within the movement. At the same time it should be recalled that the ANC managed to survive decades of exile without suffering the kinds of splits that left other liberation movements fragmented and powerless. The glue of this heritage is strong, as are the ties of patronage. Jacob Zuma is an extraordinarily skilled politician with a history in the ANC's intelligence arm, and is unlikely to be taken unawares by the difficult road that lies ahead.

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BRIEFING

'Green revolution' for whom? Women's access to and use of land in the Mozambique Chókwè irrigation scheme¹

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The Chókwè irrigation scheme, covering approximately 30,000 hectares of land and cultivated by more than 11,000 farmers², is the largest area of irrigated land in Mozambique. Located in the southern part of the country, within the Limpopo river basin, the scheme and its organisation were an important case study for researchers investigating the consequences of the 'socialisation of the countryside' and Frelimo's agricultural policy after independence (see Wardman 1985, Hermele 1988, Roesch 1988, Bowen 1989) and the effects of divestiture of the state farm structures after the signing of the peace agreement (West and Myers 1996). Afterwards, because of poor agricultural performance exacerbated by the very poor state of the irrigation infrastructure, the scheme had almost been forgotten. Since the beginning of 2007, however, the Chókwè irrigation scheme has forcefully re-emerged in Mozambican public debate.

The renewed interest in the country's biggest irrigation scheme stems from the 'green revolution strategy', the Mozambican government's current agricultural policy that aims to 'increase agricultural production and productivity of small

farmers' (Republic of Mozambique [RoM] 2007, p. 7) and to eliminate the need to import rice and potatoes. The foundations of the 'green revolution strategy' are to be found in the second Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (Plano de Acção para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta 2006–2009 [PARPA II]), aimed at 'achieving higher productivity and intensifying the vertical and horizontal links within the rural and national agricultural economy' (RoM 2006, p. 132).

This policy has major implications for an aspect that makes the Chókwè irrigation scheme an unusual case study: the high percentage of women in the family sector holding an irrigated parcel in their own name. In the whole family sector – which covers 44% of land and includes 92% of the farmers in the scheme – women are slightly over 30%, and over 80% among the former Farmers' Cooperatives (known these days as Farmers' Associations) that were created after Independence. The high number of registered users that are women is a consequence of the historical, political and social dynamics of the area that have pushed the migration of men towards South Africa and that have thus shaped the patterns of gendered access to family plots within the irrigation scheme.³ In the following part I will briefly analyse these dynamics, and the factors that brought about what O'Laughlin (2009) has recently defined as 'relatively secure' access to land, before discussing in more detail the

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implications of the ‘green revolution strategy’ with respect to women’s access to and use of land.

The historical dynamics of women’s access to irrigated plots

The Mozambican peasant farmers that used to occupy the area when the irrigation infrastructure was built had their land allocated according to customary rules. The construction of the irrigation scheme and the establishment of the *Colonato do Limpopo* caused a process of land expropriation that affected about 2000 households. Only a small number of them, linked to customary structures, received two hectares of land back, on probation, when irrigated plots were distributed in 1954, while the others had to move to dryland areas. By the end of the 1950s, economic, social and management problems started to undermine the productivity of the scheme, and over one-third of the Portuguese *colonos* had already left the scheme before 1975, when Mozambique became independent (Hermele 1988, p. 43).

The existing patterns of male migration towards South African mines had created instability in marital and family relations that came to be closely linked with the ongoing processes of social differentiation and the nature of women’s work. Remittances from migrant labour were crucial for women, in charge of household agriculture, to rent a plough or to hire seasonal workers for planting or harvesting. Other women continued to ‘wield the hoe’ in their plot or were employed as casual labourers on plantations (O’Laughlin 1995).

As soon as Portuguese settlers left Mozambique, local farmers occupied irrigated lands: Frelimo had yet to decide how to manage the vast irrigation scheme. In 1977, the Third Frelimo Congress set guidelines for the agricultural development of the country that had to be carried out by mobilising people in state farms and cooperatives, and creating communal villages.

The Limpopo Valley, with its major irrigation scheme, was designated ‘breadbasket of the nation’. In Chókwè, those who had occupied the irrigated plots were resettled into communal villages and organised in farmers’ cooperatives, and the whole irrigation scheme was put under the control of a state farm, the Limpopo Agro-Industrial Complex (CAIL).

At Independence, 30% of households were headed *de jure* by women, and but many more women were *de facto* heads of household. This was reflected in the composition of cooperatives in Chókwè, where two-thirds of the members were women. At that time wages from migrant labour were steadily declining, due to radical change in South African recruitment policy: from 1976, the number of Mozambican miners had decreased by 70% (Newitt 2002, p. 205). This had a marked gendered impact in terms of the division of productive work, with men searching for employment on the state farms and women relegated mainly to subsistence or cooperative production, or recruited as seasonal casual workers.

The Fourth Frelimo Congress of 1983 agreed to halt the expansion of the state farm sector while recognising the relevance of the cooperative and family sector, as compared to large-scale and centralised agricultural development projects that were not achieving the expected results in terms of economic development. In Chókwè, the CAIL was divided into smaller state farms, and part of the land was redistributed among members of the cooperatives for individual farming. The remaining irrigated land was further divided among the family, the ‘private’ sector (i.e. including better-off farmers that owned agricultural inputs) and the entrepreneurial sector – private companies and two joint ventures (Pitcher 2002, p. 110). The divestiture of the state farms was completed after 1986, when a programme of economic rehabilitation was agreed between the Mozambican

government, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The land was then further redistributed among individual farmers. Whereas many women members of farmers' cooperatives were allocated a small irrigated plot in the family sector, they were completely excluded by the category of 'private' farmers, who received larger plots closer to the main canals, as they were deemed to be 'productive farmers' – which, according to West and Myers (1996, p. 43), related more to wealth, status, local connections and kinship relations than to equipment or specific expertise. Women were thus admitted as individual farmers within the irrigation scheme because of the local patterns of gendered division of labour, but not because they were considered 'serious actors in the irrigation context' (Zwarteveen 1997, p. 1346). While the fact that many women were admitted to the scheme as individual farmers – and later registered in their own name as water users – should not be underestimated, their relative security of access is due to their being 'productive' and paying the water fee, as further developments in the irrigation scheme show.

The Chókwè irrigation scheme after 1997

The year 1997 seemed to be a landmark for the development of the irrigation scheme, with the establishment of a new management body, the parastatal enterprise *Hidraulica de Chókwè-Empresa Publica* (HICEP), and of Water Users' Associations (WUAs) that were charged with providing technical support to HICEP in maintenance activities and with representing all farmers, now officially called 'water users' (WUs). The irrigated plots remained divided into three sectors: family (between 0.25 and 3.9 ha. of land), private (4 to 500 ha.) and entrepreneurial (over 500 ha.), with the family sector covering approximately the 44% of land and 92% of the WUs.

According to the HICEP statute, approved in 2002, water users (WUs) are entitled to receive water in a quantity proportional to the size of their plot, and to be represented by their respective Water Users' Association (WUA). The right to water for irrigation can be suspended if a WU does not pay the water fee. WUAs regulate, manage and keep the accounts of water distribution within the area assigned to them, ensure that infrastructure (secondary canals and ditches) and equipment are properly maintained, represent their members and take part in the administration of the irrigation system. HICEP, for its part, administers the irrigation scheme, regulates and manages the water supply, and is responsible for the maintenance of the main canals as well as for technical support to WUAs.

As concerns land rights, Article 12 of the HICEP statute establishes that the irrigation scheme follows the regulations set out in the 1997 Land Law. Two types of land right apply to WUs: those entering the scheme for the first time are issued a state-granted land title (*Título de Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra*) once they are approved by their WUA. According to the Land Law, this kind of land title is subject to a legally mandated community consultation process and to the discretion of the state. In the case of this state-owned irrigation scheme, WUAs act as 'the community'. Non-Mozambican citizens and corporate bodies are only allowed to obtain this type of land title, and their application must include a development plan to be implemented within two years. On the other hand, Mozambican men and women who have occupied irrigated land in good faith for at least ten years are awarded an inheritable land title. Within the scheme administration, both titles can be revoked for abuse of rights, for lack of maintenance of irrigation canals or for not paying taxes. The statute further specifies that land rights within the irrigation scheme should aim to intensify use of land, and therefore WUs

are required to maximise use of their plot, provided that water is available. Moreover, land rights are inseparable from rights and duties related to the use of water.

The establishment of the new management structure and of WUAs was accompanied by the emergence of an enduring conflict between them and the Farmers' Associations. HICEP, in fact, suggested to the Farmers' Associations (affiliated under the Chókwè Union of Farmers' Associations) that they stop the associations in order to enable their members to join the respective WUA as individual WUs. The Union strongly disagreed and is currently engaged in a process of establishing a legal persona for its Farmers' Associations, so that they can join their respective WUAs as a group rather than as individual members. This would enable them to maintain a better bargaining position *vis-à-vis* HICEP and to advance the water fee for members in temporary difficulty. Indeed, this is often the case for women members of the Farmers' Associations who – especially when heads of household – are most likely to use the irrigated plots for subsistence rather than for marketing. The recent policy focus on increasing the commercial productivity of the irrigation scheme puts many of these women farmers – especially those who are heads of household and those without alternative or differentiated livelihood strategies – at real risk of being evicted.

Mainstream and conflicting visions over the Chókwè irrigation scheme

The 'green revolution strategy' has its foundations in the second Mozambican PARPA: it is aimed at assisting both 'small family farms during their gradual transition to commercial operation' and 'commercial farmers, encouraging them to boost their production, productivity, and competitiveness' (RoM 2006, p. 129). The development of public–private partnerships is seen as a key strategy to effect this

structural transformation in the agricultural sector (*ibid.*, p. 130). While the role of irrigated agriculture is only briefly mentioned in the PARPA, in June 2006 the National Directorate of Water released a proposal for a new National Water Policy (NWP) aiming at: the efficient use of water for economic development; water pricing; direct participation of the stakeholders at basin-level; enhancement of the role of the private sector (RoM 2006a, Art. 2.2–3). As regards irrigation, the policies envisaged aim to 'promot[e] the full utilisation of those irrigation infrastructures already existing' including through the promotion of private investment and public–private partnerships. The sustainability of operating, maintenance and management costs of irrigation schemes is guaranteed by the imposition of a water tariff (*ibid.*, Art. 4.2).

The mantras of the international agenda of water management – cost recovery, decentralisation of water management, setting up associations for water users, promotion of commercial agriculture and increased participation of the private sector – resonate in the above documents and fit into the local dimension of a rooted narrative that sees subsistence farmers transformed into commercial farmers as the best answer to the problems of rural poverty, underdevelopment and food insecurity. Irrigation infrastructure is considered an added value to achieve objectives of increased production and must, therefore, be properly and efficiently managed. Efficient management would necessarily include cost recovery through the imposition of water fees, a reduced role for the state, the involvement of the private sector and, an increased role for local users. This, it is claimed, will lead not only to increased production and productivity, but also to a more sustainable use of water that, as a scarce and economically valuable resource, must not be wasted in inefficient subsistence farming.

These measures are currently being implemented in the Chókwè irrigation

scheme, and the changes have crucial implications both in terms of gender equality and of dynamics of social differentiation and poverty reduction. Irrigated farming is seen as having a significant potential to enhance the productivity of small farmers, thus reducing rural poverty. However, the fact that the above actions do not take into consideration gender inequalities in accessing and using irrigated land makes one wonder who will benefit from these dynamics of change and who, on the contrary, will be marginalised. Gender mainstreaming, in the key policy documents that are shaping the current state of the Chókwè irrigation scheme, has resulted only in a rather rhetorical acknowledgement of gender inequalities in Mozambican society and in rural contexts in general.

The main concerns of HICEP managers are the completion of the infrastructural rehabilitation, the establishment of joint ventures between WUAs and private investors, and the economic sustainability of the irrigation scheme, which would necessarily imply an increase of the water fee. The fact that this will result in increasing difficulties and a real risk for subsistence farmers of being evicted from their parcel – as the statute sets out for non-payment of the water fee – appears to be of marginal concern for HICEP, who considers that subsistence farmers in the scheme are essentially wasting water, and is planning to have all irrigated parcels allocated to those who can farm ‘efficiently’. There is no mandatory provision in this sense, but the envisaged increase of the water fee will push many small farmers – and particularly women – out of irrigated farming and back to rain-fed plots, and in search of casual jobs in a very insecure regional labour market (O’Laughlin 2009, p. 19). At the same time, powerful actors are entering the irrigation scheme, as HICEP is encouraging private investors to establish partnerships or joint ventures with the WUAs, granting them huge plots of irrigated land. However, private

investors are not new to the irrigation scheme: they are only one of the many types of actor with different and competing interests that, over the years, have shaped a historically, politically and socially complex environment.

Reviving the ‘breadbasket of the country’?

Part and parcel of the government discourse about rice production in the Chókwè irrigation scheme is a recall to the Frelimo’s almost mythical project of transforming the Limpopo Valley into the ‘breadbasket of the country’. The 2008–11 Food Production Action Plan estimates that the deficit in rice production is around 300,000 tonnes, and the government expects the Chókwè irrigation scheme to contribute 35,000 tonnes to national supply in 2009–10.⁴ Indeed, HICEP expects farmers in the irrigation scheme to grow rice on their plots, rather than ‘unprofitable’ subsistence crops. However, a brief analysis of the specific patterns of production in the family sector throws some light on the risk that some women farmers are facing, in a situation exacerbated by the increasing competition for casual jobs in the agricultural sector resulting from substantial return migration of males from South Africa (O’Laughlin 2009, p. 19) as a consequence of the economic crisis.

During a series of interviews conducted in January 2008 with three male and 17 female members of a few Farmers’ Associations, supported by a Spanish NGO-funded family farming support project, several interesting factors emerged. While the three men were all married (one of them with two wives), only six of the women were married (one the first wife of a polygamous man), while eight were widowed, and three were single mothers. Their ages ranged from 32 (a single mother) to 63 (a widow), while the three men were 49, 54 and 60 years old.

With respect to land holdings, five out of 20 were farming a plot that was not

registered in their name. One woman, for example, had been working the plot of another who died in 2004. She previously had a plot within the same association, but in 1991 she was forced to abandon it because of 'difficulties'. In 2005 she went back to the association asking for another plot, and she was waiting for it to be registered in her name in the HICEP land register. Her agricultural production was exclusively subsistence-related, and had little growing on it compared to other farmers. This was because her plot was not receiving water due because of a soil problem that was later corrected. At the time of the interview she had just started to irrigate properly, and did not know how much the water fee was, since she had never been asked to pay it. Plot sizes vary from 0.25 ha. to 2 ha., the average being 0.9 ha. It is interesting to note that the three farmers who have a 2-ha. plot (two women and one man) are long-serving presidents of a Farmers' Association, and that they were granted their individual plots between 1983 and 1987.

As regards crop production, 14 of the farmers were cultivating rice (the three men, and 11 of the women). Of the six women who were not, four were widows and two were single mothers. They mainly produced maize, beans and sweet potatoes for subsistence, and only one sold part of her maize production, from home rather than at market. With only one exception, all the farmers had alternate sources of income, coming mainly from casual labour on other plots, but also from selling charcoal, brick production and laundering clothes. Among the rice producers, the situation was very varied. One man had been able to harvest six tonnes of rice on 1.5 hectares of land in the last season, but most farmers grew rice on only half a hectare of land, even when they had a bigger plot, and average production ranged from approximately 1.5 to 3.5 tonnes of rice. The limited options for selling the rice were considered a major

constraint: the majority of farmers were selling the rough rice to Orizicola Inácio de Sousa, a rice-processing factory located in Palmeira, in the district of Manhiça, Maputo province. They received 4.1 to 4.5 *meticais* (MTn) per kg of rice, from which transport costs, calculated at 1 MTn per kg, had to be deducted. Only three women did not sell their rice to the factory: one claimed that the amount of money received was not worth all the work she did in her field, therefore she was cleaning her own rice and selling it from home, earning up to 15 MTn per kg. Another woman sold rough rice from home, gaining approximately 100 MTn per 15 kg. The third used to sell rice to the factory, but as her production was decreasing due to the poor conditions of her plot, she kept it for family consumption: 'I am not going to spend all my money on a 25kg bag of rice in the shop!' she claimed.

All the farmers grew maize and beans, and many also grew vegetables. Some successful rice producers (four) had decided to limit their crops to rice in the warm season and maize and beans in the cold season. Two of them, however, had access to another plot in the dryland where they grew vegetables that were either sold at the local market or used for family consumption.

These patterns of production show that the small farmers in the Farmers' Associations are trying to comply with HICEP requests to cultivate rice – mainly thanks to the NGO support and because 'they want to show to the government that small farmers also work hard and can be efficient.' There is, however, a series of constraints that must be considered. The main problem for these farmers is the marketing of their produce; in fact, having refused to engage in contract farming arrangements with a private company present in the scheme (because it was not considered profitable), their options have remained limited: either they send the rough rice to the processing factory, with

a limited profit, or they sell it from home. The woman selling cleaned rice from home is married and has no dependants in her household: her only son lives and works in South Africa. Given that her husband also takes part in the farming work, she has time to clean rice, a time-consuming operation that in any case she prefers to the alternatives of selling in Chókwè market ('it's a waste of time') or selling to the factory ('it's not profitable!'). But for single mothers and widowed or divorced women, rice cultivation is highly demanding in terms of work and time spent in the field, and limits options for accessing other sources of income, which are mainly casual labour on other plots, but also include charcoal selling, brick production and laundering clothes. Constrained by lack of time, money and inputs, these women are not only lagging behind on rice cultivation, but are clearly also facing the risk of eviction once the water fee is increased.

Another important concern is the lack of access to inputs, fertilisers and pesticides. Even though the farmers are entitled to use tools and other inputs from the Associations' premises, these are not always easily available. With limited access to other forms of stable income, the money they invest in their farming activity is used mainly for land preparation – and for paying the water fee.

A third factor involved the option of employing casual labourers to help with particular activities (mostly rice transplanting). It is interesting to note that five out of the six women not growing rice were only farming for subsistence. The sixth sold only part of her produce from home, depending on the season and on the supplies that she had. They claimed that being by themselves (four of them are widowed, and two single mothers), they do not have enough time to engage with more profitable farming activities, and that they would like to employ some casual labour, but had no money to do so. All

the other farmers, more or less regularly, employ other people that are paid 30 to 50 MTn per day. Traditional systems of mutual help or solidarity are not common, except for the amount of work that everyone is supposed to do in the communal field of the cooperative: 'Money is important. Those who work, want money.'

The Chókwè irrigation scheme has an unusual history that was shaped by male migration to South Africa and resulted in increased options for women to have primary access to irrigated plots, and over the years, women have enjoyed a certain degree of security with respect to access to and use of irrigated land. The implementation of the government 'green revolution strategy' – including the HICEP plan to make the scheme economically sustainable by increasing the water fee, the concept of the 'efficient farmer' backed by the international agenda of water management, and the increasing insecurity of the regional labour market – will severely undermine this 'relative security', given the fact that there is no clear-cut gender policy within the scheme, nor indeed within the key policy documents briefly presented above, that addresses the specific needs and interests of women regarding irrigated land and taking into accounts the problems they face. It appears that expecting small farmers, and in particular women, to be able to compete in the globalised rice market is unrealistic, and can perpetuate unequal gendered access to resources such as land and water.

Note on contributor

Roberta Pellizzoli has recently been awarded a PhD by the University of Bologna for her research and thesis on International Cooperation and Sustainable Development Policies.

Notes

1. This briefing is based on fieldwork carried out between October 2007 and February 2008 as part of my doctoral research on women's access to and use of land in Chókwè.

2. Farmers (or water users) are divided into three sectors, the main difference being the size of irrigated plot they hold: 0.25–3.9 ha. for the family sector; 4–500 ha. for private sector; over 500 ha. for entrepreneurial sector. It is important to stress here that in this context 'private' does not mean individual ownership, but refers to farmers owning means of production (see Roesch 1988).
3. According to the 2007 national census, the sex ratio in the Chókwe district is 0.77 male to 1 female, compared to a national ratio of 0.91:1.
4. See: 'No regadio do Chokwe': Custos ameaçam produção de arroz' (2009); and 'Mozambique: country to eliminate rice supply deficit by 2011' (2009).

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Ubuntu bashing¹: the marketisation of ‘African values’ in South Africa

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Broadly defined as an ‘African worldview’ that places communal interests above those of the individual, and where human existence is dependent upon interaction with others, *ubuntu* has a long tradition on the continent. This paper explores the ways in which the philosophy and language of *ubuntu* have been taken up and appropriated by market ideologies in post-apartheid South Africa. The literature on ‘*ubuntu* capitalism’ offers the most obvious illustration of this, but there are more subtle ways in which *ubuntu* theory and language have been (re)introduced to post-apartheid South Africa to support and reinforce neoliberal policymaking. But rather than reject *ubuntu* thinking outright as too compromised by this discursive shift, as much of the Left in South Africa has done, the paper asks if there is something potentially transformative about *ubuntu* beliefs and practices that can be meaningfully revived for more progressive change.

Keywords: *ubuntu*; capitalism; socialism; South Africa

The values-based philosophy of African humanism (*ubuntu*) has begun to transform the corporate culture in South Africa towards a more people-centred style which is inclusive, participative and integrity-based. (Visser 2004, p. 12)

The systems of capitalism and *ubuntu* are like oil and water. They do not mix. (Vavi 2001)

Although a complex and contested set of ideas, the philosophy of *ubuntu* has been widely employed in post-apartheid South Africa by the state, the private sector, academics and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). From the development of jurisprudence to the promotion of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, *ubuntu* is seen in many circles as a philosophical break from South Africa’s colonial/apartheid past and an ideological vehicle for a revitalised (South) Africa.

Broadly defined as an ‘African worldview’ that places communal interests above those of the individual, and where human existence is dependent upon interaction with others, *ubuntu* has a long tradition on the continent. This paper provides an overview of the ways in which the philosophy and language of *ubuntu* have been taken up in post-apartheid South Africa, with a focus on how it has been appropriated by pro-market interest groups – from nationalists who use the concept to argue for a ‘rebranding’ of the country to business leaders and government policy-makers keen to make South Africa a more business-friendly place.

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The literature on ‘*ubuntu* capitalism’ provides the most transparent form of the marketisation of this philosophy, promising a home-grown corporate management culture that combines social and economic justice with improved profits, but there are more subtle examples evidenced in a wide variety of policy making and practice in the country. In this regard, the revitalisation of *ubuntu* theory and language should be seen as part of a larger discursive effort on the part of the South African state and capital to convince South Africans that market reforms are democratic and egalitarian, while at the same time serving to defuse opposition to underlying neoliberal change.

Not all of this *ubuntu* narrative is intentionally or explicitly market oriented. Much of it lacks the theoretical and analytical rigour to be taken as deliberate. Some of it is simply wishful and naïve. Most of it, however, contributes to the growth of neoliberal thinking in South Africa by valorising the market reforms that have been driving much of the post-apartheid political dispensation.

None of this should come as a surprise. The broad, abstract principles that make *ubuntu* so appealing also lend themselves readily to liberal market principles. The same could be said of the erstwhile attempts to create ‘African socialism’ in the 1960s and 70s by tapping into *ubuntu* ideals. Though not a theology *per se*, *ubuntu* faces the same challenges in this regard as religions such as Christianity and Judaism, which espouse similar core values but which have been appropriated at different times by market and non-market interests alike, making it unclear what political value *ubuntu* may have in post-apartheid South Africa.

Are we, therefore, to reject *ubuntu* thinking as too theoretically fuzzy or irredeemably marketised to be a useful progressive tool in South Africa (as most of the political Left has done)? Or is there something potentially transformative about *ubuntu* beliefs and practices that could reinvigorate the discourse and ideas of socialist/anti-capitalist movements?

Persisting with as tired and tainted a political idea as *ubuntu* may simply confuse people; and will certainly present a major rhetorical challenge given the twenty-year head start that market ideologues have had with the *ubuntu* concept in post-apartheid South Africa. Nor is it clear that *ubuntu*’s otherwise rich worldview can assist in understanding the vagaries of contemporary capitalism. At the very least *ubuntu* theory and discourse would require a much more explicitly materialist conception of market society, without which it would fail to provide the structural insights necessary for non-market change or to resist incorporation into market ideologies. It is unclear whether such a theoretical synthesis is possible.

I will argue, however, that the philosophical underpinnings of *ubuntu* are fundamentally at odds with the market agenda of *ubuntu* capitalists, with irreconcilable differences between the stated communalism of *ubuntu* and the individualised and commodified life-worlds of capitalism. *Ubuntu* thinking and practice can perhaps exist contemporaneously with the market, but as the opening quote to this paper by union leader Zwelinzima Vavi suggests, ‘Capitalism and *ubuntu* are like oil and water.’ Far from strengthening social bonds and putting the communal ahead of the individual, marketised notions of *ubuntu* exacerbate individualism and inequality. In this regard the dominant rhetoric of *ubuntu* in South Africa today is similar to that of neoliberalism, offering pro-market policy-makers another weapon in their discursive arsenal. For this reason alone it may be worth an attempt to revisit the more progressive aspects of this philosophical tradition.

Defining *ubuntu*

Defining *ubuntu* is both a simple and complex task. It is simple in the sense that its general meaning and spirit are broadly understood in common practice and parlance throughout

much of the continent. It is complex in the sense that there is no easy or direct translation to English, and there are unresolved debates about its ontological status.

Morphologically, *ubuntu* is an Nguni term, with phonological variants in many African languages, including *umundu* in Kikuyu, *imuntu* in Kimeru, *bumuntu* in kiSukuma, *vumuntu* in shiTsonga, *bomoto* in Bobangi, and *gimuntu* in kiKongo (Kagame 1976, as cited in Kamwangamalu 1999, p. 25). For Ramose (2002a, p. 230), it is critical to see the word as ‘two words in one’, consisting of the prefix *ubu-* and the stem *ntu-*, evoking a dialectical relationship of being and becoming. In this sense, *ubu-* and *ntu-* are ‘two aspects of be-ing as a one-ness and whole-ness’, with *ubuntu* best seen as a dynamic interplay between the verb and the noun rather than a static or dogmatic state of thinking.

Not surprisingly, efforts at direct translations to English have proven difficult. Most simply, *ubuntu* has been translated as ‘humanness’ (notably, not ‘humanism’), though most observers agree that its meaning is better captured in aphorisms such as the Zulu phrase ‘*umuntu ngumuntu nga Bantu*’ (or the Sotho version, ‘*motho ke motho ke batho*’), which can be construed in English to mean that to be a human being ‘is to affirm one’s humanity by recognizing the humanity in others, and on that basis, establish humane relations with them’ (Ramose 2002a, p. 231).

Other translations of the concept include: ‘a person is a person because of others’ (Blankenberg 1999, p. 43); ‘I am because you are’ (Prinsloo 2000, p. 277); ‘a spirit of neighbourliness’ (Kamwangamalu 1999, p. 24); and ‘the individual’s existence is relative to that of the group’ (Mokgoro 1998, p. 2). Desmond Tutu has described *ubuntu* as ‘embracing hospitality, caring about others, being willing to go the extra mile for the sake of others. . . . The solitary human is a contradiction in terms and therefore you seek the common good because your humanity comes into its own community in belonging.’²

The South African government, in its 1997 White Paper on Social Welfare, defines *ubuntu* as ‘the principle of caring for each other’s well-being . . . and a spirit of mutual support. . . . Each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual’s humanity. *Ubuntu* means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being’ (Republic of South Africa [RSA] 1997, section 24).

Is *ubuntu* unique in this philosophical orientation? Yes and no. Many analysts insist that its foundational meanings and practices can be found in societies, philosophies and theologies around the world, from Buddhism to liberalism. As Broodryk (1996, pp. 31–35) notes, ‘if “unique” means unusual, incomparable or extra-ordinary, then *ubuntuism* is not unique to one culture, for all people have this magic gift, or sadly lack it’ (see also Mbigi and Maree 1995, Shutte 2000).

Others insist that *ubuntu* is ‘unique to Africa’, and more specifically to ‘the Bantu languages from which it derives’ (Kamwangamalu 1999, p. 37). Ramose is perhaps most insistent on this point. In his critique of Shutte’s (2000) attempt to find the ‘universal insights of European and African thought’ and ‘reconcile’ them into a new South African culture, Ramose (2002b, p. 327) argues that ‘dissolving the specificity of *ubuntu* into abstract “universality” is to deny its right to be different. It is to accord undue primacy to the universal over the particular.’

But in keeping with the dialectical spirit of *ubuntu*, even these authors point to its context-dependent nature. Thus, Kamwangamalu (1999, p. 36) notes that qualities of *ubuntu*, or humanness, may exist in every person, but ‘these qualities are not innate . . . rather [they are] acquired through socialization.’ ‘Besides’, he goes on to say, ‘how can Africa, a continent that has produced innumerable political monsters and dictators, have

humanistic pretensions' (Kamwangamalu 1999, p. 37). *Ubuntu* practices therefore vary across time and space and are dependent on (changing) social, linguistic, economic and political contexts. In this regard, one can identify, acknowledge and celebrate a uniquely African phenomenon (and phenomenology) while at the same time recognising similarities and continuities with other philosophical traditions.

It was in this philosophical spirit that attempts to introduce 'African' forms of socialism were undertaken in the 1960s and 70s. Although importing 'universal' understandings related to the failures and contradictions of capitalism, there was also a heavy reliance on indigenous concepts of *ubuntu* and the potential for Africans to develop a unique post-colonial socialist path (Nyerere 1968, Rodney 1972, Legum and Mmari 1995, Saul 1995).

A similar approach has been employed by pro-market *ubuntuphiles* today who see the merger of 'universal' market principles with local *ubuntu* beliefs and practices as both an ontological possibility and a political opportunity. It is to this marketisation of *ubuntu* principles that we now turn.

The marketisation of *ubuntu* discourse in South Africa

The marketisation of *ubuntu* discourse in South Africa has evolved in a number of ways, finding formal expression in laws, policies and public debates since the early 1990s. The following sections look at three important clusters of this marketised discourse. The first focuses on the 'moral regeneration' movement, which has used *ubuntu* as a form of nation-building and national 'branding' intended to attract capital to South Africa. The second looks at the literature on '*ubuntu* capitalism', while the third explores developments in public policy and 'good governance' where *ubuntu* discourse has been most closely tied to that of neoliberalism.

Moral regeneration and national branding

The *ubuntu* concept has been used explicitly by a host of traditional leaders, churches, community organisations, NGOs and politicians since the end of apartheid to push for a 'moral regeneration' of South Africa. A 'Moral Summit' hosted by Nelson Mandela in 1998 appears to have been a catalyst for the formalisation of the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) – a non-profit Section 21 company created with the participation of the Office of the President. The MRM was established 'in the spirit of *ubuntu*', with the aim of 'encourag[ing] a dynamic mass movement' of organisations that can assist in 'building and sustaining moral communities ... and fight[ing] against immoral behaviour in our communities and public institutions.'³

The MRM and its constituent organisations are calling for nothing less than a 'moral renewal crusade', with Mandela advocating for a 'cultural revolution' (elevated – quite literally – to a 'Cultural Revolution' by a journalist for *Rootz*, a popular magazine founded on the *ubuntu* concept [Sampson 2007]). But it is not just morality that is at stake. For Mandela, a cultural revolution is required 'if we want to preserve our national heritage' (Sampson 2007). In effect, the revitalisation of *ubuntu* is seen to go hand in hand with the building of a post-apartheid national identity.

Former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (the 'leader of the Moral Regeneration Movement collective') takes the argument one step further, arguing that *ubuntu* values are essential for the creation of 'a national consciousness' aimed at 're-branding and redefining South Africa,' in the same way that 'some Asian countries have been

branded in terms of ... Confucianism' (Mlambo-Ngcuka 2006). Here we see explicit attempts to link *ubuntu* nationalism with the enhancement of market opportunities for South African firms, and to attract foreign capital, with the 2005 Annual Report of the Moral Regeneration Movement outlining plans to 'implement a major national image building marketing campaign' intended to 'profile the importance ... of Ubuntu'.⁴

Ubuntu capitalism

Even more explicit are attempts to marry *ubuntu* philosophy with corporate operations and ideologies in the rapidly growing writing on '*ubuntu* capitalism'. Academics and business leaders in South Africa have been aggressively promoting *ubuntu* as a home-grown management philosophy since the early 1990s, arguing that it leads to better corporate governance and social responsibility while at the same time improving the bottom line and safeguarding a market economy.

The most overt form of this thinking is in the business literature, with academics and corporate leaders stumbling over one another to advance a new post-apartheid corporate worldview (and in many cases creating business opportunities for themselves as '*ubuntu* consultants'). One of the earliest and most influential illustrations of this is the King Report (first published in 1994 with a subsequent report in 2002). Written by former High Court Judge Mervyn King, and commissioned by the private-sector Institute of Directors, the reports are intended to provide a voluntary 'Code of Corporate Practices and Conduct' for post-apartheid corporate governance. They capture the essence of attempts by South Africa's corporate world to import *ubuntu* concepts into new management philosophies, as illustrated by the following quotes from the Executive Summary of King Report II (King 2002, pp. 17–18):

Governance in any context reflects the value system of the society in which it operates. Accordingly, it would be pertinent to observe and to take account of the African worldview and culture in the context of governance of companies in South Africa, some aspects of which are set out as follows:

- Spiritual Collectiveness is prized over individualism. This determines the communal nature of life, where households live as an interdependent neighbourhood.
- An inclination towards consensus rather than dissension helps to explain the loyalty of Africans to their leadership.
- Humility and helpfulness to others is more important than criticism of them.
- In the main, African culture is non-discriminatory and does not promote prejudice. This explains the readiness with which Africans embrace reconciliation at political and business levels.
- Co-existence with other people is highly valued. The essence of *ubuntu* (humanity) that cuts across Africa is based on the premise that you can be respected only because of your cordial co-existence with others.
- There is also an inherent trust and belief in fairness of all human beings. This manifests itself in the predisposition towards universal brotherhood [*sic*], even shared by African-Americans.
- High standards of morality are based on historical precedent. These are bolstered by the close kinship observed through totem or clan names and the extended family system.
- A hierarchical political ideology is based on an inclusive system of consultation at various levels. The tradition of consultation as practised by the chiefs since time immemorial should form the basis of modern labour relations and people management practices.
- Perpetual optimism is due to strong belief in the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent superior being in the form of the creator of mankind.

According to Visser (2004, p. 12), King Report II 'is unique in the world in the way in which it emphasises to company directors the importance of embedding *ubuntu* as the underlying governance ethic of their organizations'. So impressed was Visser that he coined the phrase '*ubuntu* capitalism', arguing that:

the values-based philosophy of African humanism (*ubuntu*) has begun to transform the corporate culture in South Africa towards a more people-centred style which is inclusive, participative and integrity-based. . . . This community-oriented spirit stands in sharp contrast to the individualistic creed (and greed) that has fuelled the American brand of capitalism over the past 50 years and which underlies much of the current anti-globalization, anti-American and anti-corporate sentiments. . . . South African business is in fact the crucible in which a new model of capitalism is being forged, one that transcends the divisions between first and third world, one that integrates economic, social and environmental goals, one that balances shareholder returns with stakeholder returns, and one that brings the heart and soul back into the workplace. For South African companies, creating this new way of doing business is a matter of survival in our transforming society, but more than that, it is a sense that South Africa is a country of miracles, where nothing is impossible and dreams do come true. . . . South African business has moved from being pariahs of the world to leaders in the global corporate responsibility movement. . . . The influence of South Africa's corporate governance agenda [will] spread throughout Africa, contributing to the African Renaissance.

This rhetoric has proven to be popular with South African corporations, with *ubuntu* phraseology showing up in brochures, annual reports and marketing efforts across a wide range of sectors. The privately-owned Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), for example, won a \$1.5 billion contract in 2006 with the Mumbai International Airport in part on its claim that 'ACSA will discharge its responsibilities with humility and the spirit of *ubuntu* that Africans are renowned for, a principle that is core to our philosophy in doing business.'⁵

The Standard Bank also 'believes in and lives by the African values of *Ubuntu*. This means that the essence of each of us is found not only within ourselves and our families, but also within our communities and the cosmos. Born out of Africa for Africa – and believing in the potential of Africa as a continent, we are committed to creating prosperity and giving back to our community – the people of Africa. For us to achieve our social investment goals, we aim to maximise and sustain our profitability as a multi-national organisation.'⁶

In the high-stakes game of tourism and corporate conferencing, South African government agencies have also been quick to use *ubuntu* language as a marketing tool. The FIFA World Cup in 2010, to be held in South Africa, is illustrative. In his welcoming remarks at the Kick-Off Workshops in Cape Town in October 2006, former President Thabo Mbeki stated that, 'Every day, as Africans, we speak of the need to respect the dignity of all human beings and embrace the universal values of *ubuntu* of compassion and human solidarity. . . . I am privileged to have the opportunity today to communicate this same important message of FIFA and its official partners, sponsors and licensees of the importance to us of the message you have brought to us that we will all win in Africa, with Africa.'⁷

In 2008, South African state tourism agencies began a 'Business Unusual' campaign in an effort to sell the *ubuntu* concept to an international corporate market and to attract international business travellers and conferences. *Ubuntu* is sold as a fusing of 'African wisdom with Western business', with 'unusual ways of doing business in unusual locations with unusual experiences, often taking executives from the boardroom into the bush'. Examples of the '*ubuntu* experience' include: 'using drumming as a team-building [exercise], holding a *bosberaad* (a conference where all have equal authority) out in the wilds, pairing

international captains of industry with their South African counterparts using indigenous cultural concepts such as *ubuntu* (means respect for the dignity of all and an emphasis on partnerships) or hosting an *imbizo* (meeting of leaders for issues to be resolved) in a locally constructed environment such as the Ubuntu Village in Soweto (Johannesburg)' (Biz-community.com 2007).

According to Marthinus van Schalkwyk (2005), former Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 'there has never been a better time to take advantage of what South Africa offers the world. This is not just business excellence – it is Business Unusual.' Even former US President Bill Clinton has been caught up in the excitement of an 'African' corporate culture. Speaking to a Labour Party conference in the UK in September 2006, Clinton told delegates that they needed to 'get into *ubuntu*',⁸ an idea that has apparently taken hold in other parts of the world, with the emergence of *ubuntu* education funds, *ubuntu* tents at development conferences, *ubuntu* demonstration villages, an *ubuntu* university, and even an open-source computer operating system named *ubuntu*.⁹

Public policy

A third way in which *ubuntu* philosophy has been marketised in post-apartheid South Africa is in public policy, evident across a range of government departments and functions. Jurisprudence and restorative justice are particularly visible attempts to instil *ubuntu* principles into governance practice, illustrated by the inclusion of *ubuntu* concepts in the Interim Constitution (though not in the final Constitution), in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in juvenile justice systems, and in Corrections (Mokgoro 1998, Anderson 2003, RSA 2004). Here we see an attempt to employ the humanist aspects of *ubuntu* to the reconciliation and rehabilitative process, in contradistinction to the punitive principles and practices of the colonial and apartheid past.

Ubuntu concepts have also been used to advocate for assistance for people with physical and mental disabilities. According to Lorenzo (2003, p. 775), 'The values of *Ubuntu* ... need to be brought into disability programmes much more consciously by all practitioners. ... The reawakening of the African Renaissance calls on everyone to deal with the challenge of building a new life based on African ideals and ways of thinking, regardless of intellectual background or academic skills.' Similarly, *ubuntu* has been invoked as a way to reduce violence against women and to improve education. For Outwater *et al.* (2005, p. 151), promoting *ubuntu* 'can lead the way to a society with decreased levels of violence and decreased levels of HIV transmission'. For Venter (2004, pp. 155, 159), introducing *ubuntu* values into the education system 'should deal with the imposition of Western values on African culture' and 'encourage critical thinking', which, 'if embraced, would enable South Africans to succeed in their quest for reconciliation and nation building.'

While not necessarily pro-market in its orientation, none of this literature addresses how post-apartheid market-oriented reforms (such as privatisation and user fees) affect the introduction of *ubuntu* principles. The calls for *ubuntu* in this writing are merely abstract ideals, decoupled from the political economy of the sectors in which they are situated and lacking coherent policy agendas or concrete goals. They are, at best, a naïve appeal by liberal academics for rapid changes in governance culture – as if a magic *ubuntu* wand could be waved over policy-makers – and at worst a distraction from the deeper structural impediments to the inequities in health, education and jurisprudence that persist across race, class and gender divides in South Africa and which have been exacerbated in many cases by market-oriented reforms.

There is, however, a cluster of *ubuntu*-oriented policy making that is explicitly neoliberal. Emanating in large part from central government, and filtering down to provincial and local levels, there has been a growing call for the introduction of *ubuntu* reforms that promote self-help and personal responsibility in ways that dovetail with many of the larger ideological objectives and disciplining mechanisms of neoliberalism (as per Abrahamsen 2000, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Harvey 2005).

A literal illustration is seen in the *Letsema* campaign of the Department of Agriculture (translated as ‘volunteerism’). Designed to encourage low-income South Africans to plant food on all available land to ‘combat hunger and poverty, ensuring food security, creating job opportunities and promoting economic development’, the former Minister of Agriculture noted at a ceremony for the programme that South Africans are ‘rolling up our sleeves and getting to work together’, stating that *Letsema* ‘aims to revive the spirit of Ubuntu’.¹⁰

Similar language is found in the Department of Labour’s *Vuk’uzenzele* (‘togetherness’) programme, and there are less literal, but equally *ubuntu*-inspired, self-help dictums scattered throughout other post-apartheid reconstruction policy documents. From housing to health care to waste management, there has been a downloading of the fiscal and physical responsibility of post-apartheid work on to the backs of low-income households in the name of ‘community’.

Whilst these programmes may have some positive effects on community-building, their main objectives would appear to be reducing the costs of rebuilding South Africa on the fiscus – a point made painfully clear by the complete lack of such programmes in middle- and upper-income neighbourhoods. ‘Togetherness’ – and the manual labour typically associated with it – is a virtue of the poor, it would seem.

Wealthy areas and business districts, by contrast, have been allowed to create gated communities with road booms and private security to keep out ‘undesirables’. In contradistinction to the communal values of *ubuntu*, these neo-segregationist reforms in wealthy suburbs and business districts are taking place in the name of making South African cities internationally competitive and attractive to transnational elites (Miraftab 2007, 2008, Visser and Kotze 2008).

In a similar vein, low-income South Africans are being asked to pay ‘cost-reflexive’ prices for the services they do receive from the state. As noted earlier, the government sees *ubuntu* as entailing ‘rights and responsibilities’, with citizens having the rights to certain services but the responsibility to pay for them (RSA 1997, section 24). On coming to power in 1994 the African National Congress (ANC)-led government immediately called for an end to apartheid-era rates boycotts in the townships and introduced a series of legislative and para-legislative mechanisms that put in place cost recovery on municipal services and mechanisms for disconnection if services are not paid for (McDonald and Pape 2002). A year later the state launched *Operation Masakhane* (‘Let’s build together’), urging residents to pay for water, electricity, sewerage and other services, recruiting no less a moral authority than Archbishop Desmond Tutu to endorse the programme.

Under a marketised notion of *ubuntu* ‘societal well-being’ would appear to depend on the willingness of individuals to pay – a highly commodified interpretation of the *ubuntu* social dialectic. Not to pay for services is seen to violate the *ubuntu* principle that ‘people are people through other people’ and to contradict neighbourliness by denying someone else access to services by contributing to a fiscal deficit. The fact that millions of low-income South Africans simply cannot afford to pay the high price of cost-reflexive services (with water and electricity alone taking up as much as 25% of household incomes), and

have been denied access to or been cut off from basic services, seems to be forgotten in the new *ubuntu* propaganda (McDonald and Pape 2002, Greenstein 2006, Ruiters 2007).

Another example of the use of *ubuntu* to reinforce neoliberal policy-making is in the 'fight against public sector corruption' and efforts to 'rationalise' (read commercialise) a wide range of government services. Former Minister of Public Service and Administration Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi made the link explicit in a speech to the Global Forum on Anti-Corruption in April 2007, noting that: 'The values of *ubuntu* and *ujamaa* inform all of us of our humanity, they tell us that we are human by virtue of the mutual support we give one another. This is the key motive force in our fight against corruption. This is the spirit we have committed ourselves to in order to create a socially cohesive and inclusive Africa that is free of corruption.'¹¹ Here, *ubuntu* principles are harnessed to imply culpability on the part of public servants and to suggest that corruption lurks throughout the public service.

Similarly, the *Batho Pele Principles* of public service delivery utilise *ubuntu* philosophy in an effort to 'improve' public service performance by 'putting people first' and creating a culture of 'accountability, openness and transparency in public administration' (RSA 2007). The Department of Public Service and Administration has developed a *Batho Pele* 'revitalization strategy whose aim it is to inculcate the Batho Pele culture among public servants and improve service delivery', via the following 'Belief Sets' (RSA 2007):

We belong – Public servants are social-beings whose needs should be recognized and fulfilled. This recognition of needs will instil a sense of belonging to the public service family. . . . Citizens who feel satisfied, will certainly develop a spirit of patriotism towards the country and will also feel a sense of belonging . . . encouraging a spirit, culture and practice of collaboration, teamwork and collegiality among all public servants thereby fostering effective intergovernmental relations.

We care – Public servants should be courteous when providing services to the public by listening to their problems, apologizing when necessary, and serving people with a smile.

We serve – In order to have a sense of service the public service should develop service standards, provide information, seek service delivery solutions and go beyond the call of duty. We serve by delivering quality services and making citizens look forward to receiving world-class integrated service delivery.

Commendable principles, but when viewed against parallel efforts since 1994 to downsize, privatise and commercialise virtually every aspect of government service in South Africa, and with little in the way of concrete investment in the training and upgrading of front-line public sector service workers, these *ubuntu*-informed public service reform principles ring hollow (Bond 1999, Samson 2003, Kelly and Ntlabati 2007, McDonald 2009).

***Ubuntu* contradictions**

Indeed, the entire market-oriented *ubuntu* project of the last two decades rings hollow. Empirically, there is little to suggest that *ubuntu* rhetoric has done anything to change corporate practice in the country. Despite the excitement over '*ubuntu* capitalism' it is still largely 'business as usual' in corporate South Africa. There are token nods to worker consultation, and an increased number of *bosberaads* at bush camps for senior white managers anxious to appear to be doing something different, but corporate social responsibility practices in South Africa have arguably been shaped more by the need to keep up with international norms than by any abstract notion of an African *ubuntu* 'cosmos' (Hamann and Acutt 2003, Fig 2005).

And how could it be anything but? Bringing ‘heart and soul back into the workplace’ with ‘consensus’ and ‘universal brotherhood’ is a radical – and expensive – proposition. To implement it meaningfully would place South African firms at a competitive disadvantage in global terms, at least in the short to medium term. With international markets becoming more, not less, homogenous, the concept of *ubuntu* capitalism in one country is illogical. The fact that experiential evidence of successful implementation of its principles amongst South African firms, or government agencies, cannot be found in any serious academic literature highlights the fact that pro-market *ubuntu* rhetoric is exactly that, rhetoric, serving more to justify post-apartheid capitalism and neoliberal policy-making than to provide any serious or realistic alternative to economic management in the country.

Theoretically, the contradictions run just as deep. Although under-theorised in the pro-market literature, marketised notions of *ubuntu* draw on the classical liberal notion of societal relations that by doing something good for yourself you are helping to generate greater wealth and utility for all. But unlike the notion of self-interest that lies at the heart of this liberal moral philosophy, *ubuntu* worldviews are not driven by such individualism and appear fundamentally at odds with the market’s *homo economicus*.

Corporate elites and neoliberal policy makers in South Africa have simply found a language that makes it appear as if there is significant change taking place, without actually altering practices on the ground, and with no effort to acknowledge or attempt to resolve the intrinsic theoretical contradictions of *ubuntu* capitalism.

***Ubuntu* revivalism on the Left?**

Given these contradictions it is surprising there have not been more attempts to openly challenge marketised notions of *ubuntu* or to try and resuscitate more progressive interpretations. On the contrary, the new *ubuntu* discourse has been met with virtual silence from the Left in South Africa.

Perhaps *ubuntu* is seen as too culturally deterministic and philosophically narrow in a now cosmopolitan South African world. Perhaps it is seen to be irreconcilably crushed by colonialism, apartheid and neoliberalism, with no chance of revival. To illustrate, the South African Communist Party (SACP) laments the ‘new values of individualism and accumulation that have robbed [South African] society of its noble value system of *ubuntu* and communalism’ but does not attempt to redevelop or reinvigorate *ubuntu* concepts in any systematic way in its publications or practices.¹² Similar quietude from progressive labour unions, social movements, NGOs and community groups would suggest this sentiment is widespread on the Left.

Should we therefore abandon the notion of a progressive revivalism of *ubuntu* in South Africa? Might it be possible to revive an *ubuntu* worldview in ways that can confront and transform the fragmenting and disequilibrating forces of neoliberalism? As at least one observer has argued it is: ‘Far from being nostalgic for an obsolete tradition, the invocation of the *ubuntu* human rights philosophy is a credible challenge to the deadly logic of the pursuit of profit at the expense of preserving human life’ (Ramose 2004, p. 644). For Ramose, *ubuntu* offers an alternative worldview that people ‘should opt for’.

Unfortunately, there is no detailed discussion in Ramose’s writing of how the ‘deadly logic’ of capitalism became hegemonic in the first place (beyond a vague ‘will to dominate’ on the part of ‘market forces’ [Ramose 2004, p. 628]) or how an *ubuntu* counterweight could emerge. There is no material analysis in his writing of the ways in which market forces have come to ‘dominate the world economy’ or the kinds of economic

structures that might be required to allow people to make more collectively oriented decisions. There is simply a faith in the ability/willingness of people to 'opt' for an *ubuntu* worldview.

If we are to take seriously the potential for reviving *ubuntu* it must be injected with a materialist analysis of markets – one which sees the mechanics of capitalist accumulation and global competition as key sources of inequity and polarisation in contemporary globalisation, not some amorphous 'will to dominate'. The emphasis here would need to be on dynamic and dialectical versions of Marxist thought which recognise that iterative changes in the material/ideational as necessary and possible, and that *ubuntu* thinking and practice can occur in a market economy in advance of an economic 'revolution'.

Examples of this kind of progressive thinking already abound in practice in South Africa, most notably with the growing number of service delivery protests which are indicative of the scale of collective action that still exists in the country as well as the growing ideological fatigue that has set in on the government's neoliberal 'volunteerist' and moralist agenda. The material realities of self-exploitation and user fees – all in the name of 'good governance' – have shown low-income South Africans that *ubuntu* rhetoric has only served to entrench inequalities, not reduce them. Community groups, social movements, labour unions and others have begun to challenge the language of market-oriented *ubuntu* while at the same time using communal strategies of resistance to fight neoliberal reforms such as privatisation.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that Marxist-oriented scholars and activists in South Africa have rejected or ignored the potential for a revival of a more radical *ubuntu* discourse in the country. A progressive (re-)engagement with the philosophies and language of *ubuntu* – grounded in a materialist critique of the market – could be valuable analytically and practically, tapping into a deep 'socialist' sentiment of communalism in the country while at the same time recognising the realities of today's market economy and ideologies.

All of which begs the question as to what a contemporary form of *ubuntu* socialism might look like. There are no simple, or prescriptive, answers to this question but I will conclude with two general observations. The first is that *ubuntu*-inspired transformations need not be all-encompassing. As Blankenberg (1999) has argued in the case of the media, there can be small *ubuntu* victories that can contribute to larger, multi-sector change.

Nevertheless, small victories will not last in the face of an omnipresent neoliberalism. Large-scale – and multi-scalar – changes will also be necessary if reforms are to be sustained. In this respect a more comprehensive vision of transformation is required. But in the spirit of *ubuntu* this visioning process cannot be vanguardist in its (trans)formation. To be true to *ubuntu* ideals, collective process is as important as its collective product.

We can therefore aim for non-market mechanisms of economic production and distribution, but the political, cultural and social means for attaining these cannot be prescribed from above. There must be democratic, consultative processes of change from above and below.

Once again, practical attempts at such processes can already be witnessed in a number of explicitly anti-capitalist social movements in the country (e.g. Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, Anti-Eviction Campaign). Some of these groups are also reaching out to like-minded organisations in other parts of Africa, helping to revitalise the pan-African sentiments and practices of earlier *ubuntu* efforts (e.g. the anti-privatisation-oriented Africa Water Network, with member organisations in twenty African countries).

In the end, it may be that the language and practice of contemporary *ubuntu* is too compromised by market ideology and discourse to be revived for a socialist agenda. My sense,

however, is that it could strike a discursive and philosophical chord with millions of low-income South Africans who have yet to benefit from the empty promises of neoliberal *ubuntu*-ism but have not given up on a belief in communal principles.

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Notes

1. The title of the paper is a play on the term ‘bundu bashing’, a South Africanism referring to driving a four-wheel drive vehicle through rough terrain as a leisure pursuit, with *bundu* being the Afrikaans word for bush. It is typically a white, middle-class pastime and generally associated with insensitivity to local environments and cultures.
2. Quoted on Tutu Foundation UK website [online]. Available from: <http://www.tutufoundationuk.org/ubuntu.html> [Accessed 15 September 2009].
3. Quoted on Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) website [online]. Available from: www.mrm.org.za [Accessed 17 April 2008].
4. Quoted on MRM website [online]. Formerly available from: <http://www.mrm.org.za/report4.htm> [Accessed 28 July 2007].
5. Quoted in online magazine: South Africa: the good news [online], 14 February 2006. Available from: http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/private_sector_business/sa_indian_consortium_wins_1.5billion_mumbai_airport_contract.html [Accessed 14 May 2007].
6. Quoted on the Standard Bank website. Available from: http://www.standardbank.co.za/SBIC/Frontdoor_02_02/0,2454,10217293_10217456_0,00.html [Accessed 12 May 2007].
7. Quoted online. Formerly available from: www.sa2010.gov.za/news/06102414451002.php [Accessed 25 June 2008].
8. BBC News: Magazine [online]. 28 September 2006. Available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/5388182.stm [Accessed 19 June 2008].
9. See, for example, www.ubuntu.org and www.southafrica.info/about/education/ubuntu.htm
10. Speech delivered by Minister of Agriculture Ms Lulu Xingwana at a ceremony in Cabuga, South Africa, on 17 October 2008. Available online at: <http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2008/08102115451001.htm> [Accessed 20 January 2009].
11. Speech by Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Minister of Public Service and Administration, at Global Forum V on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, Johannesburg, South Africa, on 2 April 2007. Available online at: <http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2007/07040215451002.htm> [Accessed 4 May 2008].
12. *COSATU Daily News*, June 18, 2007 [online]. Available from: <http://groups-beta.google.com/group/COSATU-Daily-News/web/mpumalanga-ready-for-sacp-12th-congress-18-june-2007> [Accessed 20 December 2008].

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The Anglo-Leasing corruption scandal in Kenya: the politics of international and domestic pressures and counter-pressures

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Mwai Kibaki's election in 2002 raised enormous hopes: after 24 years' repressive and corrupt rule by his predecessor Daniel Arap Moi, an apparently reformist opposition leader had been democratically elected president. The fight against corruption stood high among his electoral promises. Unfortunately, a year and a half after his election, the enormous Anglo-Leasing corruption scandal, and Kibaki's failure to prosecute the ministers involved, marked the end of the anti-corruption war. Building on existing Kenyan literature and international relations scholarship on transnational advocacy networks, this article systematically analyses the impact of both international and domestic pressures exerted on Kibaki to fight corruption. It confirms that this combination of pressures explains Kibaki's initial dismissal of the ministers involved. However, analysis of the 'counter-pressures' is also necessary to understand the crisis in all its complexity. Desperately seeking electoral support for the 2007 election, Kibaki acquiesced to ethnically based counter-pressures exerted by the dismissed ministers, and reinstated them.

Keywords: governance; democratisation; corruption; pressure; Kenya; Anglo-Leasing

Kenya took a historic step towards democracy in 2002, when opposition leader Mwai Kibaki was elected president in multiparty elections after 24 years of Daniel Arap Moi's dictatorial and repressive rule (Bourmaud 1988, Schmitz 1999). A divided opposition had failed to defeat Moi in Kenya's first two multiparty elections in 1992 and 1997 (Grignon and Maupeu 1998, pp. 14–16). By the 2002 elections, however, the opposition had managed to line up behind Kibaki, under the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). Having held office for two terms since the 1992 constitutional amendment, Moi was legally obliged to step down. He designated Uhuru Kenyatta as the official candidate of his party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), but did not succeed in manipulating the results sufficiently in Kenyatta's favour to influence the outcome. Although instances of violence and vote buying were reported, most observers agree that the elections were significantly freer and fairer than those of 1992 and 1997 (Anderson 2003, p. 338, Anderson and Mapeu 2003, pp. 6–10). Kibaki won 63% of the votes, leading to Kenya's first electoral succession. Moi allegedly approached military officers shortly before the elections to prepare an intervention in case of a NARC victory. However, the army – which is almost as ethnically divided as Kenyan society itself (Asingo 2003, p. 41) – refused,

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probably having already arranged a deal with the Kibaki coalition (Holmquist 2003, p. 202). This left Moi with few options other than to peacefully hand over power to Kibaki, turning Kenya into an electoral democracy, although not a consolidated one (Diamond 1999).

Kibaki's election raised enormous hopes among Kenyans and donors (Närman 2003, p. 343). Indeed, Kibaki was elected on an ambitious reform agenda which included universal primary education, economic growth, adoption of a new constitution and the fight against corruption (Kenya, State House 2002). This last point was of particular importance to the Kenyan people, as corruption under Moi had literally ruined the country for the benefit of a few (Southall 1999, Southall 2005). Many believed that the 2002 election would bring about a new type of rule. A common joke in Nairobi was that the drivers would now stop at the same road crossing where they used to be arrested by policemen and demand a bribe refund (Interview, Mattli, 2007). According to Afrobarometer, 92% of Kenyans surveyed approved or strongly approved of the way President Kibaki performed his job during his first eight months in office, while the mean for the 15 countries included in the survey was 70%. Similarly, 85% of Kenyans believed the government was doing fairly to very well in fighting corruption in government, while the average for the 15 countries was 42% (Bratton *et al.* 2004, p. 51).

Unfortunately, despite significant progress in other domains, Kibaki failed to fight corruption. A year and a half after his election, the enormous Anglo-Leasing graft scandal, and Kibaki's protection of the cabinet members involved, marked the end of the anti-corruption war. Theoretically, there were good reasons to believe that Kibaki's election would lead to significant reforms, including the fight against corruption. The population had proven its power by turning to the opposition in 2002. It could do so again if Kibaki failed to deliver on reform. In addition, as Kibaki was elected on a reform agenda, he could be considered to have entered into a social contract with his electorate. Such a situation was likely to increase the demands of the population on their government. Furthermore, most interviewees agreed that Kibaki genuinely had the political will to fight corruption in 2002,¹ confirming the Afrobarometer results cited above (*ibid.*). Why, then, did the 2002 electoral transition not lead to a genuine fight against corruption during Kibaki's first term?

A key explanation highlighted in the Kenyan literature is that the political transition occurred without a comprehensive constitutional review process able to reform the electoral system (Nasong'o 2007), and judiciary, among other institutions, so as to foster the accountability of elected officials (Branch and Cheeseman 2009). In other words, while the opposition and domestic civil society could mobilise strongly against Kibaki's government in a backlash against the Anglo-Leasing corruption scandal, they lacked the institutional means to pressure the government more effectively.

Building on this literature, and borrowing from international relations scholarship on transnational advocacy networks developed mainly in the field of human rights (Keck and Sikkink 1998, Risse and Sikkink 1999), this article argues that domestic pressures are most effective when combined with international pressures. This argument finds strong support in the history of Kenyan democratisation, which saw long-term domestic pressures on Moi to restore multiparty politics eventually triumph in 1991, when donors agreed to cut all aid to Kenya until opposition parties were legalised (Widner 1992, pp. 217–218, Branch and Cheeseman 2009, p. 10). As this article shows, the combination of domestic and international pressures on Kibaki to dismiss ministers involved in the Anglo-Leasing scandal did, initially at least, have a significant effect.

However, this paper argues, the politics behind the Anglo-Leasing scandal cannot be fully understood if the analysis is limited to pressure for the fight against corruption.

Indeed, along with these pro-reform pressures, a ruler necessarily faces what may be called ‘counter-pressures’, that is, pressures from powerful people who do not view the anti-corruption war as in their interest. Depending on the pre- and post-electoral alliances forged by a ruler, these counter-pressures can sometimes be stronger in the short term than the combination of international and domestic pressures, and hence can block reform. The present author’s ongoing research in other African countries shows that counter-pressures can come from many different types of actors such as the army, the domestic or international private sector, or even from foreign countries. In Kenya, as this article shows, counter-pressures on Kibaki came mainly from political leaders supposedly able to secure electoral support from selected ethnic groups.

This article thus uses the Anglo-Leasing corruption scandal, which broke during Kibaki’s presidency, as a case study to empirically test the respective roles of pressures and counter-pressures around governance reform in the post-Moi era.² The first of two substantive sections which follow this introduction describes the background to, and the Anglo-Leasing affair and its political consequences, while the second analyses the pressures and counter-pressures implicated in the scandal and its aftermath, helping to explain Kibaki’s seemingly irrational handling of the crisis. Information is drawn from, among other sources, a total of 23 interviews conducted in Nairobi in January 2007. Selected via the snowballing method, the interviewees included some of the most influential actors involved in governance, and were drawn from among donors, domestic non-governmental organisation (NGOs), the media and the Kenyan government.

Politics, power and the Anglo-Leasing scandal

As already noted, Kibaki’s election raised enormous hopes among Kenyans as well as donors (Närman 2003, Bratton *et al.* 2004, p. 51): an apparently reformist opposition leader had finally assumed power. Such a positive atmosphere was not due only to the election of, or promises made by, Kibaki during the campaign. The new regime *did* initiate significant reforms immediately after it took power, the most impressive of which concerned education. Right after his election, Kibaki told Kenyans to take their children to primary school ‘and not to pay a shilling’ (Interview, Kisia, 2007) – a policy that was supported by funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) (Wrong 2009, p. 210).

Significantly, too, Kibaki appointed some true reformists to key positions. For example, he created the National Commission on Human Rights and appointed Maina Kiai as chairman. Kiai was a key figure both in Kenyan and transnational human rights civil society, having occupied the position of Africa director at Amnesty International in London (Interview, Mattli, 2007).

On the economic front, per capita GDP growth had been negative in the 1990s. However, Kenya managed to reach an average of 2.6% real per capita GDP growth between 2003 and 2007 (World Bank 2008). Moreover, the reform of the Kenya Revenue Authority resulted in an increase of tax revenue by 25–35% a year (*ibid.*).

Kibaki was, unfortunately, power-hungry. This had the double consequence of isolating him politically and torpedoing the constitutional review process. Kibaki was elected under the banner of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), an alliance between his National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK) and Raila Odinga’s Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The coalition was based on a memorandum of understanding, which was the result of harsh negotiations among many ethnic leaders (Wanyande 2006, p. 72). Under this memorandum, 11 of 23 cabinet positions would be allocated to NAK, and 11 to LDP, while

Kibaki would be the presidential candidate. Once elected, however, Kibaki reneged on the agreement, appointing 13 ministers from NAK and only nine from LDP, two of whom were people who had not even been on the list drawn up by LDP leaders. Moreover, Kibaki did not respect regional balance while appointing to key positions in civil service and parastatal agencies (Steeves 2006, pp. 229–230). This is important, as ethnically based appointments in the Kenyan public administration are one of the main mechanisms of patronage and ethnically biased distribution of state resources (Berman 2004).

Worse, Kenya's national conference – the result of intense domestic pressure on Moi in the 1990s – had produced a draft constitution based on a broad, popular consensus in 2004 (Holmquist 2005, p. 212). This draft, known as 'Bomas', aimed to reduce presidential power through decentralisation at province, district, division and location levels (Ghai 2008), as well as by creating a powerful prime ministerial post, which was promised to Odinga under the NARC memorandum. However, instead of presenting this draft for adoption in a national referendum, Kibaki presented his own draft, known as 'Wako'. The Wako draft increased presidential power, limited decentralisation to the district level only, and circumscribed the Prime Minister's powers by making the role subordinate to that of president (Lynch 2006, p. 240). In contrast to many other African states, Kenya is characterised by strong executive control over provincial administrations, which have been used by incumbent presidents to secure victory during multiparty elections (Branch and Cheeseman 2006). It is this which largely explains Kibaki's preference for the limited form of devolution set out in the Wako draft (Lynch 2006, Ghai 2008).

NARC was dissolved as a result, with Odinga and other former LDP leaders joining the opposition, and forming the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). The latter effectively campaigned against Kibaki's draft constitution, leading to its rejection in the November 2005 constitutional referendum. Directly afterwards, Kibaki reshuffled his entire cabinet, excluding almost all of the former LDP ministers (Steeves 2006, p. 231). Dissension inside NARC, and around the issue of constitutional review, set the stage for the dramatic 2007 election, pitting Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) against Odinga's ODM (and which is discussed later in the paper).

However, this article focuses on another of Kibaki's failures, which also produced tremendous disappointment: the fight against corruption. Indeed, far from being a minor side effect of poor governance, corruption is the fundamental mechanism that allows many African rulers to secure their support base (Bayart 1989, p. 296, Chabal 1992, p. 172, Bratton and van de Walle 1997, p. 61). Fighting corruption is thus among the most challenging tasks an African ruler can face, even one genuinely committed to improving governance. Significantly, Kenya has been characterised as a kleptocracy (Southall 1999), with the extensive and illegal redistribution of state financial resources, as well as public land, contributing to the 'formation and consolidation of Kenya's political elite' (Southall 2005, p. 150). Moreover, as this article will show, this is further complicated by the strong ethnic bias characterising the illegal distribution of public wealth.

Kibaki had shown an initial commitment to fighting corruption in 2003 by passing a law obliging civil servants to declare their assets, and forbidding them from conducting business activities. He also established the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission. However, asset or wealth declarations proved meaningless as they were neither open to public scrutiny nor easily accessible to the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (Interview, anonymous, representative of international governmental organisation, 2007). Above all, however, the infamous Anglo-Leasing corruption scandal that became public in April 2004, and the failure of the government to prosecute the cabinet members involved, completely discredited Kibaki's political will to reform governance in public financial management.

Unlike most cases of grand corruption in Africa, which remain in the shadows, the Anglo-Leasing scandal is well documented. Indeed, the Permanent Secretary for Governance and Ethics, John Githongo, issued a report on his investigation of the scandal, notably detailing all the attempts by cabinet ministers to make him stop the inquiries (Githongo 2005). As Githongo was the founding president of Transparency International's Kenya chapter prior to being appointed by Kibaki, he enjoyed enormous credibility in Kenya. His report was further corroborated by audio recordings played by Githongo to the BBC a few months after the publication of his report (Githongo 2004). Anglo-Leasing is thus a perfect opportunity to examine the counter-pressures that can occur behind the scenes in an archetypal African grand corruption case.

Anglo-Leasing was a private company, supposedly from the UK, that was awarded a US\$35 million government contract in December 2003 to produce tamper-proof passports. Githongo discovered in March 2004 that no such company was registered in the UK, and asked the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate the case, while conducting his own parallel inquiry. It soon became clear that people at the highest level of Kibaki's government were implicated, including Vice-President Awori, as well as various cabinet ministers and permanent secretaries. In May 2004, investigators further discovered that at least 18 other contracts in the security sector, of the same type as Anglo-Leasing, had been signed between August 2001 and January 2004, to a total value of approximately US\$721 million (Githongo 2005).

During the inquiry, there were various attempts to persuade Githongo and the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission's investigators to drop the case: high-level pressure, threats and attempted bribery. Githongo, for example, was offered the opportunity to have his father's private debt cancelled. On 17 May, Finance Minister Mwiraria warned Githongo that a businessman called Wanjigi had sworn to kill him. Such half-hidden death threats came more than once during the inquiry. Hierarchical pressure was the most common tool of intimidation, however. Githongo even tape-recorded an incriminating discussion with Justice Minister Murungi and Finance Minister Mwiraria on 11 June 2004, in which the latter two explicitly asked Githongo to stop his investigation (Githongo 2004). On 18 June, President Kibaki himself advised Githongo not to hand over three important files to the Attorney General and the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) (Githongo 2005, p. 11).

That the scandal had become public did not deter the ministers involved from attempting to secure authorisation for payment for the contract to proceed. Commitment fees paid to three different fake companies were initially refunded as a result of Githongo's investigation. However, on 13 June 2004, a journalist discovered that within the budget for fiscal year 2004/05, the Finance Minister had allocated US\$2.8 million to Anglo-Leasing as payment for one of the security sector contracts. Worse still, towards the end of 2004, Justice Minister Murungi and Security Minister Murungaru implicated themselves in the affair, by demanding that Githongo allow payment of at least some of the contracts that had been blocked as a result of his and the KACC's investigations. In discussion with Githongo, the ministers openly admitted that the proceeds from the contracts were intended to finance election campaigns. Moreover, they were not cowed by the prospect of their approach being reported to President Kibaki, pointing out that as an ex-Finance Minister himself, the latter 'understood how these things were done' (*ibid.*, p. 19).

By this stage, it had become clear that Githongo's options had narrowed considerably: he could either agree to drop the case and, in so doing, become party to corruption, or he could flee the country. In Githongo's own words, 'These ministers, my closest colleagues sat there and told me to my face that they, *they* were the ones doing the stealing. Once they

said that, I knew I had to go.’ (Wrong 2009, p. 20). Githongo submitted his resignation from London in January 2005 and made his report public in November of that year. In February 2006, he played the audio recordings of Mwiraria and Murungi asking him to stop the investigation to the BBC (Githongo 2004).

The political consequences for the ministers mentioned in the report were limited. On 13 February 2005, Kibaki moved Security Minister Murungu to the less prestigious transport ministry (*The Standard* 2005b) and, eventually, dismissed him while reshuffling his cabinet on 7 December 2005. Justice Minister Murungi was merely downgraded to the Energy Ministry, while Vice-President Awori and Finance Minister Mwiraria both retained their positions (*The Standard* 2005a). On 1 February 2006, Mwiraria finally resigned (*The Standard* 2006a), followed on 13 February by Murungi and Education Minister Saitoti (*The Daily Nation* 2006). Mwiraria and Murungi were accused of obstructing Githongo’s investigation of Anglo-Leasing; and Saitoti had been mentioned in a report, published a week earlier (BBC News 2006c), about the Goldenberg scandal that had occurred during Moi’s presidency.³ However, Vice-President Awori – who took a back seat during Githongo’s investigation yet was clearly mentioned in the report – refused to step down.

Except for Murungu, the resignations were short lived. On 15 November 2006, Murungi was reinstated as Energy Minister and Saitoti as Education Minister (BBC News 2006c; *The Standard* 2006b), while Mwiraria was appointed Environment Minister on 24 July 2007 (*The Standard* 2007a). Saitoti had previously been cleared of involvement in Goldenberg by the Court on 31 July 2006 (*The Standard* 2006c) in a judgment that Chairman of The Kenya National Commission of Human Rights, Maina Kiai, described as ‘ridiculous’: as Parliament had previously cleared him, judges applied the double jeopardy rule from common law, according to which a person cannot be tried twice for the same crime, neglecting the fact that Parliament is not a judicial organ (Interview, Kiai, 2007). The Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission cleared Murungi, Mwiraria and Awori, on 19 January 2007 – that is, after Murungi’s reappointment. The judgment was no less ridiculous: the three cabinet members were cleared of obstructing Githongo’s investigation on the grounds that ‘Githongo is not an investigator in the legal sense’ (Interview, Kibaka, 2007). The question of whether the Permanent Secretary for Governance and Ethics is an investigator under Kenyan law is not debated here. It is, however, difficult not to read this judgment in the same way as most Kenyans: the three cabinet members were cleared on the basis of legal technicalities, although the Githongo report leaves little doubt of their implication in the Anglo-Leasing scandal.

Accountability pressures and ethnically based counter-pressures on Kibaki

Information such as that above, which ended up in the public domain, incriminated various members of Kibaki’s cabinet, and suggests that Kibaki was at the very least passively involved. But while the Githongo report contributed significantly to the visibility of the Anglo-Leasing graft scandal, this should not be allowed to totally eclipse the positive achievements of the Kibaki regime in other domains. Thus, despite the scandal, the judgment of interviewees on the Kibaki government was not completely negative. Indeed, the economic recovery, the implementation of free universal primary education and the dramatic increase in democratic space were seen as major advances, compared to the Moi era (Interview, Muthoga, 2007). In the field of governance in particular, various interviewees mentioned the achievements in the Governance, Justice, Law and Order Sectors (GJLOS) reform programme (Interview, Nagel-Dick, 2007) – a cross-cutting reform programme involving 32 departments in seven ministries. GJLOS, which was initiated

under Kibaki with much international support and significant civil society participation, seemed to be successfully enhancing efficiency and transparency in some sectors of public administration (Interview, Carstens, 2007). On the question of whether Kibaki personally had the political will to improve governance and fight corruption when he assumed power, most interviewees answered positively, mentioning, for example, the fact that having studied law in London, he had been socialised to a different manner of rule (Interview, Mattli, 2007). This positive view was shared by the vast majority of Kenyans surveyed in Afrobarometer (Bratton *et al.* 2004, p. 51).

How do we explain the politics at work here? Firstly, why did Kibaki dismiss the four ministers involved in the graft scandals? Secondly, why were they not properly prosecuted, and why were three of them reinstated shortly before the 2007 elections? And, finally, why did Vice-President Awori survive in Kibaki's government, despite his incrimination in the Githongo report?

The evidence suggests that such political gymnastics were the result of a president caught in a whirlpool of pressures and counter-pressures, who was desperately struggling to stay in power. In order to support this argument, particular attention needs to be paid to the sequence of the various pressures on, and actions of, the Kibaki government. For this purpose, a chronology of the most important events can be found as an appendix to this article.

Regarding the pressures on Kibaki, a combination of factors made them particularly strong, especially where governance in public financial management was concerned. First is the fact that Kibaki was elected on a reform agenda. People had been exasperated with Moi's corrupt rule and hence, in electing Kibaki, had voted for change. They gave their trust to Kibaki, but expected results in return (Interview, Jayawardena, 2007).

Second, the expansion of political space under Kibaki strongly enhanced domestic pressures. When governance issues arose in the public domain, civil society and the media protested with a virulence that was not possible under Moi (Interview, Nagel-Dick, 2007).

Third, the broad coalition on which the Kibaki regime rested implied more political competition inside the government. As ministers are also Members of Parliament who would eventually face the issue of re-election, they are quick to denounce wrongdoing in other ministries for fear of being tainted with guilt by association (Interview, Rogers, 2007). Moreover, as many people in Kibaki's government were either in opposition or part of civil society during the Moi era, they were the same people who had criticised the former regime for its failure on governance issues (Interview, Mugonyi, 2007).

Fourth, the international community supported Kibaki's government, but became more demanding in exchange. The World Bank and DFID pushed strongly for reforms, notably in public procurement (Interview, Jayawardena, 2007). In addition, the initial push for reforms in the GJLOS reform programme came from donors, 15 of whom had co-financed it (Interview, Carstens, 2007).

As a result, when Githongo's report became public in November 2005, there was a storm of protest from both national and international actors, who demanded action from Kibaki. His dismissal of former Security Minister Murungaru in December 2005 was far from sufficient to calm protestors. In December, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) postponed the fourth and fifth tranches of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) loan, worth US\$73m. In January 2006, the World Bank suspended five projects, worth a total of US\$265m, because of corruption (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2006, pp. 20–21). Mwiraria resigned on 1 February 2006, but pressure continued, with a group of 76 civil society organisations meeting a few days later, under the banner of 'Global Anti-Corruption Watchdog', to pressure Kibaki to sack *all* the other people

involved in the scandal. The chairman of The Kenya National Commission of Human Rights even suggested that Kenyans should stop paying taxes until all the money from the various contracts was recovered (*The Standard* 2006d).

Despite Murungi's resignation on 13 February, pressure continued to build on Kibaki to take decisive action. Indeed, on the same day, following a trip by the Parliament's Public Account Committee to London to meet Githongo, a group of 80 Members of Parliament headed by former presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta called for Vice-President Awori's resignation (BBC News 2006a). On 16 February, street demonstrators mobilised by civil society marched to Awori's office and handed over a letter which demanded his resignation within 72 hours (*The Standard* 2006e). In April, the Netherlands suspended aid to Kenya worth US\$146m, because of Kibaki's lack of action against corruption (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2006 p. 21). Awori, however, refused to step down until he lost his parliamentary seat in the December 2007 elections (*The Standard* 2007b), and was not recalled to Kibaki's new cabinet in January 2008 (*The Standard* 2008). There is little doubt among interviewees that it was the combination of domestic and international pressures that forced Kibaki to dismiss Murungaru, Mwiraria, Murungi and Saitoti (Interview, Oloo, 2007).

But since this pressure was so high, and the image of those cabinet members so sullied by the corruption scandals, why then were they not properly prosecuted? Why did Kibaki refuse to dismiss Vice-President Awori? And why did he reinstate three of the four dismissed ministers to his government a year before elections?

The explanation for this apparently irrational behaviour lies in the study of counterpressures. The same answer was given by various interviewees: Kibaki felt he needed those four cabinet members for his re-election. First, George Saitoti, who became one of the wealthiest Kenyans under Moi, is said to have greatly contributed to Kibaki's 2002 campaign fund and to have been in a position to finance the 2007 campaign as well (Interview, Muli, 2007).

Second, during his time in power, Moi managed to structure the political debate in terms of ethnicity. Being himself from the Kalenjin community (12% of the population),⁴ he convinced smaller ethnic groups to support him, manipulating their fear of being otherwise dominated by the Kikuyus (Oloo and Oyugi 2002). This policy has led to high levels of inequality, not only between rural and urban populations as the dualistic model predicts, but also within rural populations (Githinji 2000). Once introduced, this tradition of ethnically based politics is, unfortunately, not easy to overcome (Närman 2003, p. 347). In Kenya, a candidate can be elected by a simple majority, with at least 25% of votes cast in five of the country's eight provinces, even during the first round of presidential elections (Oloo and Oyugi 2002, p. 258). As a Kikuyu himself, Kibaki could count on support from Kikuyus, who constitute the main ethnic group (22%). This would not, however, have been sufficient to win against an opponent as popular as Odinga, who could count on his Luo community (13%) (Interview, Oloo, 2007). Ironically, although Moi called on Kalenjin to support Kibaki in 2007, his past narrative of Kikuyu hegemony had become ingrained in the Kalenjin mind. As a consequence, the majority of Kalenjins supported Odinga instead (Lynch 2008). Kibaki was, therefore, absolutely reliant on the support of other communities. He thus stuck with Awori, hoping he would be able to secure the support of his Luhya community (14%) (Interview, Odhiambo, 2007). Likewise, Murungi and Mwiraria both come from the Meru community (6%), which traditionally voted with the Kikuyu. Here again, had their leaders been left out of Kibaki's cabinet, the Meru may have felt betrayed and turned to the opposition (Interview, Muli, 2007, Interview, anonymous representative of a Kenyan autonomous government institution, 2007).

However, the 2007 general elections revealed the miscalculation in Kibaki's corrupt strategy, as many Kenyans refused to vote strictly on ethnic lines (Bratton and Kimenyi 2008). For example, Awori not only failed to secure the Luhya vote in favour of Kibaki, but the vice-president was not even re-elected as Member of Parliament for his constituency (*The Standard* 2007b). Moreover, while Kibaki polled more than 20% more votes than Odinga during the 1997 presidential elections (African Elections Database 2010), the two candidates were so close during the 2007 elections that it is really not clear who would have won if the election had been free and fair (Thrupp 2008). Taking into account Kibaki's advantage as an incumbent (Branch and Cheeseman 2006), the 2007 elections were clearly a popular disavowal of Kibaki's policies. Hence, while producing tremendous violence and human suffering, the 2007 elections at least allowed the population to give the elite two strong signals: first, that they were not ready to accept a step backwards on the democratisation agenda and, second, that they refused to back a corrupt system. Kenyan society had evolved despite its president. Kibaki's big mistake was to betray the memorandum of understanding on which NARC was based (Branch and Cheeseman 2009, p. 17). If, instead, he had respected the terms of the memorandum, sponsored the national assembly's Bomas draft constitution which was based on a broad and popular consensus, and appointed Odinga as Prime Minister, his popular legitimacy would have been so great that no corrupt deal would have been necessary to secure his re-election in 2007. Rather than struggling to survive in the Anglo-Leasing storm, he would have had two presidential mandates, with Parliament, the population and the international community solidly behind him in a quest to progressively institutionalise good governance in Kenya. Kibaki failed to grasp the historic opportunity thus offered to become the leader of real political change in Kenya, and instead became a pale copy of his corrupt predecessor, Daniel Arap Moi.

Conclusion

The analysis of the enormous Anglo-Leasing graft scandal in Kenya highlights the intense struggle of pressures and counter-pressures that occurred partly behind the scenes. The cabinet members mentioned in Githongo's report were Kibaki's ultimate political allies. If it had not been for the intense pressures he was subject to when the Githongo report and tape recording were released, he would not have asked them to resign. The donor community suspended aid. Seventy-six civil society organisations, the media, and 80 Members of Parliament, as well as street protestors, simultaneously asked for corrupt officials to be punished. Kibaki had no choice but to dismiss at least some ministers: Murungaru first, followed by Mwiraria, Murungi and Saitoti. This point is consistent with the predictions of the international relations transnational advocacy network literature developed mainly in the field of human rights (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and, in particular, with the application of the spiral model of human rights change to the field of governance: once a sufficiently strong transnational advocacy network is developed, it is able to effectively constrain the ruler through normative pressure (Risse and Sikkink 1999).

Other aspects of the affair cannot, however, be explained by the spiral model. Despite continued international and domestic demands, Kibaki refused to dismiss Vice-President Awori. Worse, Awori, Mwiraria, Murungi and Saitoti were soon cleared of all allegations in judgments that could only be the result of political protection. Three of the four dismissed ministers were reinstated in Kibaki's cabinet shortly before the 2007 elections. Various interviewees argued that the reason behind those very unpopular and apparently politically irrational reappointments was that Kibaki felt he needed those allies for his re-election: Saitoti's wealth was needed for campaign financing. And Awori, Mwiraria and Murungi were

considered key allies in mobilising the Luhya and Meru votes. In other words, Kibaki gave in to the counter-pressures exerted by his ultimate political allies.

In light of these findings, the question that arises is what could have been done to force Kibaki to fight corruption and prosecute corrupt cabinet members? The answer is that probably nothing more could have been done in the short term. Domestic and international actors did exactly the right thing by protesting. By doing this they achieved two goals. Firstly, they warned the elite that grand corruption was no longer acceptable in Kenya. Secondly, they contributed to the socialisation of the population into the norms of good governance. Fundamental change in governance was unlikely to occur over just one presidential term, given the culture of corruption and patronage that prevailed under Moi. The fact that Kenyans sanctioned Kibaki's government in the 2007 elections indicates that the socialisation of the Kenyan population into good governance norms is clearly under way.

However, for governance to be durably improved and corruption to diminish, the constitutional review process, which started in 1997, needs to be pursued until a consensual constitutional draft is adopted in a new national referendum (Lynch 2006). Building on this new constitution, key governmental institutions such as the electoral commission, the judiciary and the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission need to be strengthened, and their independence from the executive guaranteed (Nasong'o 2007, Branch and Cheeseman 2009). Meanwhile, much more civic education is necessary in order to facilitate a definitive shift from ethnic-based to programme-based voting. A few more years of democratic struggle between political parties is required to stabilise the party system.

While transition to democracy was a necessary step, democratic and good governance norms need to penetrate all spheres of society to become sustainably institutionalised in domestic practice. Such a stance is in sharp contrast to the democratic sequencing argument, according to which democratisation without fundamental transformation of the political processes and institutions is too dangerous a strategy (Nasong'o 2007). As Branch and Cheeseman (2009) rightly point out, reform is even less likely to occur under a dictatorial regime. Thus, although a dangerous strategy, pushing for simultaneous processes of democratisation and reform appears the only way forward. To this end, donors should ally with reformist domestic civil society to push for democratic consolidation through constitutional review, institutional development, and civic education, in order for pro-democratic and pro-governance pressures to surpass potentially corruptive counter-pressures in the future.

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Notes

1. This article is based on, amongst other sources, 23 interviews with representatives of domestic civil society, the local press, various government agencies and the main international donors. The interviews were conducted in Nairobi in January 2007.

2. Governance refers to 'the formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and societal actors interact to make decisions' (Hyden and Court 2002, p. 19). The quality of governance can be evaluated on the basis of six principles: participation, fairness, transparency, decency, accountability and efficiency (Hyden and Court 2002, p. 27). The concept of good governance is hence much broader than the simple absence of corruption, although the latter is often the most obvious symptom of poor governance.
3. For details on the Goldenberg scandal, see Cowen and McWilliam (1996) and Thomas (1998).
4. According to Kenya's 1999 population census, the seven largest ethnic groups in Kenya are, respectively, Kikuyu (22%), Luhya (14%), Luo (13%), Kalenjin (12%), Kamba (11%), Kisii (6%) and Meru (6%) (Central Bureau of Statistics 2001).

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Appendix: Chronology of the main events related in this article

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 26 November 1991 | 14 donors agree to cut all bilateral and multilateral aid to Kenya, asking for restoration of multiparty democracy (Widner 1992, pp. 217–218). |
| 10 December 1991 | Moi legalises opposition parties. |
| June 1992 | Moi passes another bill limiting presidential tenure to two five-year terms (Oloo and Oyugi 2002, pp. 254–258). |
| 29 December 1992 | Moi is re-elected with 36.3% of the vote against a divided opposition. Kibaki is third with 19.5% after Madiba (26.0%), and Odinga fourth with 17.5%. |
| 29 December 1997 | Moi is re-elected with 40.1% against a divided opposition. Kibaki is second with 31.1% and Odinga third with 10.9%. |
| 27 December 2002 | Opposition candidate Kibaki is elected president with 62.2% against KANU's candidate Kenyatta (31.3%), (African Elections Database 2010). Moi peacefully hands over power to Kibaki (Holmquist 2003, p. 200). |
| April 2004 | The Anglo-Leasing scandal becomes public, thanks to a whistleblower. |

- 13 June 2004 A journalist discovers that the Finance Minister had allocated US\$2.8m to be paid to Anglo-Leasing for one of the dubious contracts.
- January 2005 Permanent Secretary for Governance and Ethics John Githongo resigns from London (Githongo 2005).
- 13 February 2005 Minister for National Security Murungu is moved to the less prestigious Transport Ministry (*The Standard* 2005b).
- 21 November 2005 Wako draft constitution is rejected in national referendum (Lynch 2006).
- 22 November 2005 Githongo makes public his report on Anglo-Leasing (Githongo 2005).
- 7 December 2005 Kibaki reshuffles his entire cabinet, dismissing Murungu and downgrading Justice Minister Murungi to the Energy Ministry (*The Standard* 2005c).
- December 2005 IMF postpones 4th and 5th tranches of PRGF loan worth US\$73m.
- January 2006 World Bank suspends five projects worth a total of US\$265m (*The Economist Intelligence Unit* 2006, pp. 20–21).
- 1 February 2006 Finance Minister Mwiraria resigns (*The Standard* 2006a).
- 3 February 2006 Bosire report on Moi government's Goldenberg scandal recommends criminal prosecutions against Education Minister Saitoti, who was Finance Minister under Moi (BBC News 2006c).
- 7 February 2006 76 civil society organisations meet under the banner 'Global Anti-Corruption Watchdog' and request that Kibaki sack all ministers involved in Anglo-Leasing (*The Standard* 2006d).
- 9 February 2006 Githongo plays tape recordings of Mwiraria and Murungi asking him to 'drop this matter' to the BBC [referring to his investigation of Anglo-Leasing] (BBC News 2006b).
- 13 February 2006 Energy Minister Murungi and Education Minister Saitoti resign (*The Daily Nation* 2006).
Meanwhile 80 Members of Parliament demand Awori's resignation (BBC News 2006a).
- 16 February 2006 Street demonstrators mobilised by civil society march to Vice-President Awori's office and request his resignation within 72 hours (*The Standard* 2006e).
- April 2006 The Netherlands suspend US\$146m worth of aid to Kenya because of Kibaki's lack of action against corruption (*The Economist Intelligence Unit* 2006, p. 21).
- 31 July 2006 Saitoti is cleared by the courts over Goldenberg scandal (*The Standard* 2006c).
- 15 November 2006 Murungi is reinstated as Energy Minister and Saitoti as Education Minister (*The Standard* 2006b).
- 19 January 2007 KACC clears Murungi, Mwiraria and Awori over Anglo-Leasing scandal.
- 24 July 2007 Mwiraria is appointed as Environment Minister (*The Standard* 2007a).
- 27 December 2007 General elections take place, with many irregularities.
- 30 December 2007 Electoral Commission of Kenya announces Kibaki's victory. Odinga rejects the results as fraudulent, and post-electoral violence erupts within 24 hours, although it is still not clear today who had really won (Throup 2008). Awori is not re-elected to Parliament by his own constituency.

BRIEFING

A contest of visions: Ethiopia's 2010 election

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Introduction

At the time of writing this piece in early 2010, Ethiopia's next general election, scheduled for May 2010, is only a few months away. As a result, this article is a pre-electoral assessment, written in the knowledge that the piece will appear shortly after the elections. However, even at this time it is clear that tensions are extremely high in the run-up to the election. Numerous opposition politicians have recently been arrested, with one facing life in prison, accused of plotting against the state. Both government and opposition leaders are expressing concern about the potential for election-related violence. As one of the vaunted 'third wave democracies', Ethiopia's democratic tradition is not only historically shallow, but also largely procedural. Like so many post-1991 democracies, Ethiopia occupies a political middle ground, caught between old authoritarianism on the one hand, and a robust democracy, with its checks and balances, on the other. Ethiopia's 2010 election will either allow for the consolidation of this democratic transition, or, as is much more likely, will prove to be an empty exercise serving only to reverse the democratic gains of the last 19 years.

Ethiopia's last general election in 2005 was a sobering experience for the ruling

party. At times it looked as though the government would be the latest regime to fall victim to one of the 'colour-coded revolutions' so fashionable at the time, such as Georgia's red, Ukraine's orange or Kyrgyzstan's pink revolutions. The aftermath of the disputed election was also an eye-opener for Ethiopia's opposition coalition. The weeks following the election saw nearly 200 protesters killed in the streets by security forces, and more than 40 opposition leaders arrested, convicted of taking part in 'acts against the constitutional order' and sentenced to life in prison, including the mayor of Addis Ababa, Berhanu Nega. Most were pardoned months later. The two main opposition coalitions quickly collapsed due to differences between the leaders and, more importantly, due to differences in their visions of how to move forward politically. Even without the backdrop of the 2005 election protest and subsequent deaths the 2010 election would have been problematic; however the events five years ago make the likelihood of a truly free and fair election minimal.

A history of uncontested elections

Ethiopia's political transition, like that of so many other African states, began in the early 1990s. With the defeat of the Marxist military dictatorship of the *Derg*, the country entered a new era, full of democratic promise. Under both the imperial government of Haile Selassie and the *Derg*, the ruling elite closely stage-managed electoral processes, despite

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efforts by students and grassroots movements to bring about meaningful social and economic reforms (Smith 2008, p. 7). After 1991, the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), dominated by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), made radical changes to the Ethiopian state, culminating in the drafting of a new constitution and the implementation of a federal state structure, based on ethno-linguistic affiliation. At its inception the *Experiment with Ethnic Federalism* was a novel approach to democracy and power sharing; however accusations of corruption, gross human rights violations and ethnic politicking have detracted from the system's appeal.

Despite the establishment of a multiparty system, the TPLF/EPRDF has remained the pre-eminent political force in Ethiopia for the past 19 years. This in of itself is not a problem; however, the manner in which the TPLF/EPRDF maintains this position is. Since coming to power in 1991 the TPLF/EPRDF has conducted three general elections, in 1995, 2000 and 2005. Unsurprisingly the ruling party won each contest by a landslide, with the exception of the more competitive 2005 election. However, it must be acknowledged that when it came to power in 1991, the TPLF/EPRDF coalition was popular. The 1995 election was largely uncontested, with the most significant national parties withdrawing due to claims of intimidation and electoral irregularities. Harassment and intimidation of opposition supporters occurred throughout Amhara, Oromiya and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR). In its heartland in Tigray, the TPLF recruited 'independent' candidates to avoid the impression of a non-competitive election (International Crisis Group [ICG] 2009, p. 8).

The 2000 election marked a watershed in the growth of organised political opposition. Although several opposition parties boycotted the election, 17 parties including the All-Amhara People's Organization

(AAPO), the Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Coalition (SEPDC) and the Oromo National Congress (ONC) did participate (US State Department 2002). In 2000 the TPLF/EPRDF won majorities both at the federal and all-regional parliaments (African Elections Database 2000).

Opposition parties also won approximately 30% of the votes in the Addis Ababa region council and 9.5% the Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS). According to international and local observers, the 2000 national elections were generally free and fair in most areas; however, serious election irregularities were reported in numerous opposition strongholds (US State Department 2002).

As support for the TPLF/EPRDF dwindled, particularly in urban areas, due to perceived favouritism and divisive politics, the TPLF/EPRDF began to crack down on opposition and revoked the few privileges they had. Numerous opposition figures were detained, and human rights monitoring bodies and journalists were also targeted. Naturally, as their support withered so too has TPLF/EPRDF's confidence in winning free and fair elections. During the build-up to the May 2005 election, under intense pressure not only domestically but also internationally, the TPLF/EPRDF was forced to open up the political space. In this way the May 2005 election was an unknown for the government. Sources within the ruling party stated that they expected to win the election with a reduced majority, but a majority nonetheless.

The 2005 election

The May 2005 election represented a substantial change. By 2004, opposition political parties had formed several coalitions. The TPLF/EPRDF allowed a more open process than in 2000 – a gamble on their part, based on the belief that more competitive elections would showcase democratic credentials for the donor community (ICG

2009, p. 8). The TPLF/EPRDF had cast itself as a rural party representing the interest of rural Ethiopians, who made up the vast majority of potential votes, in the hopes that strong rural support would win it the election. The gamble failed spectacularly, as two major opposition coalitions were able to capitalise on discontent with the regime. The Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD), established shortly before the election and chaired by Hailu Shawel, a well-known engineer, former politician and leader of the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPPO), united a number of parties.¹ It fielded candidates nationwide but drew its strength primarily from urban, educated Amharas. The opposition United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) was a coalition of five domestic² and nine exiled parties.³ Led by Addis Ababa University professors Merera Gudina of the Oromo National Congress (ONC) and Beyene Petros of the Ethiopian Social Democratic Federal Party (ESDFP), the UEDF domestic parties (but not their more radical exiled members) endorsed ethnic federalism and state land ownership. Its member parties had their stronghold in SNNPR and to a lesser extent Oromiya (ICG 2009, p. 8).

The main political parties, TPLF/EPRDF, UEDF, CUD, and the Oromo Federalist Democratic Movement (OFDM) campaigned on specific policy positions (Smith 2008, p. 8). The relative success of opposition political parties (largely owing to the performance of these parties in the inter-party debates with the incumbent that were transmitted live on radio and TV) after a relatively short organising period indicated not only openness in the political process, which to the credit of the TPLF/EPRDF was unprecedented in the country's modern history, but also the growing resentment toward the TPLF/EPRDF which had been building for some time (Smith 2008, p. 8). Although the latter still exists, the political space in Ethiopia is more closed than it was in 2005. In 2005, EPRDF and

opposition parties reached an agreement on a formula to allocate access to important state-controlled media sources, including TV and print media. In the days before the election, large political rallies were well attended and peaceful. None of these provisions have been repeated in the run-up to the 2010 election.

Despite the expulsion of several international-observer missions, the African Union, the European Union, and the Carter Center observers strengthened the hand of local observers and added legitimacy to the exercise. Voter turnout was unusually high, and observer missions reported only minor irregularities, particularly in urban areas. The opposition was able to win 172 seats in the 547-seat House of Peoples' Representatives, while the EPRDF took 372 seats (African Elections Database 2000). By all accounts the scale of the urban setbacks in 2005 was unsurprising to the ruling party, but the rural swing to the opposition did cause surprise. The main opposition parties disputed the final results and the National Election Board investigations. With the ruling party and the main opposition parties all claiming victory, violence became widespread. Demonstrations in early June and again in late October and early November led to violent crackdowns by security forces and the deaths of 193 civilians and six security officers, and the arrests of tens of thousands of others.

A key factor in the 2005 election was donor community assistance to the electoral process. In fact in the period between the 2000 and 2005 elections, the donor community poured more than US\$20 million into democracy and democracy-related projects. This was on top of the more than US\$6 million in direct assistance for the 2005 election (Fikreyesus 2007). In this way the donor community played a critical role in levelling the playing field and creating a democratic environment under which the 2005 elections were contested. In recognition of the fact that the Ethiopian government passed a

host of new legislation aimed at not only closing the political space, but also curtailing the ability of NGOs (known in Ethiopia as civil society organisations [CSOs]) to operate and receive funding. To this end on 6 January 2009, the Ethiopian Parliament voted 327 to 79 to pass the Charities and Societies Proclamation (CSO Law) limiting foreign funding for NGOs working in areas related to human and democratic rights, child and disability rights, gender equality, support to the justice sector and conflict resolution, to less than 10%, and banning lobby groups from certain activities. Although the bill has been revised twice since it was first proposed in May 2008, the version that became law still retains many of the most controversial provisions. Of particular note are the regulations regarding the nationality of CSOs. According to the new law, a charity/society is deemed Ethiopian only if three conditions are fulfilled:

- (1) It should be formed and controlled by Ethiopians;
- (2) It must get at least 90% of its assets from Ethiopians;
- (3) It must be formed in accordance with Ethiopian Law.

In other words, any local NGO/CSO will be deemed a foreign charity or society if it receives more than 10% of its income from foreign funders, including Ethiopian citizens living abroad. In addition, foreign CSOs are prohibited from engaging in development advocacy, human rights, democratic governance and conflict resolution and some other activities directly related to the forthcoming election, as noted by Kumlachew Dagne in his observations on the law (Dagne 2009). The law's repressive provisions need to be viewed partially as an attempt by the Ethiopian government to stifle opposition by curtailing CSOs' ability to receive funding and organise an effective campaign ahead of the election. It is also meant to prevent human rights and democratic campaigners from

influencing either the run-up to or the post-election political scene.

The 2010 election

Parties are now preparing for the June 2010 federal and regional elections. A key difference between the 2005 and 2010 election has been the relative political openness which characterised the run-up to the former. Unprecedented levels of voter interest were stimulated by live televised debates, also broadcast on the radio and reported in the state-owned and private press. The debates, organised by the Inter-Africa Group, offered new sources of information for voters. Civil society organisations (CSOs) were quite effective during the critical pre-election phase, through general voter education and information dissemination about the political parties and candidates as well as the electoral process (Smith 2008). The run-up to the current election has seen many of the measures that levelled the playing field between the opposition and government rescinded, and restrictive and in some cases draconian measures imposed.

While support for the TPLF remains relatively high in their Tigrayan stronghold, the TPLF has come to realise that it cannot rule the country with only Tigrayan backing. As a result it has come to increasingly rely on the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO) and the Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Front (SEPDF) to govern. Aware of their increased importance within the EPRDF, the OPDO and SEPDF are resisting TPLF interference in their regional states. The Prime Minister has publicly hinted that he has considered stepping down after 2010; however at the seventh party congress, in September 2008 in Awassa, Meles was re-elected, and no official hint was given about a possible successor in 2010 (ICG 2009, p. 14).

As was the case after the 2005 election, splits within the opposition have proven

easy to exploit. The most serious fissure is between the ethnic Amhara nationalist bloc and the more federalist Southern and to a lesser extent ethnic Oromo bloc. Attempts to establish a more unified opposition began in earnest in June 2008, with the creation of the Forum for Democratic Dialogue (FDD). The main objective of the movement is to create joint policy goals for a united opposition platform ahead of the election. The FDD was later registered as a political party and united some of the main opposition forces in Ethiopia. Parallel to the formation of the FDD was the creation of a new political alliance by veteran of the 2005 election, Birtukan Mikdesa, a 34-year-old lawyer, single mother and vice-president of the CUD. As the CUD name and symbol were claimed by a competing faction, Birtukan registered a new party under the name Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) in August 2008. The UDJ grew in strength when ex-President Negaso Gidado and veteran TPLF military commander and former Defence Minister Siye Abraha both joined as vice-presidents. Later that year the UDJ joined the FDD, making the FDD perhaps the most important opposition platform.

In the build-up to the election, the TPLF/EPRDF has continued to vilify opposition members. Opposition leader Birtukan Mideksa was rearrested on 29 December 2008, when the presidential pardon that released political leaders from prison in July 2007 was revoked. In April 2009, the authorities issued arrest warrants for 35 people and charged them with conspiring to overthrow the government. In July, the parliament adopted a draconian anti-terrorism bill with a broad definition of terrorist activity that gives security forces extensive powers.

In early 2009, Merera Gudina's OPC left the UEDF and established the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC), a coalition with Bulcha Demeska's OFDM. These parties have also joined the FDD. Hailu

Shawel's return from exile has also added to the choices voters will have in 2010. Hailu succeeded Professor Asrat Woldeyes as leader of the AAPO in 1999; however a few years later the party split into two factions – the All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP) and the United Ethiopian Democratic Party–Medhin. Hailu, who retained control of the AEUP, was instrumental in the formation of the CUD coalition, in which AEUP was a major player. After the post-election violence, Hailu Shawel was one of a host of opposition leaders arrested. He was later released after a public confession and apology. He then became embroiled in a leadership struggle in the CUD, the end result of which was the government-run National Election Board awarding the CUD name and party symbol to a dissident faction, after which he left Ethiopia for the United States. Many thought that this move would signal the end of his political career, but, ever the consummate politician, Hailu returned to Ethiopia and registered his All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP), which will contest the 2010 election on its own. The AEUP, CUD and other smaller parties signed an election code of conduct with the TPLF/EPRDF in late 2009. The code of conduct was enacted as a law, but FDD was not involved in the negotiations.

The Forum for Democratic Dialogue, like its predecessors and constituent parts, is riddled with personal rivalries and political differences. Currently the UEDF, CUD, UDJ and OFC and OFDM parties have been able to hold the unwieldy FDD alliance together. For the time being, however, the FDD is a consortium united more by antipathy to the TPLF/EPRDF than by joint positions. The parties cannot even agree on their stance on what are seen in Ethiopia as the Big Three political issues:

- (1) federalism;
- (2) relations with Eritrea (some would frame this as access to a port);
- (3) state ownership of land.

The 2010 election is likely to be a contest of the visions:

- the *status quo* – represented by the ruling TPLF/EPRDF coalition;
- a reorganised federal state with more powers given to the regional states – UEDF and OFDM;
- a return to a centralised state (for many non-Amhara this is interpreted as a return to an Amhara-dominated centralised state) – represented by elements of Shawel’s CUD and the now outlawed Ginbot 7 Movement for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, formed in May 2008.

Conclusion

When grouped with similar states, Ethiopia in 2010 looks less like a member of Huntington’s vaunted *Third Wave of Democracies* (1991) and more and more like Fareed Zakaria’s semi-democratic *Illiberal Democracies* (1997). Like other Illiberal Democracies, Ethiopia’s most problematic period is the election cycle. During this time the regime is open to higher levels of national and international scrutiny and opposition forces are able to use this to their advantage.

In this way elections have been an ever-present powder keg at the centre of the Ethiopian political scene for some time now. Ethiopia’s *anciens régimes*, from Emperor Haile Selassie, to the Derg and the EPRDF, have utilised elections to add the veneer of credibility and popular support to their governments. Ethiopia’s electoral problem, like that of so many other partial democracies, is not the process of balloting, but rather the run-up to the election itself (Diamond 2002, Lust-Okar 2006). Disenfranchisement of large blocks of voters and the absence of the basic elements of free and fair elections have been and will continue to be two major similarities between the 2010 and 2005 elections.

Important social divisions exist alongside policy divisions in the opposition and

the ruling coalitions. There is a divide between rural and urban communities, as well as a division among ethnic and religious communities. Thus, it is fairly pointless to speak of the ‘Ethiopian Electorate’ at this juncture; rather one must be cognisant of views of several electorates. While this level of fracture is not unique in Africa, the Ethiopian elections show its potential for violence when combined with winner-take-all political systems, the exact system that federalism was supposed to replace.

The 2010 election will not see national dialogue on contentious issues, particularly those related to specific controversial provisions of the Constitution, such as ethnic federalism and state ownership of land. Pre-election debates in 2000 and 2005 showed the extent of dissatisfaction with, and at the same time support for, the post-1991 governance structures. However the election results and the subsequent crack-down by security forces served only to stifle that dialogue and debate critical to Ethiopia’s future. The ruling party has become increasingly authoritarian, reversing previous democratic gains. The implications for the 2010 election are not promising.

Note on contributor

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Notes

1. These were the All Ethiopian Unity Party (AEUP), led by Hailu Shawel; the United Ethiopian Democratic Party – Medhin (UEDP-Medhin), led by Admassu Gebeyehu; the Ethiopian Democratic League (EDL), led by Chekol Getahun; and Rainbow Ethiopia: Movement for Democracy and Social Justice, led by

- Birhanu Nega. The AEUP and UEDP-Medhin were the strongest components.
2. The Oromo National Congress, Ethiopian Social Democratic Federal Party, Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Democratic Coalition, All-Amhara People's Organization and Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party. The UEDF's Amharic acronym was Hibret.
 3. Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front, All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement, Ethiopian Democratic Union-Tehadiso, Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, Ethiopian National United Front, Ethiopian People Federal Democratic Unity Party, Gambella People's United Democratic Front, Oromo People's Liberation Organization and Tigrayan Alliance for Democracy.
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BRIEFING

Patrons and petits patrons: knowledge and hierarchy in illicit networks of trade in archaeological objects in the Baniko region of Mali

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This article focuses on the hierarchical relationships governing the local illicit trading networks in terracotta antiquities in the region of Baniko, in Mali. The level of authority and social control at the heart of the network lessens with each link in the chain, as a result of the monopoly and the fragmentation of knowledge. The article demonstrates that the social organisation of the network corresponds to a hierarchical *habitus* that ensures that the *status quo* of the dominant actors (urban antique dealers, rural antique dealers and intermediaries) is maintained through the economic dependence of the rural diggers, the monopoly of information and control of the network. Analysis of the first links in the network shows that action by rural intermediaries in the chain with respect to the weak links in the chain (the rural diggers) reproduces ‘micropolitics of power’ that are modelled on the same strategies of compartmentalisation of the local links, as used by the dominant actors on the rural intermediaries.

Par une approche empirique de l’illégalité à travers ses usagers et des rapports d’inégalité, je dégage, dans cet article, le fonctionnement des réseaux d’écoulement de statuettes anciennes en terre cuite dans

la région du Baniko (Bougouni), au Mali, à partir des premiers maillons de la chaîne marchande: les paysans-fouilleurs et les intermédiaires ruraux. En particulier, j’essaye d’éclairer le lien entre information et pouvoir en contexte illicite.

Mon but est de montrer, d’une part, que l’organisation sociale de la filière rurale d’écoulement des terres cuites anciennes répond à un *habitus* hiérarchique apte à assurer le maintien du *status quo* des acteurs dominants (antiquaires urbains, antiquaires ruraux, intermédiaires) à travers la dépendance économique des fournisseurs ruraux et le monopole des connaissances de la filière. D’autre part, je montrerai que, dans les limites de leurs marges de manœuvre, ces maillons premiers reproduisent des «micrologies de pouvoir» (Foucault 1994) à l’égard des éléments faibles de la chaîne calquées sur les mêmes stratégies de cloisonnement relationnel que les acteurs ruraux subissent par les acteurs dominants.

‘Patrons’, ‘parrains’ et ‘petits’: la confiance sous contrainte du réseau relationnel

Les données présentées dans cet article proviennent du témoignage d’un intermédiaire que j’appellerai Fatiékoro.¹ Fatiékoro a travaillé dans l’écoulement des terres cuites de 1965 à 1997. La richesse de son témoignage relève du fait que, entre 1970 et 1983, il a été, successivement, fouilleur, chef d’équipe, acquéreur et intermédiaire

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local, accédant ainsi à plusieurs maillons de la chaîne marchande rurale. Bien que les activités d'écoulement de Fatiékoro se soient poursuivies à plein régime jusqu'à 1994, la plupart des faits mentionnés dans cet article se sont déroulés entre la fin des années 1970 et le milieu des années 1980. L'organisation par réseaux constitue un élément central des milieux marchands illégaux.² A partir d'un noyau organisationnel, soudé par des liens «denses», tels les liens de parenté, se ramifient des contacts basés sur des «liens faibles» (Granovetter 2000) à temps déterminé, fonctionnels au maintien et à la consolidation du réseau 'dense'. L'agencement de ces liens ne suit pas un développement constant et homogène. Le maillage du réseau peut présenter une densité intermittente, suivant les opportunités et l'évolution des contacts et se révéler par «grappes relationnelles» (Sciarrone 2000) plutôt que par 'groupes' d'acteurs. Aussi bien dans les réseaux du commerce d'objets anciens que dans d'autres contextes de 'groupes' engagés dans des dynamiques de consommation rapide des gains sans accumulation (*hot money*), tels que les chercheurs d'or (Grätz 2004), de diamants (de Boeck 2001) ou de saphirs (Walsh 2003), ceux-ci répondent au principe des «liens faibles» en partageant des règles dans la contingence de leur rapport économique, avant de se dissoudre et de se recomposer dans d'autres situations de contingence.

Marginalité et dépendance des maillons ruraux: systèmes en 'vases-clos' I

A l'instar des réseaux mafieux (Sciarrone 2000), le maillage relationnel des réseaux d'écoulement des objets d'art sous-entend des relations dyadiques de confiance et de réciprocité, soient-elles libres ou sous influence. La gestion du réseau relationnel d'écoulement des objets archéologiques s'insère dans le sillage des dynamiques de prestige des logiques clientélistes (Grégoire

et Labazée 1993, Warms 1994) et partage avec ces dernières les rapports duels de redistribution des bénéfiques et des sanctions (Boone 1994). Par rapport aux réseaux relationnels de l'«économie du bazar» (Geertz 1978, Trager 1981), l'organisation clientéliste du marché de l'art répond à une gestion hiérarchisée des informations par une élite d'acteurs tels les intermédiaires régionaux et les 'grands antiquaires'. Le monopole des connaissances se traduit ainsi par une économie des mots caractérisée par la fragmentation de l'information, élément structurel du marché de l'art (Steiner 1994, Panella 2002), à travers des réseaux en 'vases-clos'. Comme dans un jeu de matriosques, les maillons de la filière sont ainsi interdépendants mais pas intercommunicants afin que chaque maillon de la chaîne d'écoulement ne reçoive par les acteurs dominants respectifs que les informations indispensables à son fonctionnement intérieur.

De même, les hiérarchies s'établissent à partir de cercles de collaborateurs restreints. Lorsque nous avons rencontré Fatiékoro, en décembre 1999, à Bamako, dans le magasin de l'antiquaire Komakodo, ce dernier nous le présenta comme son jeune frère. Quelques semaines plus tard, lorsque nous rejoignîmes Fatiékoro à Fabula, il devint clair qu'il n'avait aucun lien de parenté directe avec Komakodo mais qu'il était, plutôt, son fournisseur de confiance pour le Baniko, zone natale de Komakodo. A l'exception d'un nombre restreint d'antiquaires pouvant se permettre de gérer plusieurs territoires d'approvisionnement et d'autorité, la plupart des 'petits' antiquaires de la capitale, dont Komakodo, tissent leur réseau relationnel et choisissent leurs receleurs suivant une stratégie de proximité orientée sur la territorialisation du contrôle social.

Fatiékoro a été encouragé à intégrer les réseaux du commerce des terres cuites anciennes par son beau-frère, déjà inséré dans ce commerce depuis le début des

années 1960. Avant de s'investir dans la fouille, Fatiékoro a été commerçant de «comprimés» (drogues synthétiques) pendant douze ans. Le marché des drogues synthétiques provenant du Nigeria et du Libéria s'est répandu dans les régions méridionales du Mali au cours des années 1960. Appelées «nigeria», «kolderan» ou «quatorze», ces drogues sont utilisées, jusqu'à aujourd'hui, comme 'paye' ou complément de salaire des paysans-fouilleurs. Le réseau relationnel tissé par Fatiékoro au cours des années lui a permis de bénéficier d'un capital social de départ pour le démarrage de son activité d'intermédiaire. Lorsque Fatiékoro sollicite «ses connaissances» pour la collecte d'objets, il fait appel, en réalité, à bon nombre de paysans qu'il ravitaillait en drogue. Maints intermédiaires du Baniko se sont reconvertis au commerce de terres cuites anciennes après avoir exercé d'autres activités commerciales (petit commerce, commerce de tissus, commerce ambulancier de produits divers), grâce à la disponibilité financière et à la connaissance des réseaux de proximité d'achat-vente.

Fatiékoro a démarré la recherche de terres cuites en creusant des tumuli pierriers dans les alentours de Fabula. Lorsqu'il découvrait des terres cuites, son beau-frère lui disait de les garder à la maison car un intermédiaire, que j'appellerai Fanbukuri, viendrait les chercher. La rencontre avec Fanbukuri, en contact avec les antiquaires de Bamako, a été décisive pour le changement de cap de Fatiékoro. Dans une première phase de son activité, il vendait, à bas prix, toutes ses trouvailles à cet intermédiaire.

[Fanbukuri] est venu me voir en disant qu'il cherchait des terres cuites. On s'est mis d'accord pour 4000 francs maliens (FM). J'ai réfléchi, je ne gagnais pas 4000 FM avec les comprimés et j'ai pensé que la vente des terres cuites m'aurait rapporté plus. Le lendemain, nous sommes partis en pleine brousse vers nos champs de culture pour chercher

des objets. Par la suite, je suis parti seul et j'ai travaillé en suivant les conseils de mon beau-frère. J'ai commencé à creuser, et ce jour-là j'ai découvert deux têtes en terre cuite. A mon retour, Fanbukuri les a achetées à 6000 FM. Le lendemain, je suis reparti et j'ai trouvé une pièce complète, un personnage, que j'ai vendu à Fanbukuri à 10.000 FM. Quelques jours après, un monsieur est venu de l'Est et m'a apporté une pièce de qualité du village de K. Je lui ai demandé où il l'avait trouvée - une pièce complète! Il m'a répondu qu'elle était dans le champ de quelqu'un. C'était une pièce de grande taille. Fanbukuri est allé la vendre à Bamako et il est retourné au village sur une Motobécane Kamiko toute neuve. Le travail avec Fanbukuri s'est bien passé et par la suite j'ai demandé à toutes mes connaissances d'aller me chercher des terres cuites. Ils sont tous partis, même de vieilles personnes; la plupart de ces gens sont au village mais en ce moment ils travaillent le coton.³

Ce témoignage de Fatiékoro révèle deux aspects saillants du rapport entre fouilleurs et intermédiaires ruraux. Premièrement, la gestion duelle et verticale des connaissances aboutit à l'enclavement relationnel des acteurs ruraux ('paysans-fouilleurs', intermédiaires locaux, 'petits antiquaires') par rapport aux voies d'accès aux réseaux d'écoulement de la capitale. Deuxièmement, il se dégage un premier niveau d'inégalité entre les paysans-fouilleurs et leur intermédiaire, matérialisé par la croissance exponentielle du prix de vente des objets une fois ceux-ci acheminés dans les circuits des acteurs urbains de la filière.

Ces rapports d'inégalité se produisent à travers une gestion continue des rapports de confiance et de méfiance, inscrite dans ce que l'on pourrait définir un *habitus* hiérarchique. Par *habitus*, Pierre Bourdieu conçoit l'ensemble des usages historiques désignant un système de dispositions acquises, permanentes et génératrices régi par une *lex insita* «inscrite dans le corps par des histoires identiques, qui est la condition non seulement de la concertation

des pratiques mais aussi des pratiques de concertation» (Bourdieu 1979, pp. 89, 99). L'habitus hiérarchique sous-entend ainsi l'intériorisation des rapports de dépendance sociale et économique des acteurs marginaux à travers des rapports de confiance-obligée. Ceux-ci déterminent le cloisonnement spatial et informationnel du fouilleur ou de la navette, qui élabore, à son tour, des rapports de méfiance à l'égard de ses référents dominants.

Dans le cas présent, le mécanisme hiérarchique de l'*habitus* se reproduit au niveau des fournisseurs ruraux de terres cuites. Vers la fin des années 1970, après avoir consolidé son réseau relationnel en tant que fouilleur, Fatiékoro se détache de la médiation de Fanbukuri et finance sa propre équipe de fouille. Entre 1979 et 1983, à l'époque où l'activité de Fatiékoro était fleurissante, Komakodo, antiquaire de référence de l'équipe de Fatiékoro, assurait à ses ouvriers la nourriture, 2000 FM par ouvrier et une somme de 25.000 FM pour toute l'équipe. A cela il ajoutait des comprimés dont un flacon de «quatorze». Lorsque les comprimés étaient épuisés, les fouilleurs envoyaient quelqu'un en chercher à nouveau auprès de Fatiékoro.

A leur retour, [les fouilleurs] apportaient tout ce qu'ils avaient trouvé [...] Les personnages étaient les plus nombreux; les cavaliers avaient des lances et des flèches; il y en avait qui ressemblaient à des gendarmes, ou à des guerriers avec leurs carquois sur le dos. Il y avait aussi des serpents, des tortues, des chevaux ailés (*kira ka yelen ka so*: le cheval de monture du prophète) et des personnages avec des médailles.⁴

Au niveau rural, l'isolement des maillons de la chaîne détermine des rapports de dépendance économique entre le fouilleur et son intermédiaire rural. Dans le cas où les fouilleurs constituent une équipe gérée directement par l'intermédiaire, ceux-ci lui remettent toutes leurs trouvailles et attendent que ce dernier les paye après vente

suivant un montant fixe qui ne dépend pas toujours du prix de chaque pièce. Lorsque Fatiékoro devient intermédiaire, il reproduit les mêmes dynamiques de cloisonnement qu'il avait subies en tant que fouilleur par son référent, Fanbukuri. L'équipe de fouille de Fatiékoro n'assiste pas à la vente. Ce dernier se déplace seul à Bamako, ou bien l'acheteur de Bamako se déplace chez lui pour une transaction à huit clos. Ses fouilleurs se voient donc contraints d'accepter le montant proposé par Fatiékoro sans avoir accès à ses référents urbains; ce système est d'autant plus courant lorsque les fouilleurs sont des 'étrangers', soit ils ne sont pas originaires de Faboula, ni de son arrondissement. Fatiékoro pouvait payer à ses fournisseurs une pièce complète à 25.000 FM pour la revendre, sur place ou à Bamako, à Kulumba ou à Komakodo, à 50.000 FM. Il pouvait également percevoir un pourcentage sur les ventes des objets qui lui étaient confiés par d'autres équipes de fouille ou par des fouilleurs individuels qui ne disposaient pas d'un réseau d'écoulement personnel. Fatiékoro pouvait vendre l'objet à un deuxième intermédiaire et remettre l'argent à son fouilleur ou bien vendre la pièce directement à un antiquaire de Bamako; dans ce cas, le fouilleur prélevait une partie pour lui. Si ses ouvriers ne trouvaient rien, Fatiékoro se réservait un 'crédit' journalier sur les gains de la vente. La rétribution des fouilleurs telle que Fatiékoro la décrit est confirmée par Nenekodo, un fournisseur de Fatiékoro installé à Dajugubala, un village près de Faboula. Nenekodo a entamé son activité de fouille en 1969 par l'intermédiaire d'un marchand de bois installé à Masagwe. Au début des années 1970, son oncle, engagé dans l'écoulement de statuettes depuis 1967, lui demanda d'aller chercher des objets dans les environs de Soron et Fingwe. Les terres cuites que Nenekodo déterrait des tumuli étaient vendues à Fatiékoro entre 50.000 et 100.000 FM. Si les trouvailles ne plaisaient pas à ce

dernier, les deux fouilleurs s'accordaient pour les proposer, ailleurs, au même prix et ils partageaient les gains.

En réalité, la remise des pourcentages de vente par l'intermédiaire relève d'une sphère grise d'aléas et de calculs personnels inaccessible aux fouilleurs, comparable aux dynamiques d'écoulement dans la région du Delta intérieur du Niger. Dans un premier scénario, l'antiquaire, ou l'intermédiaire, a pris des engagements financiers précédents qui le contraignent à temporiser le paiement des objets engagés par son intermédiaire (achat de nouvelles pièces, avance d'argent à de tierces personnes). Ce dernier est donc dans l'impossibilité effective de payer, à son tour, ses fouilleurs. Dans le scénario le plus courant, l'intermédiaire informe ses fouilleurs que (1) il n'a pu 'placer' aucune pièce, (2) qu'il a dû céder les pièces à un prix inférieur à celui prévu, (3) que l'antiquaire a prétendu des pièces de meilleure qualité. Dans ce cas, le fouilleur ne tire aucun profit de son travail. De surcroît, en raison du système en vases-clos qui le lie à 'son' intermédiaire, il est obligé de continuer de travailler jusqu'au jour où son 'patron' lui remette, en une seule tranche tout à fait arbitraire, un pourcentage sur ses ventes (Panella 2002).⁵ Tout en admettant qu'un fouilleur découvre une statuette que rapporte beaucoup à son chef d'équipe, il ne recevra pas un montant supérieur par rapport à un coéquipier qui aurait découvert des fragments sans valeur. Dans ce cas, le montant de la paye est calculé sur la base des heures de travail et non de la qualité des pièces.⁶

Marginalité et dépendance des maillons urbains: systèmes en 'vases-clos' II

Le système des 'vases-clos' imposé par Fatiékoro à ses fouilleurs se reproduit entre Fatiékoro et les 'patrons' de Bamako lors de ses déplacements dans la capitale. En 1979, après quelques démarches

infructueuses auprès de maints antiquaires, Fatiékoro décida de s'adresser à Kulumba, le premier antiquaire bamakois à se déplacer en brousse pour acheter les trouvailles de Fatiékoro. La première transaction avec Kulumba se déroula dans un hôtel de Bamako: trois pièces complètes de grandes dimensions vendues à 1 million de francs maliens (FM). Malgré sa 'fidélité' à Komakodo, la vente des pièces à cet antiquaire n'a jamais rapporté à Fatiékoro plus d'un million de francs maliens dont 10% était destiné à son logeur en ville. Komakodo ne payait pas avec régularité; il emportait les pièces et donnait à Fatiékoro, de temps à autre, 25.000 ou 50.000 FM. Fatiékoro cite le nom d'un troisième antiquaire de Bamako avec qui il a travaillé au début des années 1980. En ce moment, il se déplaçait à Bamako trois fois par mois. «Personne d'autre n'a pu sortir tant de statuettes dans cette zone», affirme-t-il.

La plupart des transactions de Fatiékoro se déroulent avec trois antiquaires de Bamako. En réalité, chaque antiquaire dispose d'un réseau de 'navettes' fixes qui ne sont pas censées proposer leurs trouvailles à d'autres marchands, sauf si leur acheteur de confiance refuse leur offre. Cette option est, toutefois, dangereuse pour l'intermédiaire car, après son refus, l'antiquaire contacte les acheteurs potentiels qui composent son réseau relationnel afin qu'ils refusent, à leur tour, l'offre de son intermédiaire. Ceci est un moyen pour contraindre ce dernier à l'exclusivité et révéler l'efficacité de l'action relationnelle de l'antiquaire. Fatiékoro donne d'autres éléments éclairants au sujet des rapports sous influence entre les intermédiaires locaux et les antiquaires installés en ville:

Komakodo venait chez nous chercher des terres cuites et dès qu'il arrivait, je prévenais mes connaissances que quelqu'un cherchait des terres cuites. Tous ceux qui voulaient des terres cuites venaient chez moi. Quand les fouilleurs amènent les pièces, moi, je les vends

toutes à Komakodo. Il peut passer deux semaines à Fabula; alors, tous les jeunes partent en brousse chercher des terres cuites. Komakodo emporte les terres cuites à Bamako et puis c'est fini. Il ne nous informe pas, ou bien il prétend qu'il n'a pas beaucoup gagné. Des fois, il vient à Fabula et nous donne 25.000 à 50.000 FCFA⁷, parfois, un peu plus, pour dire que c'est tout ce qu'il a gagné. Au cours de la même période venait aussi Kulumba. Il achetait directement sur place, en argent comptant. Maintenant, ce qu'ils font des terres cuites à Bamako, je ne le sais pas. Le problème est que si les gens viennent me confier des pièces et moi je les donne à l'antiquaire et j'y ne gagne rien, cela peut compromettre mes rapports avec les fouilleurs qui me font confiance. Moi, j'ai été contraint de vendre ma moto pour rembourser les gens qui m'avaient confié des objets. Quand les gens voient que tu ne gagnes rien, personne ne te fait plus confiance. Komakodo n'a pas été correct. J'ai toujours été le patron de [noms de trois villages du Baniko]. Lorsque quelqu'un trouvait une statuette, il venait me voir. Le Chef d'arrondissement de [nom d'un chef-lieu] et tout le monde venaient chez moi.»

Fatiékoro n'a jamais su le prix auquel Kulumba vendait les pièces qu'il lui apportait à ses acheteurs étrangers. Son témoignage révèle que, bien que chaque maillon de la filière ne soit pas au courant des activités des autres maillons, l'activité de chaque unité se répercute sur les autres. Fatiékoro ne connaît pas non plus les dynamiques d'écoulement des terres cuites qu'il vend à Kulumba ou à Komakodo. Cependant, il voit les conséquences de ces transactions, sur lesquelles il n'a aucune maîtrise, se répercuter sur ses relations avec son réseau de fournisseurs. Ainsi, le caractère abstrait des référents de pouvoir (grands antiquaires, collectionneurs européens) et, par conséquent, de l'ensemble de la filière renforce l'isolement relationnel des fouilleurs tout en étant un élément de conditionnement à distance de leurs trajectoires.

Le prix: paroles de pouvoir

Le rapport entre antiquaires et 'navettes' répond à une gestion hiérarchisée de la parole. En milieu bamana et maninka, la parole comporte un pouvoir d'action et peut se traduire en punition, voire en mort (Dieterlen 1981). Langage et pouvoir sont étroitement liés à travers une différenciation sociale véhiculée par l'ânesse et la détention des connaissances (Sindzingu 1985). En milieu marchand, ces mécanismes d'autorité se reproduisent dans un rapport de force où l'ânesse est déterminée par la disponibilité financière et relationnelle à travers «une culture matérielle du succès» (Rowlands 1996, Banégas et Warnier 2001). Dans ces économies des mots, l'information sur le prix est ainsi un vecteur puissant d'ostentation du pouvoir du réseau relationnel (Roitman 2003). Ce premier témoignage de Fatiékoro éclaircit la maîtrise de la construction de l'évènement relationnel par les antiquaires et le pouvoir de conditionnement exercé sur la navette.

Kulumba a sorti la pièce que je lui avait vendue à 300.000 FM. Il m'a dit que quelqu'un lui avait proposé 25 millions. Parmi les trois pièces que je lui ai vendues à 1 million, il y en avait une cassée au milieu. Cette pièce a été restaurée par Kulumba et un acquéreur lui a proposé 25 millions, qu'il a refusés. Je lui ai demandé à combien voulait-il la vendre et il m'a répondu: à cinquante millions, c'était un acquéreur européen. Kulumba a dit qu'il attendait un ami des Etats-Unis et qu'il voulait également lui proposer la pièce.

Dans une deuxième occasion, Fatiékoro proposa à l'un de ses trois antiquaires de référence une statuette en bronze que ce dernier acheta à 30.000 FM. Par la suite, une connaissance rapporta à Fatiékoro que ce même antiquaire avait vendu ce bronze à 800.000 FM. «Cela m'a causé une crise de confiance envers les marchands de Bamako» affirme Fatiékoro. A la suite de

ces nouvelles, Fatiékoro retourne chez Kulumba, son premier contact, et lui vend toutes les pièces qu'il détient, dont l'une à 300.000 FM. «Que de pièces complètes, tous des personnages». Le témoignage de Fatiékoro montre d'une part que les aléas de la confiance ont des conséquences sur la rentabilité économique des rapports duels et orientent l'intermédiaire vers des nouveaux contacts 'faibles' (la vente de toutes les pièces à Kulumba). En outre, ces aléas redessinent les frontières du conditionnement et remettent en cause aussi les liens 'denses' anciens (rapport de Fatiékoro avec Komakodo).⁸

Les rapports de force dégagés à travers la communication et la redistribution du prix se reproduisent à toutes échelles de la filière. Dans les transactions des commerçants d'objets d'art, régis par des rapports duels verticaux, le paysage de la transaction s'égraine suivant une mise en scène rodée de l'autorité dans le but de pérenniser le joug de la dépendance des 'navettes'. Autant le prix de revente à la clientèle étrangère relaté par l'antiquaire à la navette doit être démesuré pour alimenter la représentation du *pedigree* relationnel auprès des fournisseurs; autant le prix proposé à ces derniers doit être 'au rabais' pour les forcer à la recherche d'objets de qualité. Ainsi, d'une part, la navette est poussée à une recherche permanente de personnages en terre cuite entiers; d'autre part, étant donné le contexte d'exclusivité des 'vases-clos', elle est sous la crainte d'un jugement négatif compromettant une éventuelle démarche de vente du même objet auprès d'autres antiquaires et finit par céder ses objets au prix imposé par son 'patron'. Les pièces de deuxième choix refusées par l'antiquaire sont discrètement proposées par la navette à la pléthore de 'petits antiquaires' de la ville, hors du circuit d'influence de l'antiquaire de référence. Entre-temps, l'antiquaire aura eu le soin d'informer, en temps réel, ses confrères de métier, en signalant le lot refusé et faisant ainsi 'terre brûlée' par

rapport à une éventuelle démarche de sa navette auprès d'autres marchands. A partir de ces éléments, l'on pourrait affirmer que le pouvoir d'ostracisme social imbriqué dans la parole se reproduit dans la 'sentence' livrée par l'antiquaire à travers la détermination du prix d'achat. La communication du prix par les antiquaires constitue ainsi un outil d'ostentation et de territorialisation de l'autorité et un instrument de consolidation des rapports de dépendance au sein de la filière, comme ces affirmations de Fatiékoro semblent confirmer:

Komakodo était incontournable car on est du même milieu, c'est difficile de proposer la marchandise à quelqu'un d'autre. Le problème à Bamako est que si tu ne tombes pas d'accord avec le premier acquéreur, tous les autres t'offriront encore moins. Quand Komakodo fixe son prix et tu refuses, tu ne pourras plus vendre la pièce ailleurs.

Coda

Fatiékoro date ses années de travail les plus rentables entre 1968 et 1984. Les gains tirés jusqu'au milieu des années 1980 lui ont permis de se marier et d'investir dans l'achat de bétail. En 1984, au moment de la réintégration de la devise malienne dans le FCFA, la baisse des salaires, en synergie avec l'inflation, entraîna une chute du pouvoir d'achat de 50%.⁹ En cette période, la plupart des pièces que Fatiékoro proposait aux antiquaires de Bamako restaient invendues. La réintroduction du FCFA ne fut pas, toutefois, la seule cause du déclin des affaires de Fatiékoro. Une première phase d'officialisation de la politique de protection du patrimoine culturel malien, entre 1976 et 1982,¹⁰ n'eut pas de conséquences directes sur les réseaux d'approvisionnement et d'acheminement des objets archéologiques. La première véritable contraction des maillons d'écoulement ruraux se produisit, en 1983, à la suite de

l'arrestation d'un célèbre antiquaire malien, plaque-tournante des circuits du marché international de terres cuites anciennes. Après cet événement, aussi bien dans le Delta intérieur que dans les régions méridionales, plusieurs antiquaires espacèrent leurs déplacements auprès de leurs intermédiaires locaux. Pour preuve, Fatiékoro admet que, au cours de la deuxième moitié des années 1980, il était obligé de se déplacer lui-même pour proposer ses trouvailles à Bamako. Cependant, lorsque Fatiékoro dit que ses affaires ont chuté après 1983, il veut, simplement, dire que l'écoulement des terres cuites ne constituait plus sa première source de gain. La déstructuration d'après 1983 n'a pas arrêté les fouilles, elle n'a fait que rendre les commandes de fouilles moins systématiques. En réalité, jusqu'au moment de mon enquête, l'activité d'écoulement et d'intermédiation de Fatiékoro ne s'était jamais interrompue.

Conclusion

A travers le cas des maillons d'écoulement des terres cuites anciennes, j'ai esquissé une description 'par le bas' des filières locales du commerce de terres cuites anciennes centrée sur les contraintes relationnelles qui canalisent les trajectoires des acteurs ruraux. Dans l'arène marchande des rapports de confiance, les acteurs dominants du réseau bâtissent un système d'intermédiation aboutissant à un rouage de collecte-vente à prix imposé et, finalement, à la pérennisation des rapports hiérarchiques à travers le monopole de l'intermédiation. Les rapports spéculaires entre fouilleurs et intermédiaires locaux et entre ces derniers et les antiquaires de Bamako intègrent ainsi des dynamiques de violence symbolique encadrés dans une matrice relationnelle relevant d'un *habitus* hiérarchique de gestion de l'autorité. Cependant, les dominés exercent, à leur tour, des formes de coercition à travers ce que Linda Green appelle des «micro-économies de la différence» (Green 2004,

p. 320). L'intériorisation des rapports hiérarchiques n'empêche donc pas l'essor de trajectoires individuelles des cadets sociaux qui gèrent la contrainte de l'autorité, donnant ainsi lieu à des «micrologies du pouvoir» (Foucault 1994) à partir de marges, soient-elles minimales, de liberté. En dernière instance, l'*habitus* hiérarchique de redistribution de la violence symbolique ne fait que renforcer le pouvoir des acteurs dominants à travers le cloisonnement de l'information par les acteurs subalternes eux-mêmes, déterminant, en dernière instance, le maintien du *status quo* hiérarchique de la filière.

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Note sur l'auteur

Cristiana Panella travaille au Département d'Anthropologie Culturelle du Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale. Depuis 1991, elle étudie le marché international de l'art africain, en particulier, le trafic d'objets archéologiques. En 2002, elle a soutenu une thèse en Sciences Sociales : *Les terres cuites de la discorde. Déterrement et écoulement des terres cuites anthropomorphes du Mali. Les réseaux locaux*, Leiden : CNWS. Actuellement, elle est en train de rédiger un ouvrage d'approfondissement théorique du commerce illicite d'objets d'art et s'intéresse aux représentations politiques de l'illégalité.

Notes

1. Les données présentées dans cet article ont été collectées lors d'une enquête de terrain financée, dans le cadre de mes recherches

de thèse, par l'Université de Leiden et l'University College London. Cette enquête a été menée, en janvier-février 2000, dans la région de Bougouni, par l'archéologue Samou Camara et moi-même. Je voudrais remercier Samou Camara pour sa présence constante et vigile et pour les nombreux risques personnels qu'il a assumés pendant ce terrain de recherche. Pour assurer l'anonymat de nos collaborateurs, à l'exception du nom de la capitale, Bamako, tous les noms, aussi bien des informateurs que des lieux, sont fictifs.

2. Pour un aperçu de la définition et de la théorisation du réseau en milieu illicite voir Eilstrup-Sangiovanni et Jones 2008.
3. Les traductions des interviews du *bama-nankan* vers le français reviennent à Samou Camara. Le franc malien (FM) remplaça le franc de la Communauté Financière d'Afrique (FCFA) de 1962 à 1984 et marqua, *de facto*, la sortie du Mali de l'Union Economique Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA). Le FM, rallié dans un premier temps au franc français (FF), subit deux dévaluations, en 1963 et en 1967. En 1984, la réintégration du pays dans la UEMOA comporta le retour au FCFA.
4. Il s'agit, il est probable, d'amulettes.
5. Cette gestion biaisée de l'information sur le prix ne concerne pas, toutefois, seulement les fouilleurs. Dans le milieu du commerce d'objets d'art abidjanais, il peut se produire qu'un antiquaire avance de l'argent à son fournisseur pour chercher des objets sculptés en bois 'en brousse'. Ce dernier peut revenir en prétendant n'avoir rien trouvé, après avoir vendu, avec un surplus de bénéfice par rapport à l'avance reçue, les nouvelles pièces à d'autres antiquaires auprès desquels il n'est pas endetté (Steiner 1994). Cependant, la marge de risque financier pour l'antiquaire est moindre par rapport à la navette; en outre, bénéficiant de son statut social, l'antiquaire peut activer un réseau d'informateurs qui vérifient les propos et les contacts de ses fournisseurs.
6. Bien que cette troisième option soit courante, elle n'est pas exclusive. Les fouilleurs de terres cuites anciennes de la région de Mopti sont, souvent, payés en fonction de la qualité de leurs trouvailles.
7. L'équivalent de 35 à 75 euros. Ce témoignage de Fatiékoro se réfère à la période 1984-94.
8. Le décalage de prix à travers les différentes échelles de la filière caractérise, d'ailleurs, d'autres contextes de pillage d'antiquités.

En Chine, un paysan de la région de Sichuan reçoit moins de 1% du prix payé en ville par un acheteur étranger. Un objet vendu à 100 dollars par le paysan peut passer par plusieurs intermédiaires avant d'être vendu en province entre 1.500 et 2.000 dollars pour atteindre les 10.000 dollars à Hong Kong ou à Macao et les 50.000 dollars sur les marchés londonien ou new-yorkais (Boylan 1995). D'autres cas d'écoulement d'antiquités volées en Italie, en Turquie et en Chine attestent que le découvreur des pièces ne reçoit que 0,7 à 1,4% du prix final de l'objet (Brodie 1998).

9. Les mêmes dynamiques se sont produites en 1994, lors de la dévaluation de 50% du FCFA par rapport au FF.
10. A la suite du projet d'inventaires nationaux de biens culturels lancés par l'Unesco en 1973, en 1976 furent organisées, à Bamako, les «Journées d'Etudes sur les Musées au Mali». Au cours de cette année, fut inauguré le Ministère de la Jeunesse, des Sports, des Arts et de la Culture, à l'origine, entre 1982 et 1984, de maintes actions d'envergure de répression du commerce d'objets archéologiques. En mars 1982 fut inauguré le nouveau Musée national du Mali. En juin 1982, à la suite d'un entretien avec le Procureur de la République, le Directeur du Musée national du Mali, Claude Ardouin, proposa au Ministre de la Jeunesse des Sports, des Arts et de la Culture, N.I. Mariko, d'appliquer l'Article 164 du Code Pénal, portant sur l'interdiction de violer des «tombeaux, sépultures et inhumations» (Panella 2002). Il en suivit une circulaire officielle d'interdiction des fouilles de sites archéologiques qui ouvrit la route à la loi nationale n° 8540/AN-RM du 14 mai 1985 et au décret n° 275/PG-RM du 4 novembre 1985 réglementant la promotion et la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel malien. A ces mesures législatives suivirent la loi n° 86-61/AN/RM du 26 juillet 1986, portant sur la réglementation de la profession de négociant en biens culturels et le décret n° 299-PG-RM du 19 septembre 1986 réglementant la prospection, la commercialisation et l'exportation de biens culturels (C. Panella 1995, *Les terres cuites anthropomorphes dites «de Djenné». Perspectives d'éthique et d'esthétique*, Mémoire de DEA en Histoire de l'Art, Université de Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 146 p, inédit).

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BOOK REVIEW

Scribbles from the den: essays on politics and collective memory in Cameroon, by Dibussi Tande, Bamenda, Cameroon, Langaa Publishers, 2009, 212 pp., £19.95, ISBN 978-9956558919

Dibussi Tande's *Scribbles from the den: essays on politics and collective memory in Cameroon* definitely contains no 'scribbles'. It is a collection of well articulated essays capturing the socio-cultural and political fabric of the nation state of Cameroon and of Africa in general. The 49 selected essays in this volume first appeared on 'Scribbles from the den,' Dibussi Tande's award-winning blog, www.dibussi.com, between 2006 and 2009, a fact which has implications for the tone and texture of these essays. Tande is not oblivious to these implications. As he explains: 'While editing, I tried as much as possible to remain faithful to the look and feel of the original blog postings, many of which were interactive articles with hyperlinks and/or embedded videos and podcasts' (p. xii). Addressed to a general audience, these essays are a product of citizen journalism, which is now *en vogue* as a result of the abundance of digital media. Cheap and accessible web blogs afford citizens like Dibussi Tande an opportunity to collect, analyse and disseminate news and information that is independent, reliable, broad-based and necessary to the practice of democracy. These essays therefore were not written as 'academic essays' following stringent citation rules and are not riddled with academic jargon. The author, for the most part, draws on his own informed knowledge to bring incisive

analysis to past and present events. Nevertheless, these analyses are thorough coming from the pen (keyboard) of the author who is a graduate of law and political science and also a talented citizen journalist with years of experience.

The essays are grouped thematically in nine parts: 'The Anglophone file', 'Citizenship in the global village', 'Collective memory', 'The university in crisis', 'Presidential politics', 'Political pluralism', 'Profiles of courage', 'Law and justice', and 'Random notes'. That Tande begins this collection with the 'Anglophone file' foregrounds his identity as both subject and citizen in this enterprise of narrating the nation in the blogosphere and in print. The Anglophone file contains essays that decry the marginalisation of English-speaking Cameroonians in La République du Cameroun. As an Anglophone student activist during the height of Anglophone Nationalism in Cameroon in the 1990s, Tande's analysis is instructive not only as a student of political science and law but a *bona fide* witness and participant in this history. The first article in this section, 'Language as a tool for exclusion: reflections on Cameroon's National Bilingualism Day', provides the canvas for Tande to analyse the apparent marginalisation of English-speaking Cameroonians in Cameroon. As he states: 'The simple truth is that in as much as Cameroonians obsess about national unity and nationhood, those in charge rarely go out of their way to ensure that these political clichés become reality, not even through largely symbolic gestures such as having a fully bilingual website for the presidency of the Republic,

arguably the official gateway of the Cameroon government ... such acts of omission go to reinforce the feelings of institutional and systemic marginalization that run rampant in the ex-British Southern Cameroons' (p. 3). Yet, where Dibussi's citizenship journalism manifests itself most admirably is in the prodding of the collective memory of Cameroonians and non-Cameroonians alike. The five essays in this section recover from the historical archives and memory, the lives of some of Cameroon's unsung heroes like Felix Moumie and Osenda Afana, brutally assassinated because of their anti-colonial and nationalist leanings. But Tande goes beyond recalling history; he indicts Cameroonians for what he terms 'collective amnesia'. As Tande postulates: 'The absence of memoirs, autobiographies and biographies in Cameroon is merely one facet of a much broader problem, i.e., the collective inability (or unwillingness) of Cameroonians to keep historical records for posterity or even to consider these records as important contributions to the national collective memory' (p. 55). It is in essays like these that Tande makes use of the 'safe haven' accorded him by the blogosphere which he has transferred into print. As he argues, 'For half a century, Cameroonians have been systematically deprived of the appropriate *repères historiques* or historical reference points that would enable them to analyze political

and other events in the country in an informed manner, and place these events in their appropriate historical and geo-political context ... taking a fresh look at events of the past and going beyond the official narrative when interpreting today's events' (p. xii).

However the thematic partitions are for convenience only and do not intimate solid boundaries because most of the essays have one denominator: Cameroon/Africa. The theme that runs through these essays is the debilitating terrain that Cameroonians in Cameroon or the diaspora are forced to call home, but Tande's web blog translated into the printed word becomes a site of resistance, a testimony that an individual can indeed play a role, albeit a small one, in prodding and shaping national discourse on relevant national and global issues.

Collecting these essays in print is indicative that despite the gains of digital media, the death knell of the print medium is still a long way off and papyrus certainly still rules. In fact, with the evanescent and ephemeral nature of web material, *Scribbles from the den: essays in politics and collective memory* is a real treasure.

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BOOK REVIEW

France and the new imperialism. Security policy in sub-Saharan Africa, by Bruno Charbonneau, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008, 189 pp., £55.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780754672852

The *civilizing mission* might have changed its name and its image, but to this day it remains implicit if not explicit in France's Africa policy. (p. 1)

At a time when a number of French publications are asking whether France has 'lost' Africa, Bruno Charbonneau's *France and the new imperialism* is a useful reminder that we should not forget the strong ties that are being kept alive between sub-Saharan Africa and the former colonial power. His book offers a re-examination of the discourses and policies that have kept this hegemonic relationship going since the nineteenth century. Following a more or less chronological pattern, Charbonneau provides an extensive study of French security policy towards sub-Saharan Africa up to and including the violent uprisings which occurred in Côte d'Ivoire in late 2004 and that were directed against the presence of French armed forces in the country. This focus on Franco-African security and military relations makes Charbonneau's contribution one that has enormous value to the field of international relations in general and to anyone with an interest in security studies and post-colonial politics.

Charbonneau's reference to hard, empirical evidence sits well with a theoretical approach that draws from Gramscian notions of hegemony as well as Foucauldian

interpretations of power. This balance is one of the desired aims of the book. It attempts to take critical theory to a position where it can elicit social change by engaging head-on with empirical research in order to point to 'where resistance and opposition can be effective: that is, by raising consciousness' (p. 6). Charbonneau begins with an all-out attack on the concept of a pre-formed unitary state, the *symbolic state*. He refers to this 'ahistorical' conception of the state as a 'strategy of power [which] produces, transforms, and reproduces [the] political order' (p. 12). It is the most powerful symbol on which Franco-African security and defence policies are based.

The author gives a concrete account of the consequences of security policy in Africa once it has been decoupled from the discourse on the symbolic state. Via two case studies which are discussed in separate chapters, we are shown how both militarisation and impunity were the main outcomes of these policies. First, he deals at length with France's involvement in the events that led to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. He then provides an examination of France's 'military cooperation' in Côte d'Ivoire. These examples serve to underline the ways in which Charbonneau understands France to be exercising a form of imperialism: with its roots in economic domination, the control of Africa is performed via security policy.

Charbonneau's stated aim is to contribute to the literature on networks and parallel hierarchies, on the criminal activity that he believes to have been discarded by international relations as a discipline – in particular by French scholarship. He is

most successful in highlighting the linguistic reconfigurations that France has had to adapt to in order to give legitimacy to its presence, its interventions and continued meddling in African affairs. The reader is thus implicitly told the story of how France went from being a 'coloniser' and 'civiliser' to a 'developer' in humanitarian clothing, operating in a world where globalisation has 'provided France with a valuable new method to maintain and restructure its influence and power' (p. 77). Along with a number of highly revealing interviews with senior serving officials from the UN and from French military high command, a large number of previously unpublished records are particularly illuminating. Among other things, these demonstrate that African states have not been entirely passive when it came to defining cooperation agreements with France.

Although Charbonneau has a majestic way of positioning his work theoretically, the reader will most likely be disappointed that his analysis of France's increasingly complicated relationship with Rwanda and

other African states has not been further developed. It is always easy to point to gaps in works which deal with relatively recent events. However, it seems that relations are changing rapidly and one is left wanting for an account of how these would fit into Charbonneau's analysis. Notwithstanding, it seems likely that further research would only support the thesis of *France and the new imperialism*.

At a time when most of the attention is drifting towards the relations that China is developing with large parts of Africa, *France and the new imperialism* highlights the pervasiveness of imperial relations that are so hard to break away from entirely. The book is a must-read for all those with a keen interest in Africa and its future. I know of none other which analyses the ongoing relations of 'new imperialism' that are the foundation of modern-day Franco-African relations with such surgical accuracy.

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BOOK REVIEW

The quest for sustainable development and peace: the 2007 Sierra Leone elections, edited by A.B. Zack-Williams, Uppsala, The Nordic Africa Institute, 2008, 86 pp., £10.95 (paperback), ISBN 9789171066190

Sierra Leone has suffered decades of military dictatorship, prebendalism and the informalisation of the economy, processes which have severely undermined the necessary conditions for building peace and a genuine democratic social order. The elections of 2007, the third since the start of civil war in 1991, were widely viewed as ‘important not just for consolidating peace, but also for nurturing and sustaining a fledgling democracy’ (p. 67). This collection of three essays by members of the Sierra Leone Research Network explores the legacy of Sierra Leone’s centralised, rent-seeking and historically conflict-prone post-colonial state for the present democratic transition, which remains fragile and unconsolidated. The authors bring to the fore the popular struggles for sustainable development and peace, as well examining the efforts of the international community and regional bodies.

The introduction by Zack-Williams traces the origin of the tortuous democratic path in Sierra Leone. He provides a summary account of the prolonged series of military incursions into Sierra Leone politics, arguing that the military intervention against Siaka Stevens in 1967 ‘marked the beginning of the political instability and economic decline of the country’ (p. 9) and the emergence and endurance of one-party centralised dictatorship from Brigadier Andrew Terence Juxon-Smith to Siaka

Stevens to Joseph Saidu Momoh. In the first chapter, Zack-Williams offers a detailed analysis of the background of the Sierra Leone civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002. Since the 1960s the so-called ‘Athens of West Africa’ was politically dis-configured and disjointed by the chronic politics of decline, more particularly under the All People’s Congress (APC) regime, in power from 1968–92. The APC institutionalised political violence, recklessly mis-managed the state economy and destabilised any concrete attempt for robust democratic experiment in Sierra Leone. He then explores the role of the international community in conflict resolution and peace keeping, including the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the UN Peace-building Commission, the EU, the International Development Association, the UK-funded International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) and the UK Independent Anti-Corruption Commission. The activities of these international actors are examined in relation to vibrant segments of Sierra Leone civil society in the struggle for democracy, peace and development during and after the 2007 general elections. The involvement of the international community in the post-war transition period in Sierra Leone was manifest in two forms. First, donors embarked on strategies of ‘stamping out’ the entrenched undemocratic tendencies, including clamping down on corruption and strengthening the rule of law. Second, there was a strong initiative to develop a solid institutional capacity for the entrenchment of genuine democratic social order and consolidation of the fragile transition

process. A key sector that preoccupied the donors was the transformation of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to ensure credible and efficient conduct of elections that matched international standards.

In the second chapter, Zubairu Wai analyses the role of youths and the Sierra Leone diaspora in the current democratic and social transformation of Sierra Leone's political space. Wai argues that the youth, ostracised by socio-economic malaise, widely regarded the 2007 election as a path to sustainable peace and development, as did the Sierra Leoneans in diaspora (p. 39). This perception informed the currently rekindled political consciousness of this segment of civil society. Hence, both transnational politicking exhibited by Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora, articulating political reawakening tactics aided by the technologies of globalisation (Internet sites, newspapers and so on), and the struggles of the youth for transformative social change leading up to the 2007 elections proved crucial to the outcomes of the election. The struggles of the people of Sierra Leone to overcome the legacy of the traumatic past by using their votes to condemn bad governance were manifest in the outcome of the election, which marked the beginning of an end to prolonged years of conflict, and new hopes for democracy and social justice.

The third chapter, by Zack-Williams and Osman Gbla, looks at the nature of the electoral process, and identifies the fundamental challenges of peace-building in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Teething problems such as the 'youth question', high levels of corruption, youth unemployment, a fragile economy, the issue of social citizenship, the struggle for survival, a weakened educational system, and quasi-national security policy are key obstacles that hinder the prospects of entrenching a sustainable democratic social order in Sierra Leone (p. 80). They underline that the integration of effective security mechanisms at both national and regional levels is a prerequisite for good governance

and the consolidation of democracy in insecurity-prone Sierra Leone. Domestically, there is the need for a strategic national security policy that will contain general insecurity by ensuring the protection of lives and property. This can be achieved through efficient and effective policing, strengthening the rule of law and stimulating social justice and development policies. However, alongside domestic security policy, post-conflict Sierra Leone needs to foster a strategic and cooperative regional policy that engages with regional security bodies within the West African sub-region on matters crucial to regional security such as the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (DDRP).

The three contributors explore the multifaceted dimensions of Sierra Leone's attempt at post-war transformations through democratic transitions and peace-building initiatives. The essays postulate that despite the efforts of civil society in Sierra Leone and the diaspora, and the activities of international actors and regional bodies, the consolidation of peace and development in Sierra Leone remains elusive. The 2007 elections served as a 'testing ground' for consolidating post-conflict peace-building and a recipe for sustaining the nascent democracy. The quest for sustainable development and peace largely depends on enduring democratisation of society through entrenching a culture of political inclusiveness, social justice and effective peace-building strategies. The pre-2007 election Kabbah-led government was marred by intractable 'politics of spoil', electoral violence, and a lack of restorative justice and popular participation in the process of governance (p. 70). This festering sore in the democratisation process spilled over into the 2007 elections, and remains a key challenge to peace-building and viable democracy.

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BOOK REVIEW

Oil and politics in the Gulf of Guinea, by Ricardo M.S. Soares de Oliveira, London, Hurst & Co, 2007, 416 pp., £20.00, ISBN 9781850658580

This is an important and timely book concerned with the political economy of oil in Africa. As energy security emerges as an increasingly important issue in global politics, the Gulf of Guinea has come to be regarded as a critical new ‘frontier’ of oil and gas exploitation. The eight oil states of the Gulf together hold over 50 million barrels of oil or just under 5% of the world’s proven oil reserves, around 80% of which is in Angola and Nigeria alone (p. 203). The ‘Gulf of Guinea’ – a region invented in this intensifying contest for oil and illustrative of ‘how space is easily conceptualised by capital and politics’ (p. 5) – is increasingly vital to the global oil market and has been ‘catapult[ed] . . . from strategic neglect into geopolitical stardom’ (p. 5). Soares de Oliveira presents an engaging and theoretically informed comparative account of oil and politics in Angola, Nigeria, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Chad, São Tomé & Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea, critically examining the role of some of the key actors involved including oil companies, the oil producing states and oil importing countries. The book thus explores the fascinating relationships that link companies, the petroleum elites of host states and oil importing countries into a mutually rewarding partnership whilst also not overlooking some of the negative consequences for the majority of the region’s citizens. Going beyond the limits of the ‘resource curse’ thesis, Soares de

Oliveira critically interrogates the structures and interests that make ‘state failure’ not an aberration but a permanent political condition. These ‘successful failed states’ are characterised by petroleum elites that sign contracts and strike partnerships with oil companies enabling them to secure the economic rents necessary for their own survival and continued reproduction. The contemporary existence of petro-states in the region is not merely the result of a skewed market or of institutional failure, but of particular historical constellations that, though centred on oil, are individual and context specific, thus deserving particular explanations.

The book also provides a powerful and insightful exposition of the role that foreign oil companies and parastatal (national) oil companies (‘states within states’) play in perpetuating ‘failure’. The discussion of Sonangol in Angola is particularly strong. The company’s emergence is set in historical context and the way in which its tentacles now stretch into a wide range of economic activities is laid bare. As an ‘impressively well networked’ national oil company (p. 92), the story of how Sonangol ‘crowds out’ other entrepreneurs or is run by presidential loyalists is well told here, as is the way in which the company has pursued a policy of joint ventures with major international players. The tangled webs that this can produce have, in Angola’s case, become more evident in the form of, for example, Sonangol Sinopec International (SSI), a joint venture between Sinopec (the Chinese state-owned oil company) and China Sonangol International Holding (CSIH)

(itself a particularly opaque agency) which has the backing of key stakeholders in the Angolan elite. Sonangol is also now currently in the process of establishing a joint venture for oil in Guinea together with China Sonangol and the China International Fund. One of the main strengths of the book is the way it can help us to make sense of these kinds of dubious convergences of interests (of local elites, international companies and global institutions) around oil, and the implications they have for politics and the prospects for 'development'. Another is the focus on the kinds of space that are produced by these interactions, such as the oil-producing enclaves protected by various state and non-state security outfits 'where companies and the state ensure levels of "stateness" that are absent in the remainder of the country' (p. 106) while the bulk of the population has to fend for itself. The enclave nature

of the oil economy (outwardly oriented, no provision for mass employment and with few if any linkages with other sectors of the domestic economy) is then replicated in the forms that states take in the region and the ways in which they divide territories into 'useful' and 'useless' spaces – just as in colonial times. In the case of the latter, 'people therein virtually disappear from the radar of national politicians' (p. 110).

In sum this is an impressive, original and insightful book that makes a very valuable contribution to our understanding of African political economy. It deserves to be read and engaged with widely.

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BOOK REVIEW

Zunami! The South African elections of 2009, edited by Roger Southall and John Daniel, Johannesburg, Jacana Media, 2009, 300 pp., £14.95, ISBN 9781770097223

Ironically, the meteoric rise of Jacob Zuma in the South African political firmament began in mid-2005 when his financial advisor, Schabir Shaik, was convicted of corruption in the Pietermaritzburg High Court, and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) launched a corruption case against Zuma for his role in a massive arms deal in the 1990s. Shortly thereafter, then-President Thabo Mbeki dismissed Zuma from his position as Deputy President, and towards the end of 2005 Zuma was charged with raping an HIV-positive woman. In 2006 Zuma was acquitted of rape, and he went on to defeat Mbeki in a fierce battle for presidency of the party at the African National Congress (ANC) 52nd national congress in Polokwane in 2007. Another break for Zuma came in September 2008, when Judge Chris Nicholson found that the executive branch had interfered in the NPA's case against Zuma, amounting to a political conspiracy against him. The National Executive Committee of the ANC promptly recalled Mbeki from office, replacing him with Kgalema Motlante as interim president. In a furious response, dissidents loyal to Mbeki broke away from the ANC to form a new party that came to be named Congress of the People (Cope) that moved quickly to challenge the ANC in the April 2009 elections. Despite Cope's assault the ANC won 65.9% of the votes, catapulting

Zuma into the presidency with a substantial majority – albeit 3.8% lower than in 2004.

The 2009 national and provincial elections form the focus of *Zunami!* Following an introductory chapter by Roger Southall on the context of the 2009 elections, the volume includes analyses of trends in party support and voting behaviour since 1994 (Schulz-Herzenberg); the electoral system (February); the ANC's election campaign (Butler); Cope (Booyesen); Cope vs the ANC in the Eastern Cape (Cherry); the Democratic Alliance (Jolobe); the Inkatha Freedom Party (Francis); two chapters on smaller parties (Heÿn and Petlane); gender and the 2009 elections (Hassim); the media (Duncan); a summary of national and provincial electoral outcomes (Daniel and Southall); and a concluding chapter by John Daniel.

Focused primarily on the political system, the book provides a useful overview of the 2009 elections and the state of political parties nearly twenty years after the unbanning of the ANC, the South African Communist Party and the Pan-Africanist Congress. For this reviewer, the chapters that stand out are those that go beyond accounts of political parties and election results to provide a deeper analysis of this profoundly contentious period in South African politics. One of these is Janet Cherry's essay on the battle between the ANC and Cope in the Eastern Cape. In addition to the varied dynamics in different regions of the province, she illuminates the contradictory position in which Cope found itself in relation to the ANC in the course of attempting simultaneously to tap into and depart from the Congress tradition.

Shireen Hassim offers some important insights into the profoundly gendered (and sexualised) character of political contestation around the 2009 elections – a crucial topic that cries out for closer attention.¹ Of considerable significance as well are Jane Duncan's observations on the lack of depth in media coverage, and how this served the interests of the dominant parties.

The term 'Zunami' was coined in the context of the Polokwane conference, when the extent and intensity of popular support for Jacob Zuma was powerfully on display – catching many of the pundits who pronounce on South African politics by surprise. Since then, however, the mainstream media and academia have devoted remarkably little attention to the question of popular support for Zuma.

Despite its provocative title, *Zunami!* does not move us very far beyond the 'manipulated mindless masses' model that pervades the mainstream media. In a chapter that begins to raise the question of support for Zuma, Anthony Butler points to a coalition of the discontented, including the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the South African Communist Party (SACP), Umkhonto weSizwe veterans, and provincial leaders on the losing side of ANC patronage. He also identifies 'branch-level discontent about the monopolisation of patronage

opportunities by incumbents, poor service delivery, and the general high-handedness and arrogance that characterised the higher reaches – or even the middling one – of Mbeki's administration' (p. 69).

While these and other forces operating at the level of leadership are undoubtedly important, the question of widespread popular support for Zuma requires far deeper analysis, especially in light of ongoing municipal rebellions. Given the widespread liberal disdain for Zuma and his followers, it is hardly surprising that the mainstream media have failed to engage these questions. Yet, however critical the independent left may be of Zuma, they ignore such issues at their peril.

Note

1. For important work on these issues, see Mark Hunter's *Love in the time of AIDS: inequality, gender, and rights in South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), and his forthcoming article in *Antipode* entitled 'Beneath the "Zunami" Jacob Zuma and the gendered politics of social reproduction in South Africa'.

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BOOK REVIEW

Landmarked: land claims and restitution in South Africa, by Cheryl Walker, Athens, OH and Auckland Park, Ohio University Press and Jacana Media, 2008, xii + 292 pp., \$26.95, ISBN 9780821418703

Walker's *Landmarked* is probably the best single-volume introduction to land restitution in South Africa. The book's great strength is the way it combines the emotional immediacy of attachment to land, detailed case studies, and national-level policy reflection in a single volume. This is possible because of the personal history and experience that Walker brings to the book, as the daughter of a white farmer in the Western Cape, a fieldworker with the land activist non-governmental organisation (NGO) the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), as a member of the first post-apartheid government's restitution team as Land Claims Commissioner for the then newly created province of KwaZulu-Natal, and as a scholar of South African social history.

The book is framed by an overall argument about the limits of the 'restitution narrative': a morally and politically charged account that tells of the dispossession of rural Africans by whites and which positions the return of land through restitution as a path to justice and healing. As Walker puts it, this is 'a historical narrative of quintessentially rural dispossession and restitution which, while not broadly untrue, is insufficient as a basis for understanding today's developmental challenges' or effectively addressing the range of claims encountered by the restitution program (p. 233). As a charter for land and agrarian

reform, she argues, it narrowly focuses attention to the former 'white' countryside to the neglect of the African labour reserves, and underplays urban issues, both in terms of the significance of urban restitution claims, and the urbanisation of the African population. Restitution has also unfolded in a context of rapid social change in which the material value of land in an increasingly non-agrarian economy may not keep pace with its symbolic value, a context in which the 'restitution narrative' underestimates the contemporary environmental and political-economic challenges to making a living off the land. Finally, the narrative frames issues in a form too general to deal with the diversity of actual claims, which have pitted different groups of claimants against one another and raised difficult issues about the value of competing land uses (p. 233).

These issues are explored in depth in chapters on three land restitution claims that, in the process of claiming and in their 'post-settlement' struggles, illustrate the diversity of challenges and possibilities of restitution without sacrificing detail, and in which Walker was involved as Land Claims Commissioner for KwaZulu-Natal. The three case studies are aptly chosen: for newcomers to restitution in South Africa they will provide a useful overview of salient issues, while readers familiar with the context will find some unexpected variations on general themes here.

The first case, Cremin, represents a 'black spot', an area where *amakholwa* (the Zulu term for an elite class of mission-educated Christians) had purchased land under individual title prior to apartheid, and from

which they were forcibly removed in the homeland era. The case illustrates persistent effects of rural differentiation and complex ways it has intersected with restitution, and emerges as successful more because of the 'relative privilege and social cohesion of the claimants ... than ... state policies and bureaucratic performance' (p. 28).

The second case focuses on the Eastern Shores of Lake St Lucia, one of the earliest claims involving a protected area; together with other similar early claims at Makuleke and Dwesa-Cwebe, it represents an early instance of the general approach – with some significant variations in particular contexts – for the resolution of land claims on protected areas in a way that maintains the conservation status of the land. Walker grapples here with the question of the public interest in conservation against owners' rights to productive use of land. Restitution here has offered some financial and emotional benefits to the claimants, but has not in the end allowed them to reoccupy their land.

The third case, Durban's Cato Manor, exemplifies both the tensions between the restitution of land and alternative urban development strategies, and concerns over the restoration of land to the Indian landlords who spearheaded the claim. The Cato Manor Development Authority successfully lobbied for the inclusion of provisions in the Restitution Act (section 34) that would allow local governments to apply to the Land Claims Court to 'rule out land restoration as a settlement option for restitution claimants in specific areas under their jurisdiction' (p. 157). What ensued was a highly confrontational and expensive court and negotiation process that in the end did not compensate many of the former tenants of Cato Manor landlords, shift the apartheid-era ethnic divisions within the city, or result in much actual restoration of land (pp. 164–166).

No book could cover the full range of land restitution experiences in South Africa, and there are certainly aspects of

the cases here that are closely tied to the context of KwaZulu-Natal. But taken together, the cases here, and later chapters on the difficulties of evaluating the restitution program, illustrate well the central tension between the nationally politically valuable narrative of dispossession and restitution and the complexities of particular restitution cases.

A chapter on Walker's own attachments to the farm of her childhood, together with a series of vignettes on individual claimants and the testimonies of others affected by forced removals and evictions, engages the challenging but vital issue of how to express an empathy across boundaries of class, culture and circumstance, and a sense of attachment to land that neither trivialises it nor appears presumptuous of a shared experience. While readers will undoubtedly have different responses to these sections, I was impressed that a single text could move coherently and successfully between detailed discussions of national evaluation statistics and their limitations on one hand, to the emotional intimacy of reflections on the author's privilege and ties to land on the other.

Because it works on so many different levels, the book is particularly well suited for teaching. Several years ago when I was designing a syllabus for an undergraduate class on the political economy of southern Africa, I could not find a suitable monograph on land reform. The next time I offer the course, Walker's book will be on my syllabus. Finally, the publishers are to be commended for allowing the book to include more than 50 black and white photographs (another asset for the classroom), taken by the author and others, ranging from the ruined homes of people removed under apartheid to the ceremonies accompanying the settlement of land claims.

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Fake capitalism? The dynamics of neoliberal moral restructuring and pseudo-development: the case of Uganda¹

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Uganda is regarded as the African country that has adopted the neoliberal reform package most extensively. Notably, neoliberal reforms have targeted the reshaping not only of the economy but also of the society and culture. The reforms aim to create a 'market society', which includes a corresponding set of moral norms and behaviour. Reforms, therefore, have to undermine, overwrite and displace pre-existing non-neoliberal norms, values, orientations and practices among the population; they also have to foster norms, values, orientations and practices that are in line with neoliberal ideology. This article looks at the process of neoliberal moral restructuring in Uganda since 1986. Extensive interviews in Kampala and eastern Uganda reveal that the cultural dimension of rapid neoliberal reform has negatively affected the relationships and trade practices between smallholder farmers and traders in rural markets. Since the onset of liberal economic reforms, face-to-face rural trade practices have been characterised by higher levels of 'malpractice' and a change in their form. Neoliberal Uganda is furthermore characterised by a spread of destructive norms and practices in other economic sectors and sections of society that have been 'modernised' according to neoliberal prescriptions. Many respondents invoked ideas such as 'moral degeneration', 'moral decay', a 'rotten society' and '*kiwaani*' (the title of a popular song, used interchangeably with *deceit*, *tricking*, or *fake* to describe behaviours and objects) and were worried about the future of moral norms and business practices in the country. The changes and trends described in this paper seem difficult but not impossible to reverse.

Keywords: neoliberalism; moral economy; Uganda

Introducing the study of neoliberal moral restructuring

Neoliberal reform: forcing a market society into being

Uganda is regarded as the African country that has adopted the neoliberal reform package most extensively (Harrison 2006, p. 110). It is considered the star performer of liberal economic reforms and the poster example that other African (and other developing) countries on the verge of starting reforms should copy in almost every aspect (Kuteesa *et al.* 2009). The country's 'apparent success [in the 1990s] allowed donors to claim Uganda as the jewel in their crown, an emblematic case for neoliberal reform' (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2009, p. 8).

Neoliberalism was imposed on the country, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, by external actors in the process and aftermath of structural adjustment policies after the 1980s. It has since been pervasive, chiefly due to the powerful ideological, normative

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and material impact of the foreign agents of the ‘development industry’, especially the international financial institutions (IFIs) and the various bilateral donors, which promoted neoliberalism in the country (Harrison 2005c, 2006); but also due to the (evolving) interests, orientations and actions of a range of domestic actors.

Neoliberal reforms in Uganda have targeted the reshaping not only of the economy but also of the society and culture. The reforms aim at the emergence and consolidation of ‘market society’ (Harrison 2005b, 2005c, 2010): free-market, capitalist social relations, respective subjectivities and the hegemony of capital (*ibid.*). This includes a corresponding set of moral norms of behaving and relating to each other: namely, dimensions of a more or less crass or blatant² *homo oeconomicus* including cost–benefit calculus, self-interest and individualism (with a focus on individual gain and material success), disposition and behaviour to maximise utility, instrumental rationality, egoism, low other-regard and empathy, opportunism and cunning, priority given to money, an emphasis on transaction-based relations and disregard for the common good (Gill 1995, Young 1996, Carrier 1997, Rose 1999, Williams 1999, Slater and Tonkiss 2001, Beckert 2005, 2007a, 2007b, Clarke 2005, Harrison 2005b, Watson 2005, Ferguson 2006, Giroux 2008, Streeck 2009).

Reforms, therefore, have to undermine, delegitimise, overwrite and displace pre-existing non-neoliberal norms, values, orientations and practices³ (hereafter, NVOPs). At the same time they have to promote, legitimise and elevate pre-existing and ‘new’ NVOPs which are in line with the neoliberal ideological ‘end point’ (Harrison 2005b): market society. To study ‘neoliberal moral restructuring’ is to take seriously the point that neoliberalism is, in important ways, a *cultural programme* (e.g. in the sense of restructuring NVOPs). This idea is implicit (and sometimes explicit) in many of the critical writings on neoliberalism; yet, *how* this process works, what is *political* about it and how it can be studied are rarely followed through empirically.

The cultural political economy of moral reform

Conceptualising moral restructuring

Moral norms refer to ‘standards of interaction concerning others’ welfare’ (Keller, 2006, p. 169). They are also referred to as norms that constrain or regulate the exercise of self-interest/selfishness and encourage pro-social or pro-group behaviour (Sripada and Stich 2006, Haidt 2007), including social or inter-personal obligations (reciprocity etc.) (Keller 2006, Streeck 2009). Restructuring moral norms can be defined as changing what is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable, proper and improper, legitimate and illegitimate, or praiseworthy and blameworthy behaviour⁴ in the light of the moral principles (e.g. justice, care, solidarity, fairness, decency, reciprocity, authenticity, reliability) in a given country and/or its regions (Thompson 1971, Scott 1979, 1980, Carrier 1997, 2005, Keller 2006, pp. 169–74, Sayer 2007). Re-engineering morals also entails changing the criteria by which people evaluate their own and each other’s actions⁵, and reordering the power structures and relations – or the relative power of actors and social groups in a particular social space (Whyte 2010). Furthermore, as Monika Keller (2006) explains,

[h]umans can be characterized by a disposition to act, to believe and to feel in ways that are guided by norms and correspondingly by a disposition to experience certain *feelings* when norms are violated. Norms are fundamental to social life and the capacity to accept norms is a universal human biological and social adaptation. Norms serve the function of *coordinating* actions, beliefs, and feelings ... Norms provide socially constituted *reasons for actions*. (Keller, 2006, p. 169, emphasis added)

From the above, it follows that a reform that promotes a different moral order necessarily has to advance or generate particular (and at times new) *justifications for action*. And further, the reform necessarily has to attack the *emotional system* that is interwoven with the part of the old moral order that is targeted for dismantling and, again, promote a different web of emotions that corresponds with the particulars of the new order. These emotions include, in the case of *norm transgression*, feelings related to internal sanctions such as guilt, shame and embarrassment, and fear of external sanctions (e.g. punishment from others, such as community disapproval) and, in the case of *norm compliance*, positive or rewarding emotions (*ibid.*, pp. 169–174, Sripada and Stich 2006). Note that ‘[m]oral awareness of . . . [norm] violations requires *acts of compensation*, such as justifications or excuses in order to rebalance the relationship’ (Keller 2006, p. 173, emphasis added). The literature further suggests that significant norm violations elicit punitive emotions like anger and outrage as well as punitive actions such as criticism, condemnation, avoidance, exclusion, or physical harm (Sripada and Stich 2006, p. 287).

In addition, following Rest *et al.* (1999) one can see moral action ‘as generated by the interaction of four components: *moral sensitivity* (interpreting situations in terms of the consequences that one’s own actions have on others); *moral judgement* (i.e. understanding what action is right in a given situation); *moral motivation* (the willingness to give priority to moral concerns over attractive non-moral values); and *moral character* (command over the self-regulatory abilities necessary to actually execute one’s decisions . . .)’ (Nunner-Winkler 2007, p. 400, emphasis added). Hence, neoliberal moral reform is likely to be effected as a result of changing *all four* dimensions of moral action. Reforms will not only alter people’s sense of the moral dimensions of their actions but also lower people’s motivation, character strength and, generally, their ability or capacity to uphold the codes that govern(ed) the ‘old’ moral order.

The notion of a moral economy

All economies are *moral economies* in the sense that all economic orders, relations and practices have moral dimensions, preconditions and implications (Block 2003, Sayer 2007). Economic relations and practices ‘of all kinds are influenced and structured by moral dispositions and norms . . . and those norms may be compromised, overridden or reinforced by economic pressures’ (Sayer 2004, p. 2). An economic organisation, for example a local economy or market in a particular locality, is in important ways shaped by people’s relationships, their statuses and positions in webs of kinship and community relations and their entitlements, claims, rights, obligations and duties. Various moral (and other) principles (based for example on religion, kinship, neighbourhood, tradition, occupation) shape what is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, entitlement, duty and so on, for the actors and groups in a particular local moral economy (Thompson 1971, 1980, Carrier 2005).

It follows that in this sense all economic actors are moral actors (Watson 2005); their identities, motives, actions and relationships have a necessary moral connotation. The study of ‘moral economy’ can then be seen as ‘a form of enquiry that examines how ordinary economic practices and relationships embody or affect moral dispositions, evaluations, rules, values, customs and norms’ (Sanghera *et al.* 2009, p. 871) and the respective *political–economic* dimension thereof. This includes, as Matthew Watson notes (2005), the study of both the *(re-)constitution* and the *action* of the individual moral being within the respective moral economy (*ibid.*). Watson points to the neoliberal *political* project of the *cultural* conditioning of individuals according to imperatives of capitalist accumulation:

the shaping of actors' cognition and behaviour (habits of thought/action) through specific socialisation (*ibid.*, pp. 160, 181–197). He notes that,

patterns of behaviour within market arenas are shaped by prevailing social institutions, which in turn reflect the dominant political orientation of society. . . . What counts as acceptable behaviour is related to political decisions about dominant social institutions in a society in which the market is embedded (*ibid.*, p. 179 ff.).

Embedding the neoliberal moral code

If the balance of political and economic power (including the dominant ideology) in a society or specific locality changes significantly, we can expect a corresponding shift in the social institutions, the patterns of orientations and behaviours and so on. Neoliberal reforms then, we presume, try to (1) reshape the prevailing moral economy, e.g. by weakening and dismantling the old institutions and (2) replace them (as far as possible) with neoliberal social institutions and world views: money availability, wealth accumulation, consumption, individual preferences, choice, self-interest.

Even in a neoliberal society, non-neoliberal NVOPs are unlikely to be wiped out entirely. They are instead likely to coexist with the dominant neoliberal NVOPs. One may also expect that at times (and rather for a limited period) neoliberal proponents advance non-neoliberal NVOPs (e.g. 'borrow from older social forms', Greenhouse 2010, p. 4), for various reasons.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to expect that the process of neoliberal moral restructuring is a highly political process that evolves in a dynamic, volatile, contentious, conflict-laden and contradictory fashion, confronting the actors involved with a range of new moral conflicts and dilemmas. As regards the actors who are the 'drivers' of change, their actions and/or the processes that they (try to) set in motion are in part intended but also unintended, conscious and unconscious (Streeck 2009).

Finally then, a core pillar of the moral code of the neoliberal doctrine is: maximise your own self-interest (utility) in every situation and you will maximise social welfare (Beckert 2005, Streeck 2007). Rationalise, calculate and maximise your business; do not (in principle) consider moral obligations, or other-than-gain imperatives. Neoliberal doctrine (mathematically and rhetorically) links self-interest, acquisitiveness and ruthlessness at the micro-economic level (orientation, motivation, decision-making) to welfare at the macro-economic and societal level (*ibid.*): 'the model of the "invisible hand" expresses the connection of public virtue to private vices and thereby disconnects market outcomes from morally motivated action' (Beckert 2005, p. 5). Further, the neoclassical market model which, among others, informs neoliberal doctrine, assumes that a stable social order of markets is enabled by the positive and negative results of the self-interested actor who realises advantage through engaging in market exchange. Actors are *only* inter-linked in markets by their *self-interest*. In short, neoliberalism explains economic coordination, order and welfare out of decentralised motives of individual utility maximisation (Harrison 2005b, Beckert 2007b, 2007c). In many ways, then, neoliberal moral restructuring is about 'freeing' actors and arenas of social interaction from established ('traditional') moral norms and connotations, making the self-interest principle the overriding or hegemonic moral code. This, according to the neoliberal promise, maximises welfare (Carrier 1997, Harrison 2005b, Beckert 2005, 2007b, 2007c, Streeck 2007, Roseberry 2007).

Operationalising the study of neoliberal moral restructuring for the case of Uganda

This article investigates how the neoliberal *set* of moral norms interacts with and reshapes the prevailing set of morals in Uganda and more specifically in rural markets and

communities. By ‘set’ I am not referring to the existence of a perfectly static, monolithic and clearly defined or explicitly agreed ‘morality’ but a fragmented and changing, yet distinct and relatively widely known collection of various norms that shape people’s daily behaviour and interactions, including in the marketplace (Olivier de Sardan 2008). Furthermore, the fact that people plan, act and justify their behaviour in the light of morals does not mean that they always adhere completely to those moral codes. Rather, creative actors apply rules and norms in innovative ways (thus modifying them), or reinterpret and/or evade them (Streeck 2009, p. 9). Thus, the morals of a society are dynamic, embedded in a historical process and keep changing over time.

Ugandan culture has been under Western influence prior to 1986; hence, we are not studying a move from a non-liberal to a liberal self and moral economy. Rather, the distinct neoliberal post-1986 dynamics have shifted what was already a ‘hybrid’ culture into a particular direction. Ugandan society has undergone capitalist restructuring before – during colonialism and in the first decades after independence – but not according to the more all-encompassing recent version of capitalist social transformation that aims to engineer and ‘liberate’ a market society (Harrison 2005b), which includes markets and individuals ‘freed’ from ‘restraining’ norms, values, ties, commitments and obligations (Roseberry 1997).

The research attempted to track, explain and interpret the changes in economic practices and their underlying moral norms by exploring people’s respective experiences, views and interpretations, including their creation of sense, meaning and subjective or culturally constructed and situational *moral truths* (Finnström 2008, p. 173). It did this by tracing the history of rural trade relationships and practices in the country. The relationships between people’s orientations, motivations, actions, justifications and explanations and the respective action context were explored (Wilk and Cliggett 2007, p. 194).

Overview of the liberal economic reforms in Uganda

In 1986, the government and President Yoweri Museveni promised to bring improvements, or ‘fundamental change’, on various fronts. One significant promise was the shift to a kind of more pro-people, broad-based, humane, accountable and moral government and state. Many people in Uganda placed their trust in the new government and based their hopes and aspirations for the future on these promises and the convincing appearance, rhetoric and practical start of the new powers in State House. Another promise was to transform the economy from a peasant economy to a modern industrial economy that would bring about a working-/middle-class based society (Rubongoya 2007).

Since the late 1980s but especially in the 1990s, the government neoliberalised the Ugandan state, economy and society extensively according to ‘market society’-oriented prescriptions – all with significant financial and technical donor assistance and related pressure. The new economic reforms included a currency reform, the liberalisation of the foreign exchange markets and the export crops sectors (coffee, cotton), the abolition of the respective marketing boards, the dismantling (directly or indirectly) of cooperatives, the transformation of ministerial responsibilities and practices including the agricultural extension service (towards ‘demand-driven’ and consultancy-type services), the laying-off of an estimated 150,000 or more public servants and a further administrative restructuring in accordance with ‘new public management’ doctrines. Further, they included new ‘business-friendly’ laws (e.g. regarding investment and profit repatriation), the privatisation of most state-owned businesses/parastatals and properties and the creation of state institutions such as the Uganda Investment Authority and the Uganda Revenue Authority,

a general deregulation across the economy and the lifting of protective buffers for (weak) economic actors (such as peasants and workers) (Hansen and Twaddle 1998, Reinikka and Collier 2001, Harrison 2005a, 2005c, Kiiza 2006, Kiiza *et al.* 2006, Okidi *et al.* 2007, Kuteesa *et al.* 2009).⁶ Finally, the reforms introduced an excessive favouring of both capital and ‘the-unregulated-market-is-best’ doctrine as the guiding principle to reshape the perceptions, orientations, judgements and practices of the remaining civil servants.

The economic reform process in Uganda was rife with uncertainty, secrecy, unpredictability, ambiguity, propaganda, tensions, shallow official communication (e.g. about the details, rationale, implications and practicalities of the reforms of the rural economy), false rhetoric or misguided state advice (e.g. *vis-à-vis* farmers’ production choices), partly failed programme implementation and acts of corruption, theft, deception and crime. This resulted in economic hardship (e.g. un- or underemployment), emotional upheaval and material losses for many people (Tangri and Mwenda 2001, 2003, 2006, Asiimwe 2002, Barkan *et al.* 2004, Harrison 2005b, 2005c, Mwenda and Tangri 2005, Kiiza 2006, Kiiza *et al.* 2006, Mwenda 2007). A particular neoliberal form of insecurity and uncertainty, both permanent and unheightened – a core characteristic of neoliberal life worldwide (Bauman 2006, Dean 2008, Wacquant 2009) – became a central contextual feature for the deliberations and actions of the Ugandan population in the 1990s and 2000s. Insecurity and uncertainty were part of everyday life in the past, especially during the years of conflict, yet the reforms did not remove many of the sources of economic and social uncertainty, but endorsed and kept many in place and unleashed new ones.

Some of the characteristics of the neoliberal rural economy in greater Bugisu

Traders, farmers and chains of malpractice

The cultural dimension of rapid neoliberal reform has negatively affected the relationships and trade practices between smallholder farmers and traders in rural markets. Since the onset of liberal economic reforms, face-to-face rural trade practices have been characterised by higher levels of ‘malpractice’ and a change in their form. A considerable section of the traders (including middlemen and brokers) who bought agricultural produce from smallholder farmers in greater Bugisu engaged in one or some of the following: deception, intimidation, theft (actual theft, non-payment for produce taken on credit or payment with counterfeit money), collusion (cartel-like pricing) and corruption (to get protection and other forms of special treatment); and there was widespread use of weighted scales to cheat farmers. Malpractice was also reported to be a problem in other geographical areas of the country’s agricultural sector and in other parts of the private sector.

In the decades before 1986 there were certainly malpractices in the rural economy, but these were kept in check to some extent by state regulations, a specific set of social values and moral norms (and related sanctions), and by the quality-control practices of the cooperatives that were a central part of commercial agriculture. Cooperatives were dismantled as part of the national neoliberal reforms. The cooperatives’ economic function was performed instead by traders, many of whom were agents for the larger (exporting) corporations that were owned by national or foreign elites.

Traders appear to have been the origin of many of the malpractices that people identified. Many farmers interviewed in greater Bugisu estimated that the majority of traders were involved in malpractice. Those traders interviewed generally acknowledged that malpractice was carried out. Both sides, with very few exceptions, considered malpractice to be a major (and growing) problem in the rural economy since the 1990s.

Partly in response to the traders' malpractice, some farmers also carried out malpractice, for example the adulteration of produce or misuse of pre-financing, though with much less frequency, scope and intensity than traders. The practices of the small traders, who at times were farmers themselves, were often also affected by poverty-related concerns. Larger companies that were supplied with produce by a group of middlemen had no substantial mechanisms in place to shape or control the behaviour of the latter. Their representatives claimed that it was impossible (or too expensive) to monitor agents effectively and limit their malpractices in a liberal market context. Some traders found themselves being tricked by some of the larger (export) companies with which they were trading. For instance, in the case of a foreign coffee-exporting company, a group of traders told us that the quality of produce supplied was often questioned so that the company did not have to pay the quality premium, or that quality measuring and pricing was done in a hidden way. According to insider information, malpractice at all levels was a common problem in the country's liberalised coffee sector. Generally, some of the malpractices emerged or mutated with an increase in product demand (the coffee boom in the mid 1990s, or southern Sudan trading boom in the late 2000s) when many people rushed into a sector in order to make a good deal. Our research thus identified cases of *chains of malpractice* in some of the researched sites.⁷

The changing political economy and the problem of farmers' diminishing bargaining power

Farmers mostly experienced a decline in their bargaining power *vis-à-vis* traders as a result of the impoverishing effects of the reforms not only in the economy, but also in the health and education sectors. A weakened public sector also contributes to this problem. The farmers, mostly now individualised actors, often had to accept the traders' malpractice – which they were regularly aware of during the transaction and even at times raised in discussion with traders – in order to get at least some cash to deal with the most immediate problems they faced.

One group of farmers reasoned that powerful politicians were backing some of the abusive middlemen that traded coffee in their village in order to get cheap inputs for the coffee company of the politician(s). Consequently, they feared challenging such middlemen to demand better practices, for example better prices, and putting an end to traders deliberately buying the coffee from the children at a low price when the parents were not at home.

In two markets studied, one in Mbale and one in a rural area, a new group of young 'brokers' had emerged in the recent past, some of them apparently formerly un- or under-employed (in very low-paying occupations), and now often aggressively positioning themselves between the farmers and the potential buyers. Brokers 'organised' deals and took a cut from sellers that in some examples was a considerable share of the price, e.g. up to about 15–30% of the price for a farmer's cow. Several farmers and buyers noted that they could not circumvent brokers because of the latter's social power, derived from intimidation and/or political-economic connections with political/administrative authorities who protected these brokers against the people's anger.

More broadly, brokers were now present in many different economic and political sectors and at various stages in the web of accumulation in the country at large and in greater Bugisu too. The taking of a cut was practised in various offices in the private and public sector as well as on the street. Importantly, it was perceived that in such public office deals among the elites, there was little thought among those involved regarding the harmful implications of their deals for a particular social group. Some of the brokers/traders in agricultural markets were (perceived to be) following what was

increasingly practised, and considered a ‘smart’ and ‘sharp’ way to earn money, in the higher-level, urban places where the educated and powerful operated. It was a ‘trickle-down of malpractice’ and of the related rationales, justifications and moral norms of what is right and wrong, proper and improper. Some traders also learnt new malpractices (and norms) in their high-risk ventures in southern Sudan (and elsewhere in the region) which are likely to have affected their practices upon return to the Bugisu region.

Generally, when farmers approached state officials to demand a change of the *status quo* in rural marketing structures and malpractice, they were often met by the officials with arguments of the following type: ‘we have liberalised the economy – the government cannot intervene in the market anymore’; ‘business is about a willing buyer and a willing seller’; ‘you have agreed with the trader, haven’t you – what do you want the government to do now?’ Some farmers expressed the view that past experiences of attempting to get redress after malpractice would restrain them from taking their case to the authorities. Fear of being called a ‘critic’ or ‘saboteur’ of government by the authorities (and their business friends) and people’s dependence on the defrauding buyers for future sales and credit played a role as well. In addition, the results of the ‘downscaling’ and ‘restructuring’ of the public services seems to have left many relevant local/district offices (for Commerce or Cooperatives) not only with a restricted mandate but also severely understaffed, underfinanced and demoralised; they were often merely skeletons of the pre-liberalisation past.

Finally, in interviews with several state officials and also with some NGO and donor representatives, there was often an organisational and/or personal attitude (and related politics) at play that did not allow the interviewee to problematise and critique the behaviour of traders. Such respondents often showed little concern about increasing the traders’ accountability for their practices and regulating traders’ behaviour better, or restructuring the whole set-up of the rural economy (e.g. back towards cooperative structures).

Living in a tough neoliberal moral economy

Overall, a lot of the farmers and small-scale traders we spoke to found themselves operating in a tough rural context with often substantial levels of fraud and corruption not only in their market dealings, but also among a range of non-state and state bodies, for example, some microfinance institutions (that ‘disappeared’ and fleeced the people of the area of billions of Ugandan shillings and allegedly had political allies), councils, courts, police officers, bureaucrats (including some of those responsible for agricultural support or regulation of standards) and politicians.

Many farmers reasoned that the malpractices were applied by the various actors in order to keep them poor and subsequently govern and exploit them with more ease. Many expressed their related frustrations and a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness, given the repeated abuses and injustices within the extremely difficult economic conditions that they experienced. The farmers were thus often very critical of the current reality of the rural economy, especially given its failure to bring about the benefits that farmers enjoyed to some extent in the era of cooperatives. In the 1960s, cooperatives instituted relative price stability and fairness, second and bonus payments, and the building up of collective wealth such as cooperatives’ assets, social programmes, collective action and identity. After years of corrupt management, the recent revival of the Mbale-based Bugisu Cooperative Union (despite significant political pressure against it) is a powerful expression of the desire of the farmers and their supporters to struggle for a different rural (moral and political) economy.

In sum, neoliberalised rural markets in the study region were not free, natural and harmonious, nor merely zones for individual calculation and utility maximisation of

autonomous actors, as mainstream economists and neoliberal proponents tend to claim. They were instead arenas of struggle, contestation, deception and differing moral views. People also attached a historical connotation to them.

The mechanics of moral restructuring and malpractice: some points

Certainly, some often better-off economic actors were motivated by the ambition to accumulate considerable wealth and to climb the social ladder into the group of the relatively rich and politically powerful in the community. However, for many of the actors that the research team talked to (e.g., peasants, village middlemen or semi-urban/urban brokers) it was often about survival; aspiring to or protecting modest living standards, and about basic family-oriented goals (sending children to school, buying medicine for a family patient, providing for the basic necessities) in tough times.

It is significant, then, that destructive norms and (mal)practices, together with dwindling public service values, have also gained ground in other key sections of Ugandan society that have been 'modernised' according to neoliberal prescriptions, for example in education, health, and public administration: similarly, this has involved corruption, the taking of percentages, theft, deception, 'air supply'⁸, wage payment problems, staff absenteeism and low morale. This meant that many actors interviewed were facing difficult choices in the context of ensuring that they had a minimum level of money to provide for the basic (and ever-pressing) issues of food, shelter, transport, education and health for their family members. Consequently, they often had to accept the malpractice (and other abuse, e.g. verbal abuse) of the respective superior in the trade hierarchy, and/or engage in malpractice too. This was one way in which malpractice and the related norms became 'normalised'.

High inflation and price instability and the increasingly institutionalised corruption (Inspectorate General of Government 2008) of the political and technocratic elite (which was rarely effectively punished by the state) were three other main channels in the malpractice normalisation process. Another dynamic was a kind of 'tit for tat' rationale (which at times seemed to entail an element of redistributive justice). Some farmers, who knew that traders used a weighted scale and carried out other tricks, reportedly engaged in 'pre-emptive' malpractice 'to keep the scales balanced'.

People were frequently fed up with and/or desperate about the various and continuous injustices and abuses (which usually implied a material loss and emotional pain) that they experienced from their trading counterparts and the various other actors with whom they interacted in the community. They were frustrated with their life situation and that of their children, their failed plans and broken dreams, the situation in the country and a feeling of having been abandoned by the state: 'we are like orphans [without state support/protection]'. There was also bitterness and despair about previous experiences of malpractice, continuing poverty, and the growing realisation that malpractice is increasingly the 'new game in town' that one has to join in order to survive or succeed. A few people reported health and emotional problems because of being on the receiving or 'dispatching' end of the experience of malpractice.

People also came under pressure to commit malpractice because of their indebtedness (due to the high interest rates and the threat of losing possessions to the banks in case of default), the unemployment trends, the pressure on land, and a range of 'accidents' in life that reduced their possessions (e.g. crime, non-payment from a business partner, failed investments), all of which increased their stress and despair.

Various interviewees (both traders and farmers) said that when they carried out malpractice they adjusted, switched off or (temporarily) dropped some of their moral beliefs and

commitments due to the severe economic difficulties they were facing, and acted in ways that they and others actually regarded as improper. Often it pained them that they had to do it. On the other hand, some traders had, it seemed, rather little emotional concern when exploiting the many opportunities for malpractice that the neoliberal moral economy offered them.

Generally, however, people were worried about the trends in business practices and morality, including the moral norms of many children and youth in their communities and the country at large. They were also worried about their economic future (and that of their children) and the politics in the country, and raised criticism of the existing realities of the state, e.g. the indifference of many officials, weak public services, significant corruption, high taxes, unfair (and often informal) market dues and other forms of resource extraction.

Given all the above, it is extremely hard for ordinary Ugandans, so the interviewees reasoned, to keep their morals and practices (and aspirations) in check, especially given the reality of poverty and the related pressures of life. In other words, in neoliberal Uganda, many of our interview partners felt that they could no longer afford to (always) practise their morals.

Some traders (eventually) rejected the spreading stress on short-term profit and the related malpractice. They built long-term-oriented relationships with farmers, based on some notion of mutual trust, honesty, fairness, commitment, and cooperation – and farmers appreciated this. These traders were often also negatively affected by the fraudulent practices that were carried out by some of their colleagues. A few traders, for various reasons (economic, social and moral), gave up or significantly reduced their malpractice and became more upright business actors. Social disapproval of malpractice by family and community members played an important role in encouraging this transformation. Reportedly, these actors lived more happy and peaceful lives, and became better fathers and even community role models (counselling the youth, or advising younger traders to abandon their malpractice too). In isolated cases, traders' committees were established to limit or eliminate undesirable behaviour and we also came across some state and non-state actors that were involved in efforts to lower the level of malpractice. Yet overall, the explicit, effective and regular regulation of malpractice in the markets seemed not to be the rule in the study region, especially in the early liberal period of the 1990s and early 2000s when malpractice was particularly high.

The macro context of the rural moral economy

The various high-level corruption and other scandals in the 1990s and especially the 2000s (Tangri and Mwenda 2003, 2001, Barkan *et al.* 2004) had a decisive impact on the country's moral fibre. They provided parts of the macro-level normative and political-economic context in which the traders and farmers and other local actors formed their motivations, negotiated the options to act and made their decisions. The realities of public sector contraction and the privatisation of state enterprises can be seen as an important first-round 'moral shockwave' that affected the country in the post-1986 period; their related dynamics and moral 'casualties' had to be absorbed by the society. It is no surprise that these trends resulted in increasing cynicism, demoralisation, demotivation and despair among ordinary observers, and that they undermined the regime's legitimacy. This 'shockwave' also led to some degree of copying of both corrupt practices *and* their underlying moral logic. These issues were frequently referred to in newspaper articles and letters; sagas were painfully debated for weeks or months, and in some cases even years in the Ugandan media.

Many people expressed the view that there was too much impunity for the corrupt ‘big shots’, and that the judiciary favoured those with money, power and the right connections. Overall, scandals seemed to open up space for heightened levels of malpractices across society and generations. We can refer to some of these dynamics as what moral psychologists call the ‘editing’ process, e.g. changing one’s moral understandings as a result of changing life experiences (Haidt and Joseph 2007).

There was also a new level of admiration and acceptance of material wealth and success, however acquired. This seemed to be fuelled by both the spreading of the new neoliberal culture and the prevailing poverty of the vast majority of the population. Over time, some sections of communities seemed to disapprove less of wrong-doing in the search for (quick) money if it resulted in material improvement of the chosen few, who were then expected to help family members and so on. The new rich would increasingly be rewarded with social approval; while those who tried to lead a modest (income-poor) life of relative honesty, rule-following and decency were marked by an increasing section of the (mainly young) population as ‘foolish’ or ‘stupid’.

The specific spirit of moneymaking (where almost anything goes in the context of ‘income generating projects’), as well as corruption in the police and judiciary, were some of the reasons why agricultural traders got away with malpractice very often and even returned at times to the same communities to continue their practices. Traders often had no known address and were not registered; hence the communities they traded with were often unable to trace cheating traders after the deal. People at times resorted to punishing the reoffending wrongdoer themselves when they got hold of them. Cases of ‘mob justice’ were regular; they had increased in recent years, both in the research region and the country more generally.

Ordinary people noticed many of these trends and changes, in part because the liberalised media reported corruption cases quite openly, and facilitated related discussions. Almost always, interviewees had one or several of these stories and sagas at their fingertips and drew related interpretations. These stories had a significant symbolic dimension, which led slowly but surely to the disillusionment of many people regarding political leadership, but also a growing feeling that for many in positions of power it is now again about everything for him- or herself; in short, about their personal rather than national development.

Concluding remarks: the significance of neoliberal moral restructuring

The article has explored the ways in which the embedding of neoliberalism changes not only the political economy but also the moral order of local markets, families, communities and the country at large. This political and societal process of moral restructuring seemed to be mainly driven by the interests, norms, practices and projects of sections of the domestic power elite, as well as foreign donors, organisations, corporations and special interest groups. The process is ongoing, nuanced, contradictory, pervasive, speedy and contested, and has led to a range of severe, complex and connected problems for many Ugandans and for society as a whole.

The changing moral and political economy in the country since 1986 has led to increasingly unconstrained moneymaking, in which those with social, economic and political power often pursued their self-interest almost without regard for the cost to others. Related to this was a focus on quick profit, with little regard for quality or for longer-term considerations. This self-interest was being rationalised, supported and justified by a new set of neoliberal norms, values, orientations and practices that increasingly governed Ugandan economy and society, bringing with them undesirable consequences which in turn further advanced the neoliberal moral restructuring process and the trend of malpractice.

Given the spread of destructive norms and malpractice in the Ugandan society and economy, many respondents, and growing public debates, invoked ideas like ‘moral degeneration’, ‘moral decay’, ‘moral decadence’, a ‘rotten society’, and ‘fake’ or ‘*kiwaani*’ (the title of a popular song by the singer Bobi Wine, that caught the public imagination and is now in everyday use as a word). The frequent reference to fake or *kiwaani* (‘not real’) points to the significant role of fake and deceitful behaviour and things (e.g. adulterated goods) particularly in the context of moneymaking in contemporary Uganda. In newspaper articles and related discussions and investigations, there were references to and complaints about fake products (milk, liquor, medical drugs, agro-chemicals, cement, fuel, solar panels), fake investors, fake banks, fake money, fake deals, fake land titles, fake clearing agents, fake doctors, fake healers, fake pastors, fake NGOs, fake trade unions, fake marriages, fake pregnancies. Further fraud in the public sector was referred to in numerous cases and debates about ghost schools, ghost health centres, ghost workers, ghost teachers, ghost soldiers, ghost pensioners, ghost voters, ghost polling stations. Consumer products imported from abroad might be malfunctioning counterfeits. Sections of certain industries, for example the construction industry, were known to regularly produce sub-standard or shoddy work with low quality and durability. Several buildings and construction sites in Kampala ‘collapsed’ (or were said to be likely to cause problems in the near future) because construction standards were disregarded. Many government programmes, for example in the health, education, transport and agricultural support sectors, were characterised by severe corruption and implementation problems and thus often delivered far short of the outlined aspiration. Given these realities and outcomes of partly institutionalised corruption and reckless profit-making in neoliberal Uganda, many people questioned the performance of both the public and private sector.

Many respondents noted a significant shift since the late 1980s regarding the way in which more and more Ugandans are made to think, feel and act. They also stated that the moral authority, integrity, and credibility of many people and institutions of power (both state and non-state) have significantly diminished due to the dynamics of the reform process. In sum then, notwithstanding the official rhetoric and statistics of reform success, many people actually experienced the day-to-day manifestations of neoliberal *pseudo-development*⁹ and *fake capitalism*¹⁰ in several realms of their lives. Many of these trends can be seen in the light of restructuring of Ugandan society towards a fully capitalist trajectory and the (cultural) ‘turbulence’ that this brings. It is far from clear where, when, and how these turbulences and the country’s march towards a market society will end.

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Notes

1. This paper is an outcome of my PhD research on the post-1986 changes in the relationships and trade practices between farmers and traders and the related moral norms in Uganda; for details see: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/politics/research/phd/jwiegratz.html>.
2. This description is owed to Henry Bernstein.
3. As well as ideas, beliefs, perceptions, valuations, and so on.
4. Or, responsible/irresponsible, permissible/forbidden, good/bad, right/wrong behaviour.
5. This point is owed to James G. Carrier.

6. Economic (and social) risk was, as elsewhere, ‘desocialized, individualized and privatized’ (Dean 2008, p. 30).
7. Notably, these chains extended beyond Uganda: malpractice was also reported for particular sections of the liberalised international trade (e.g. with the European Union) and regional trade (southern Sudan) (Dow Jones 2007, New Vision 2007, 2009, Wiegratz *et al.* 2007, Wiegratz 2008, 2009). For example, in the fruit and vegetable sector, malpractice was carried out by both some buyers in Europe and some of the Uganda-based suppliers (Wiegratz *et al.* 2007). Malpractice by buyers (and suppliers) also affected parts of the foreign trade in agricultural products of some other African countries (Wiegratz 2010: see Freidberg 2003, Fold and Gough 2008, Baglioni 2009).
8. Paying for a good or service that is never delivered.
9. Which might also be called *façade development*, or *Potemkin development* (suggested by James G. Carrier), after the fake model villages built on Potemkin’s orders for Catherine the Great’s tours of the Ukraine and the Crimea.
10. This description is owed to Graham Harrison.

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EDITORIAL

Demanding development

The current times are characterised by uncertainty. Yet development shibboleths, which for some time now have been drawn from the tenets of neoliberal capitalism and democracy, have proved remarkably unshakeable. By using the term ‘shibboleth’, we mean to indicate the set of core ideas that has come to be taken as axiomatic by a like-minded group of ‘development experts’. In Africa, the shibboleths of pro-poor growth and good governance have focused the attention of the development industry on fighting corruption and building civil society. Indeed, the two are understood to go hand in hand.

Until recently, much anti-corruption focused on grand corruption, getting governments to put in place the institutions to hold to account abusers of high office. While such efforts remain important, attention has now shifted towards ‘quiet corruption’, understood as the ‘various types of malpractice of frontline providers (teachers, doctors, inspectors, and other government representatives) that do not involve monetary exchange’ (World Bank 2010, p. xi). The solution to this problem, according to the World Bank, is threefold: better and more committed anti-corruption leadership, better and more effective sector-specific anti-corruption policies and institutions, and better demand for good governance from civil society.

In the bank’s view, the poor, organised into familiar forms of ‘civil society’, should now be demanding better governance from domestic governments – but not from international institutions, donors, international or local non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Many international NGOs are now concerned with building the capacity of local organisations, recast as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), to demand more accountability from government. The theory goes that poor social service delivery can be addressed through increased citizen engagement and domestic agitation. Bono’s recent intervention in the *New York Times*, lauding the efforts of East African citizens’ organisation *Twaweza* (Swahili for ‘we can make it happen’) (Bono 2010) aptly demonstrates the elevation of the ‘demand side’ for good governance to shibboleth status. According to Bono, who invokes a model of ‘people power’ as an upside-down pyramid:

[T]he masses are sitting at the top, and their weight, via cellphones, the Web and the civil society and democracy these technologies can promote, is being felt by those who have traditionally held power.

It is true that in some parts of the continent civil society has become a veritable growth industry. However, the problem with development shibboleths is that they can obscure as much as they reveal, framing ‘solutions’ to complex situations that have been constituted through unequal historical and global relations in relatively simple and isolated terms. For example, a focus on the ‘demand side’ for good governance overlooks inconvenient facts such as the long-term undermining of the state’s ability to deliver social welfare in Africa, from the colonial period to the era of structural adjustment. Contrastingly, social provision has been achieved most recently through the outsourcing of social welfare

provision to civil society providers. In rural Tanzania, where money from the Global Fund and from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has inflated the number of CSOs dealing with HIV and AIDS and Most Vulnerable Children, CSOs compete for small amounts of money in order to deliver packages of social welfare services and HIV 'sensitisation' activities. Yet, lacking the experience or expertise to deliver these services themselves, local government staff have to be hired by CSOs on a *per diem* basis instead. Meanwhile the development shibboleths remain firmly in place: that government cannot be trusted to deliver development because it is corrupt, while CSOs apparently succeed because they are 'closer to the poor'.

The articles in issue 124 of *Review of African Political Economy* are diverse, yet they all deal in one way or another with different aspects of these development shibboleths and the inconsistencies that they paper over. Jörg Wiegratz offers an analysis of 'neoliberal moral restructuring' in Uganda. Outlining a 'cultural political economy of moral reform' in greater Bugisu, Wiegratz demonstrates the ways in which the neoliberal project has dovetailed with the experience of *increased* malpractice in rural trade. The core argument here is that the removal of regulations – no matter how imperfect these are – does not necessarily mean improvement: liberalisation brings with it its own discernible instabilities, injustices, and indeed impoverishing effects. In the Ugandan context, liberalisation has recalibrated the moral underpinnings of trade in ways that have generated a veritable 'fake' development in which fast money, a co-mingling of economic and political power, and an eroding or narrowing sense of social obligation create economies of dishonesty.

In a second article, David McDonald addresses *ubuntu*¹ in South Africa, teasing out the ways in which *ubuntu* philosophy and language have been redeployed in post-apartheid South Africa in a number of ways, from a form of nation-building and national branding of South Africa to attract foreign direct investment, to its promotion by capitalists as an indigenous management philosophy, to a bolstering of 'community' on which neoliberal policy-makers can rely for the provision of social services. Various leaders from government, the private sector, and civil society have variously claimed *ubuntu* as fitting their needs. In asking whether there is anything progressive that can be reclaimed from *ubuntu* philosophy, McDonald acknowledges that the answer is far from clear-cut, yet he insists that it remains worth asking. This reminds us to remain vigilant in the face of apparently unshakeable development shibboleths that render Africa visible in ways that eschew complexity, as well as possible alternatives.

Alison Ayers' analysis of civil war and political violence in Sudan underscores the point that the persistent framing of development 'problems' in terms of development shibboleths matters profoundly, both for analysis and for intervention. In particular, the framing of Sudan's political violence in 'civil' – or domestic – terms represents what Ayers calls 'the triumph of ideology over history'; in other words, the negation of the historical and globally constituted nature of conflict in Sudan. Ayers' paper identifies three of the most damaging aspects of Sudan's history which are central to an understanding of the contemporary conflict: the technologies of colonial rule which connected identity to the distribution of power and resources; the connection between regional conflict and Sudan's geopolitical position during the cold war and the 'war on terror'; and the country's incorporation into the global capitalist economy.

Gunnar Sørbø connects such a macro-political economic reading of Sudan's conflict to recent research on the local political economic complexities of continuing violence. Sørbø writes against the shibboleths of African conflict which tend to dismiss the significance and agency of small local-level actors as 'an inconvenience', particularly in the context of peace-building. Instead, he highlights the importance of resources, particularly land, to

an understanding of the ways in which local conflicts undergo continuous reconfiguration. Given the ‘politics of dispossession’ that has emerged in the country, Sørnbø concludes that only peace-building efforts that deal directly with local conflicts, as well as with the national picture, stand a chance of steering the country away from fragmentation.

The final article in this issue deals directly with the question of corruption. Jérôme Bachelard focuses on grand corruption in post-Moi Kenya, focusing on the Anglo-Leasing scandal and its centrality to the unravelling of Kibaki’s anti-corruption drive. Bachelard’s analysis offers a useful counter-argument to the development shibboleth outlined at the outset of this editorial regarding ‘quiet corruption’ and the ‘demand side’ of good governance; for while the ‘demand’ for tough action against the key political figures involved in the Anglo-Leasing scandal was loud and clear from Kenyan civil society, Kibaki nevertheless later reneged on that action because of the need to shore up electoral support.

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Note

1. *Ubuntu*, notes David McDonald in his article, is ‘Broadly defined as an “African worldview” that places communal interests above those of the individual, and where human existence is dependent upon interaction with others’.

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