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Making a liberal state: 'good governance' in Ghana

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This paper is concerned with the project of constructing a liberal state as evinced through the World Bank's policies and practices of good governance in Ghana. It argues that this project is an expression of characteristically liberal ways of thinking about the state and its relationship with its economy and society. The construction of a liberal state involves more than simply reducing the scope of state power and constraining state action through forms of accountability – although it does involve these. It is also about the constitution of the state as a governmental agency with the capacity to enact reforms on its society – in other words, the liberal state is one with significant autonomy and agency; and it involves the engineering of that very 'civil society' to which the state is to be made accountable.

Keywords: liberalism; state; civil society; World Bank; Ghana

Introduction

That in some way or another the African state has at various times failed developmentally has rarely been contested, although the evident dangers of over-generalising about the extent and causes of this failure are clear (Allen 1995). But right from the start of analyses of the post-colonial state in Africa there were two different kinds of worries about why the state was struggling to fulfil its developmental mandate. The first focused on the emergence of authoritarian and certainly non-democratic tendencies within African politics, be they the one-party state, forms of personalised rule, the incidence of military coups, or the use of coercion and more or less extreme forms of violence to sustain political power (Zolberg 1966, Jackson and Rosberg 1984). To this anxiety was sometimes added a stress on the rapacious quality of African politicians and bureaucrats whose possession of authoritarian power allowed for the development of an elaborate system of rules and regulations enabling significant 'rent-seeking' opportunities that were ultimately developmentally catastrophic (Bates 1981, Jeffries 1989). A second set of anxieties, however, focused on the weakness of the African state: its lack of autonomy from society and its inability to exercise anything like effective governance, most importantly in the work of Goran Hyden (1983), but this was also noted by others (Fatton 1988). There is a tension here, because dealing with the latter problem has the obvious implication that the former may be exacerbated – a more effective authoritarianism.

The developmental crisis that engulfed many states in the region in the late 1970s and into the 1980s certainly demonstrated to external agencies that something was profoundly

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wrong with the way the African states functioned. The kinds of policies pursued by these agencies can be roughly summarised as the construction of liberal forms of politics. The most high profile and contentious of these reforms have been designed to tackle the problems of authoritarianism and ‘rent-seeking’. Structural adjustment through the 1980s was designed to reduce the role of the state (and thus the scope for rent-seeking) and to promote forms of economic freedom. Through the 1990s there was a renewed stress on democracy, civil society and accountability, again as a way of overcoming the authoritarian character of African politics and ensuring the ‘responsiveness’ of the state to the wishes of its society. This is the form of liberal politics that is most familiar. Alongside this, however, has been another less high profile and somewhat less familiar strand of reform focusing on the problem of capacity. Here the purpose has been to try to make the state in Africa more able to govern effectively (Hibou 2006). This is as much a part of the construction of liberal forms of politics as the institutionalisation of democracy and the promotion of civil society.

This article is concerned with the project of constructing a liberal state as evinced through the World Bank’s policies and practices of good governance in Ghana. This involves more than simply reducing the scope of state power and constraining state action through forms of accountability – although it does involve these. It is also about the constitution of the state as a governmental agency with the capacity to enact reforms on its society – in other words, the liberal state is one with significant autonomy and agency; and it involves the engineering of that very ‘civil society’ to which the state is to be made accountable. This article traces these issues through a brief review of some of the arguments found in liberal political theory. It then turns to the policies of good governance and finally to the practice of reform in Ghana as illustrated by a number of World Bank projects. The purpose of this is to show the connections between liberal theorising and the policies and practices of the World Bank. That is, the World Bank reproduces in its practices the arguments, concepts and ambiguities found within liberal theory. It is also to show that the view that liberalism is largely about ensuring the conditions for the expression of individual freedom is distinctly one-sided. Liberalism as a body of thought and as expressed in the practices of the World Bank is also about generating the capacity to govern populations in their ‘depths and details’, as Foucault put it, and inserting individuals in new forms of individualised discipline (Foucault 2001b, p. 219). More broadly, this reading of liberalism is inspired by Margaret Canovan’s argument that liberalism is a ‘project to be realised’ (Canovan 1990). In this view liberalism is not simply or even largely a body of theorising; it is also and significantly a political project of transformation. Viewed in this way liberal theorising is not normative philosophy, but an extended reflection on the desirability and possibility of social transformation. What is more, this understanding of liberalism allows us to connect in more systematic ways liberal thought with liberal agency; to see liberal agents as enacting this liberal project. The implications of these arguments for the idea and functioning of forms of democracy are discussed in the conclusion.

The theoretical terrain of liberalism

The state

Liberals have very often been suspicious of the state and anxious about its power and scope; yet, in almost all liberal thought, the state remains the central vehicle for the achievement of liberal ends and arrangements. The primary tension here then is that within liberal thought the state is conceived of as both weak and strong. The state must be weak because it is purely an enabler, little more than a neutral mechanism providing security to allow free and equal individuals to pursue their life projects unhindered by others. This view has been particularly prominent in contemporary liberal political theory (Goodin and Reeve 1989). It is most obviously associated with the work of John Rawls, and following Rawls, Richard Dworkin (Rawls 1972). According to Dworkin, the liberal state must be neutral on the question of the good life for individuals and thus political decisions must be, so far as possible, independent of any particular conception of the good (Dworkin 1985). But it is quite clear that a strong strand of liberal thought, arguably from Hobbes and Locke onward, has justified the state on the basis that it is 'neutral' between competing conceptions of the good (Salkever 1990). Kant, for example, argued that a paternalistic government was the 'greatest conceivable despotism' as it imposes a particular morality and a particular view of what makes people happy (Kant 1793/1970). In this view a strong state is a potential threat to free persons. First, the state may attempt to impose some particular social order, which will invariably embody some set of values, that constrains people's freedom, and second, that the offices of the state may be abused by their incumbents (and the stronger and more expansive the state the greater the possible abuses). Within liberal thought, these threats are countered by the advocacy of a universal legal code to which state officials are also subject, the establishment of certain political rights which the state cannot transgress (association, free speech and so on), and the institutionalisation of forms of political accountability – usually understood as forms of democracy (Waldron 1984, Paul *et al.* 2005). These then play a crucial role in constraining the state, both in its power and scope, and help to ensure that the state does not encroach on the legitimate expressions of individual freedoms, including of course economic freedoms.

There is an extensive debate over exactly what the basis of the argument for a neutral state is, and liberal thinkers have been characteristically ambivalent on this point (Galston 1982, Kymlicka 1989). On the one hand liberals have appealed simply to the 'facts' of pluralism to demonstrate the desirability of a neutral state. As Locke says, 'men in this world prefer different things and pursue happiness by contrary courses' (Locke 1742/1976, p. 123). In a related fashion, Rawls has suggested that neutrality is to be understood as a political not a metaphysical principle; the liberal state simply responds to the already existing pluralism that exists in society (Rawls 1985, 1993). At its most basic this is a kind of pragmatic justification, as any attempt to impose a particular moral or political order will inevitably lead to conflict and possibly violence. On the other hand, liberals have also very often relied on philosophical arguments, rather than political or pragmatic ones, to justify the neutral state, and in so doing of course have advanced particular conceptions of the good (Galston 1982, Sandel 1982). Hobbes and Locke both endorsed what would come to be called the 'bourgeois' goods of peace, comfort and security (Salkever 1990, p. 170). In doing so they endorsed these values as particularly appropriate for individuals. There is a good case for arguing that Rawls also has particular conception of the good for persons at the heart of his theory (Sandel 1982). As Brian Barry has argued, 'there is no way in which non-liberals can be sold on the principle of neutrality without first injecting a large dose of liberalism into their outlook' (Barry 1990, p. 54). That is, arguments for the neutrality of the liberal state actually rest on substantive conceptions of the desirable way of life; or to put it another way, the neutrality principle applies between ways of life that are the expression of the choices of individuals already committed to the goods of liberalism (Galston 1982, p. 625).

This ambiguity about the grounding and extent of the neutrality principle points in the direction of the other vision of the state in liberal thought – that of the strong state. For while it might be right that all liberals think there should be domains of social life over which the state has no legitimate authority, they also want to see these domains created and sustained, and the only agency capable of doing that is the state. The strong state must to a certain extent, then, be disengaged from social interests and certainly not be overwhelmed by them; it must in other words, be 'autonomous' from society, at least up to a point, because it is only by being autonomous that the state is not prone to capture by social groups who would threaten the achievement of liberal ends. And this is where we should locate the anxiety that many liberal thinkers have had about the form and extent of democratic arrangements. This is especially clear, for example, in the work of John Stuart Mill (Mill 1863/1972). This suggests that there is within liberalism a vision of the state as capable of imposing and maintaining a certain kind of social order – a liberal order. On this view it is quite impossible for the liberal state to be neutral and indifferent to values; rather, it must actively interfere in what people believe and how they live, even to the extent of inculcating certain kinds of values and dispositions as well as reconstructing social relations. Such elaborate processes of transformation of both institutions and practices require not a weak state, but rather a state constituted in the form of a bureaucratic apparatus with all the capacity for social surveillance and social control that that makes possible.

The tension between the idea of a weak state and the idea of a strong state is explicable in terms of the liberalism as a political project of social transformation. To put it bluntly, a strong state is necessary to construct and defend liberal institutions and practices, but once these are established and secure the state can afford to be 'neutral'. All of this might seem some way from the World Bank, but as we shall see, it is not. For these ambiguities about the state – weak but strong, neutral but partial, accountable but not captured – are exactly replicated in the way the World Bank thinks about the role of the state in development. And the central role that the state is understood to have in the liberal project is again exactly replicated in the World Bank's account of good governance. And both of these too are reflecting in the specific content of some of its projects in Ghana.

Civil society

The term 'civil society' has enjoyed a remarkable renaissance (Keane 1998, Cohen and Arato 1992, Seligman 1992). 'Civil society' holds an important place in liberal thought, signalling as it does an associational sphere somehow between the state and the family, which is both a realm of freedom (rights of association, worship and pursuit of varied goods) and a check on the power of the state. In the traditional liberal story civil society plays three important roles (Chambers and Kymlicka 2002). First, civil society advances liberal ends by providing a check on the centralising or over-bearing state. It does this by being an arena of free debate and criticism of the state. For civil society to be effective in this role, political resources such as wealth, leadership and organisational skills must be relatively widely dispersed through society. This is one connection between civil society and a liberal economy, as a liberal economy allows for at least some of these resources to be developed outside of control by the state. Second, civil society supports liberalism by providing an arena for diverse interests and opinions to develop. This, so the argument goes, prevents the formation of a tyrannical majority and allows for the expression in associational life of diverse life patterns. Third, civil society cultivates certain personal virtues and moral dispositions that are seen as important for sustaining liberal life. These include self-control, law-abidingness, cooperation, tolerance and self-reliance. This role for civil society emphasises the 'civil' aspects of civil society (Rosemblum 1989, Putnam 1995).

There are, of course, tensions and ambiguities that complicate this traditional picture. These cluster around three interrelated areas. First, there is a tension between civil society as a realm of private interests and as a protector of the public interests. As has been noted above, the traditional liberal story has it that civil society is both a realm of private interest and a realm of where the public interest is advanced and protected. It is a realm of interests in the sense that groups form to advance economic and other interests in a relatively free context. These 'interest groups' (to use the contemporary political science language) engage in strategies, such as lobbying and publicity campaigns in order to advance their own particular interests. At the same time, however, civil society is charged with protecting the public interest through criticism of the government and free debate; and this would seem to require individuals to put aside their private interests and act instead in the interests of the larger polity.

A second set of related ambiguities surrounds the role or status of 'identity' in civil society. The dilemma can easily be seen by thinking of 'affective' groups, such as those based on race, ethnicity, religion or culture. To the extent that these groups' internal values and arrangements are non-liberal (for example, they may be based on gender inequalities), should they be accepted as a legitimate part of civil society? For some liberals the answer must be no (Kateb 1994, Galston 1995). Others have seen some value in these groups, although even here there tend to be limitations (Kymlicka 1991, Barry 2001). As Kymlicka has argued, 'liberals are committed to supporting the right of individuals *to decide for themselves* which aspects of their cultural heritage are worth passing on' (Kymlicka 1992, p. 144, emphasis added). The third set of ambiguities surrounds exactly what kinds of areas of public life are to be influenced or shaped by civil society (Charney 1998). That is, how much faith should liberals put in civil society to advance and protect liberalism, and how much should liberals seek guarantees outside of civil society – say in the state and the legal system – for liberal ends and arrangement? This is the flipside of the tension noted above over the extent to which the state should be insulated from society so as to be able to pursue liberal ends, and it follows from the anxieties over the extent to which the public interests can really be guaranteed by civil society.

The World Bank again exactly reproduces these tensions. It has found civil society in some of the most unlikely places, and afforded it a significant role in the development of good governance; yet it must be the right kind of civil society (modern non-affective) and it must relate to the state in the right kind of way (public interest). These ambiguities point again to the idea of liberalism a project of social transformation. Civil society is itself an at least partly constructed realm. Certain groups, with certain kinds of identities and certain kinds of objectives, are to be encouraged, and other groups dismissed as 'bad civil society' (Chambers and Kopstein 2001). The pursuit of certain kinds of particularist interests (tribe, religion) are to be excluded, particularly from public policy making, yet the pursuit of other kinds of interests – economic for example – are to be encouraged as a way of making the state accountable.

Good governance

> Good governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policymaking (that is a transparent process); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law. (World Bank 1994a)

By the middle of the 1990s the World Bank had been led to contemplate a detailed transformation of the politics, institutions and societies of its borrower countries. There is a complex story here, but it is significant that the term good governance was first used by the Bank in the context of the perceived problems of African development (Williams 2008). The 1989 report, *Sub-Saharan Africa: from crisis to sustainable growth*, argued that 'underlying the litany of Africa's development problems was a crisis of governance' (World Bank 1989, p. 60). This idea of a 'crisis of governance' went beyond simply a concern with failing government institutions and focused attention on a much broader set of political and social factors:

> Ultimately, better governance requires political renewal. This means a concerted attack on corruption from the highest to the lowest levels. This can be done by setting a good example, by strengthening accountability, by encouraging public debate, and by nurturing a free press. It also means empowering women and the poor by fostering grassroots and non-governmental organizations, such as farmers associations, cooperatives and women's groups. (World Bank 1989, p. 6)

Good governance is in very large part about the state. And, like much of liberal thought, the World Bank sees the state as having the central role in constructing and protecting the conditions under which the achievement of liberal ends is possible. But as with liberal thought so this central role is fraught with tensions and ambiguities. In particular good governance is about making the state both stronger and weaker. It must be strong enough to govern effectively and enforce the rules. This is the significance of the concern with improving the institutional, regulatory and legal frameworks for development. 'The state has an indispensable role in creating a favourable economic environment . . . It is of the utmost importance for the state to establish a predictable and honest administration of the regulatory framework to ensure law and order, and to foster a stable, objective and transparent judicial system (World Bank 1989, p. 55). It must also be strong enough to resist the malign influence of certain social groups: 'in some spheres . . . there can be little compromise. Family and ethnic ties that strengthen communal actions have no place in central government agencies where staff must be selected on merit, and public and private monies must not be confused' (World Bank 1989, p. 60). On the other hand the state must be made weaker. It must learn to govern less, and it must be made accountable to certain social groups. The report emphasised the importance of decentralisation in the process of building better governance: 'local governments are best suited to meet the needs of local communities . . . developing competent and responsive local governments is central to capacity building' (World Bank 1989, p. 58). The report also stressed the need to harness and encourage 'civil society'. It suggested that the 'new approach should try to reconcile efficient government with the common desire of individual Africans to be independent economic operators, and of social, religious, and community groups to play their part':

> the object should be to release private energies and encourage initiative at every level. At the grassroots level this means village and ward associations; at the intermediary level, various local nongovernmental and cooperative unions and other organizations; at the national level, chambers of commerce and industry, trade associations umbrella NGO organizations . . . and professional associations of Bankers, doctors, lawyers, accountants and the like. (World Bank 1989, p. 59)

The report argued that these 'intermediaries' can voice local concerns, bring a broader spectrum of ideas and values to bear on policymaking, and exert pressure on public officials for better performance and accountability (World Bank 1989, p. 61).

In this vision of the state, then, it must be insulated and accountable, uncaptured and responsive, autonomous but not oppressive. As we shall see in the next section this takes the World Bank down the road of designing intricate development interventions that attempt to mediate this tension. So, for example, the state is to be given much enhanced tax-raising powers, yet it is also subject to carefully controlled practices of publicity and accountability. Good governance also seems to require the construction of the right kind of 'civil society' that can both hold the state accountable for its actions, and pressure the state into undertaking actions conducive to economic development. And again we can see how this reflects liberal thought. We have on the one hand the idea of civil society as a political institution, charged with holding the state accountable and in so doing ensuring the state pursues the public interest. On the other we have the idea of civil society as a private associational sphere that enables people to pursue their particular private interests (as businesses, unions) through political means – with the obvious danger that these groups exercise too much influence on policy making. It is also possible to see how the imagined composition of civil society within the good governance agenda reflects ambiguities within liberal thought. The kinds of groups the World Bank refers to tend to be recognisable, modern and based on non-affective ties. And as we shall see, in practice the World Bank has designed development projects that encourage the formation of these kinds of groups.

The practice of reform: Ghana

The World Bank has been concerned with Ghana's governance right from the early 1990s. In 1993, the Bank produced a Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for Ghana which argued that Ghana needed to create an 'enabling environment' for private-sector growth by removing 'inhibiting regulations', increasing transparency and due process in the enforcement of rules and regulations, divesting state-owned enterprises, correcting tax 'distortions', reducing transaction costs in the financial sector, and conforming to 'international conventions' in such matters as accounting, auditing and the disclosure of financial and operating data (World Bank 1995b, pp. 33–34, 1992). It also argued that there needed to be improvements in public sector management, which included continuing the civil service reform programme, improving expenditure management, improving tax collection, and 'capacity building' at both the central and local government level (World Bank 1995b, p. 34, 1992, pp. 91–95). An Operation Evaluation Department (OED) report on World Bank activities in Ghana 1995–97 argued that 'improved governance is essential'. Included in this, so the report argued, was further progress on decentralisation, improvements in the regulatory and legal environment, civil service reform and improved accountability, particularly concerning the government budget (World Bank 2000b). The World Bank's 2004 Country Assistance Strategy for Ghana includes many of the same concerns. It argued that improvements were needed in co-ordination between ministries; that the capacity of local government institutions needed to be improved; that the civil service needed to be 'professionalised'; that the government's financial management needed to be strengthened; the corruption needed to be reduced; and that participation by civil society in the management of public affairs needed to be encouraged though increased provision of information on government business (World Bank 2004a). The World Bank's ongoing support for Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy illustrates the same themes. Nominally the government of Ghana was responsible for producing its Poverty Reduction Strategy. In fact, as Lindsay Whitfield has argued, the World Bank was the most important influence on the content of the report (Whitfield 2005; see also Fraser 2005). Unsurprisingly, then, the strategy involves the creation of a governance framework that is characterised by a democratic, inclusive and decentralised state, a capable and motivated public service, and an effective policy, budget management and implementation process. The World Bank has argued that Ghana needs to do much more to achieve this objective. Again it has stressed the importance of improving the capability of local government, reform of civil service, strengthening the capacity of the central state, improving the budget-management process, improving accountability and transparency, and reducing corruption (World Bank 2003a).

This section examines several World Bank projects in the broad area of governance reform. In line with the above argument these projects illustrate the tensions and ambiguities of the liberal state. The first section examines a number of projects that are significantly about redefining and reducing the role of the state. The second section looks at projects where the capacity of the state to govern its society and economy is the central focus. The third section explores projects that concern themselves with civil society. This division is somewhat artificial in the sense that projects often have all three elements within them. Nonetheless, this division serves to highlight the kinds of reforms the World Bank either has or is currently undertaking.

Redefining the role of the state

In 1996 the Bank undertook a Public Enterprise and Privatization Technical Assistance Project (PEPP) in Ghana which was designed to help the government implement its public enterprise reform and privatisation programme (World Bank 1996). The privatisation of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) has been part of the economic recovery programme since 1983, and it continues to be a key part of the Bank's strategy, as is the reform of those SOEs which will remain under government. In 1994 the public sector accounted for an estimated 35% of gross domestic product (GDP), including 40% of all manufacturing activity, and almost all the financial sector and utilities. As of 1994, about 200 enterprises remained in public ownership employing approximately 150,000 employees. SOE liabilities to the government exceeded US$1 billion at the end of 1994, and the government had guaranteed approximately US$250 million of SOE borrowing. The reform and privatisation of SOEs was one area in which Ghana has not complied with Bank loans conditionalities, and while there were political and ideological factors behind the government's unwillingness to engage in a process of mass privatisation, there were also technical and administrative problems, associated with a lack of expertise in valuing the assets of SOEs, a lack of information, a lack of clarity in the legal code, and lack of bureaucratic coordination (Toye 1991, pp. 180–181, Leith and Lofchie 1993, pp. 276–279).

One particular problem identified by the World Bank was that the State Enterprises Commission (SEC) had no accurate information on the value of these enterprises, and no accurate information on the exact fiscal burden they were placing on the state (World Bank 1996, p. 4). One component of the PEPP supported the Ministry of Finance and SEC in developing a 'portfolio management capability', to allow the government to 'coordinate and manage the reduction of the size of the portfolio through divestiture, focus on core financial performance criteria, and address the new financial policy issues created by the privatisation program'. In particular, it focused on maintaining complete and reliable information, monitoring and tracking the financial and operational performance of SOEs, and advising the government on financial policy issues (World Bank 1996, pp. 5–6). PEPP also provided funds to help reform the legal and regulatory framework for SOEs. This went beyond a change in the legal status of SOEs into limited liability companies, and encompassed measures to reduce government interference in the day-to-day management of SOEs, increase their exposure to 'market competition', and use 'incentives' to improve their performance and increase their accountability (World Bank 1996, pp. 7–8). In addition, the project supports the government in developing and implementing a 'public information and communications strategy', which would increase accountability by providing for public dissemination of information on the performance of SOEs, and which would build and sustain public and stakeholder support and investor confidence in the privatisation programme (World Bank 1996, p. 10).

The Bank's attempt to redefine the role of the state can also be seen in another project that had as one of its objectives the privatisation and/or commercialisation of nearly 200 government-owned or controlled agencies, ranging from the Ghana University Press and the National Theatre to the Ghana Tourist Board (World Bank 1999, pp. 73–77). The stated aims of the project were: 'redefining the role and function of the state, designing appropriate institutions and systems to implement this role, and rationalising the existing structure and systems to meet the new design' (World Bank 1999, p. 3). Part of this project was a fairly straightforward attempt to close down those agencies that had no clear mandate, and the project provided for severance pay and retraining. Those agencies that did have a viable mandate were to be reformed, and as far as possible either fully privatised or at least commercialised. The overall aim of these components was to reduce government spending. But on top of reducing the size of the state, this project also attempted to reconfigure the relationship between the state and the 'private sector'. The aim here was the 'introduction of performance-based management principles for more efficient public services, with increased customer orientation, transparency and accountability' (World Bank 1999, p. 8). Concretely what this meant was increased private sector input into government operation through exchange programmes and joint activities, and increased private sector involvement in policy design and decision making (World Bank 1999, p. 7). The idea was that this would not only make the government more efficient, but it would also increase accountability and transparency.

Enhancing the capacity of the state

As argued above, the construction of a liberal state is not just about reducing its size and scope; it is also about enhancing its capacity to govern and reform its society. In 2003 the World Bank funded a Land Administration Project (World Bank 2003b). The Government of Ghana has been revising its land policy since the late 1990s. The aim of this has been to stimulate economic development through improving security of land tenure, simplifying the process for accessing land, developing the land market and fostering prudent land management. The Land Administration Project was designed to support these objectives. It has a number of components. First, it supported the revision of laws and regulation regarding land ownership and administration. This was seen as particularly important because there are a variety of different types of land-tenure systems in Ghana, some tribal, clan, or family-based, some commercial, and some held by the state (Kasnaga and Kotey 2001). This review involved drafting new laws where appropriate, and resolving conflict and overlap between different systems. One outcome of this component is expected to be the development of a more efficient land market; as it would enable more secure and transferable land titles, it would 'instil order and discipline to curb the incidence of land encroachment, unapproved development schemes, illegal land sales, and land racketeering' (World Bank 2003b, p. 6).

A second component involved improving land titling, registration and information systems. The problem here was that except in some urban areas there was no adequate mapping or land registration system. This led to boundary disputes, protracted litigation and the freezing of land that could be used for development purposes. It also led to informal land sales and thus lost revenue for the government (World Bank 2003b, p. 7). The project supported the development of a land information system that would record the physical location of land parcels, the nature of its tenure, the rights held over it, and the holders of these rights. This involved a photo-mapping process, the funding of land registration offices, the improvement of the land title registry system, and improvement to the land development and building permit system. The project also supported the establishment of a national land valuation database with a view to improving the ability of the government to collect tax revenue.

The Bank has argued that Ghana's financial system is not very 'deep', meaning that compared to other developing countries, even in Africa, Ghanaians keep much more money in cash, and invest in building materials, or inventories, rather than saving in bank accounts, especially deposit accounts (World Bank 1995a). The Bank attributed this low confidence in the financial sector to high levels of inflation, low or negative interest rates, high transaction costs, and violations in the confidentiality of bank accounts in the early years of Rawlings' government (Aryeetey 1994, World Bank 1995a, p. 43). The problem, according to the Bank, was that this led to low levels of investment that hampered growth, and it led to low levels of credit availability which hampered the ability of the government to successfully privatise state-owned enterprises. In addition, the cheque clearance and settlement system was slow, there was inadequate availability of information, and a lack of technological infrastructure needed for money markets and the nascent Ghanaian stock exchange to develop further (World Bank 1995a, pp. 3–8). Finally, the overwhelming dominance of cash in the economy was constraining the government's ability to improve tax collection because when most economic payments are in cash it is difficult for the government to estimate incomes and revenues and monitor completed transactions (World Bank 1995a, p. 42).

The Bank hoped to expand and deepen the financial sector in Ghana by undertaking an institutional development project targeted at certain 'non-bank' financial institutions such as the Ghana Stock Exchange, the Securities Regulatory Commission, the Bank of Ghana, and institutions associated with the national insurance and social security system. The Non-Bank Financial Institutions Assistance Project aimed to 'strengthen institutions and introduce instruments which would create conditions to encourage substantial amounts of savings held in informal, non-financial assets to move to the formal financial sector where they can be used more productively'. In particular it aimed to create new legislative and regulatory frameworks, change organisational structures, increase operational efficiency, build capacity in each sub-sector, and promote institutions to improve the provision of financial services to the informal and rural sector. This was expected to 'create an environment conducive to greater private sector activity' as well as supporting the divestiture of state-owned enterprises (World Bank 1995a, p. 11). Among the components the projects financed include those to support the purchase of computers for the Ghana Stock Exchange to speed and monitor the payment and settlement process, as well as support for an educational campaign 'to increase the awareness and understanding by the local population of the role of the securities market in the context of the divestiture of public enterprises and the development of the private sector'. The project supported improving the capacity of the Social Security and National Insurance Trust, and assisting it to develop benefit schemes for workers in the informal sector, most of whom do not contribute social security or national insurance payments. The project funded a review of the legal and regulatory role of the Securities Regulatory

Commission, and an increase in the capacity of the Bank of Ghana to regulate other financial institutions. It also included a specific component to improve the cheque payment and settlement system by changing the legal and regulatory environment surrounding cheque payment, upgrading the data communications system, and increasing the number of automated teller machines. Finally, the Project provided funds for a review of the institutions and mechanisms which provide finance for small rural and informal enterprises, and funds a pilot project to assess the feasibility of using small financial institutions, based on models such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, in the Ghanaian context (World Bank 1995a, pp. 16–32).

The Local Government Development Project (LGDP) was a US$55.5 million project designed to support the decentralisation programme by providing for the rehabilitation of urban infrastructure and services, and the 'institutional strengthening' of District Assemblies (DAs), through technical assistance and improved revenue raising (World Bank 1994b). One objective of the LGDP was to promote the sustainability and expansion of urban services by strengthening the DAs' financial, technical and managerial capacities, supporting the government's decentralisation programme, and 'promoting accountability and efficiency in the provision of infrastructure and services' (World Bank 1994b, p. 9). The institutional development component of the loan provided support for increased district revenue collection. Increasing local revenue collection is seen by the bank as essential if DAs are to be able to perform their operations and maintenance activities. The LGDP provided support for drawing up Revenue Improvement Action Plans (RIAP) for each DA, and a key component of these plans is to be an improvement in the collection of property tax. The most important constraint on property tax mobilisation to date has been the lack of accurate and up-to-date information, and the project provides support for the establishment of accurate urban maps using aerial photography, and for the formalisation of street names and addresses to allow an accurate role of rateable properties to be drawn up. Once this had been done, the project provided support for new computer hardware and software for the Land Valuation Board to enable the automated production of rate demands, and improved billing and collection operations. In addition, training was given to DA staff to 'enable them to maximise the revenue potential that will be available from the updated, comprehensive tax base resulting from the revaluation of rateable properties' (World Bank 1994b, pp. 90–102). The information gained through the mapping of urban areas and the formalisation of street names and addresses is an important part of improving the availability of information for urban planning and infrastructure development (World Bank 1994b, p. 97). Finally, the project supported the strengthening of central government's capacity to support and monitor the activities of the DAs. This includes provision of training courses on the distribution of revenue sources between central and local government, training of Land Valuation Board Staff in the use of the new computers and the maintenance of property valuation lists, technical assistance to the Town and Country Planning Department in record-keeping systems, and support for changes in the legal and regulatory relationship between central and local government (World Bank 1994b, pp. 87–88, 91, 95, 108, 111).

Constraining the state

It is clear from the general discussion of the World Bank's understanding of good governance, as well as the detail of some of the projects discussed above, that it sees 'civil society' as having an important role to play in holding the government (central and local) accountable. The then World Bank country director in Ghana said in 2000 that the two main benefits of greater civil society involvement were the generation of feedback to help the public sector improve its performance and the improved accountability of government (Harrold 2000). This concern with holding the state accountable to society is particularly clear in a recent Public Financial Management Project (World Bank 2000c, pp. 3–4). This is a wide-ranging project focused on improving the budget management and revenue collection processes. But it also has as one of its key objectives the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation capacity, and the enhancement of 'stakeholder participation' and 'civil society' involvement in the area of economic management. This involves a number of components. First, it provides for reform of procurement procedures and the establishment of a new procurement oversight institution. Second, the project provides for capacity building for parliament to improve its oversight role in the area of economic management (this will help to 'professionalise its interaction with the government'). Third, the project supports capacity building for oversight agencies such as the Serious Fraud Office and for organisations within the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (a 'civil society' organisation) (see also World Bank 2000a). Fourth, the project funds a variety of initiatives to encourage the participation of civil society in the oversight of economic management. This includes providing training for the media so it can play its watchdog role vis-à-vis the fiscal and economic activities of the government. Finally, the project funds reform of the information and public disclosure policies of the government.

What is less obvious, but is revealed through some of the World Bank's lending, is the extent to which the World Bank is actively engaged in building a 'civil society'. The Community Water and Sanitation Project (CWSP) was a US$27 million project designed to support and implement the water and sanitation sectoral investment plan in Ghana (World Bank 1994c). The project was designed as a full-scale demonstration of Ghana's National Community Water and Sanitation Strategy which emphasised the provision of water and sanitation services to communities who are willing to contribute towards the capital costs and the operations and maintenance costs of water and sanitation facilities. This approach was in deliberate contrast to previous Bank water supply projects which have been of a 'top-down' nature with little community participation. As a result, water supply facilities had been installed with little consideration for demand and sustainability, and 'communities often saw no clear relationship between services rendered and tariffs charged'. Involving communities in decision making, and making them pay some of the costs of water supply facilities was seen as a way of ensuring the 'ownership' and sustainability of investments in water supply (World Bank 1994c, pp. 1, 7–8, 28–31). District Assemblies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and partner agencies disseminated information about CWSP, and helped interested communities prepare an application for a construction grant. NGOs were seen as effective 'facilitators' for community participation. Communities had to demonstrate that they could effectively operate, maintain and repair water facilities, collect revenue, keep records and accounts, and evaluate and resolve problems (World Bank 1994c, pp. 7, 38, 81). Once it had been established that the community could meet the requirements for involvement, a contract was drawn up between the community and the partner agency, or NGO. At this time the community was required to show proof that cash contributions from its members had been deposited in a specially created bank account. Communities were expected to contribute 5–10% of the capital costs of the project, and then levy and collect tariffs to pay for operations and maintenance (World Bank 1994c, pp. 22, 28, 39).

A second Community Water and Sanitation Project ran from 2000 to 2004 (World Bank 2005). Much the same themes were in evidence. Again the project targeted community capacity building and community hygiene practices. Again community groups were given training in planning, implementing, operating and maintaining water and sanitation facilities. More stress was placed in this project on the participation of women in community water and sanitation groups. The idea of combining community capacity building with other development objectives is again visible in the Community Based Rural Development Project (World Bank 2004b). In this case the project supports the development of rural infrastructure and the rehabilitation of community facilities, alongside capacity-building community-based organisations. Building the capacity of these organisations will, so the project document suggests, improve good governance and lead to the empowerment of the poor by encouraging them to actively participate in issues which affect their daily lives (World Bank 2004b, pp. 4–5). Concretely, however, this means they will be provided with 'capacity building' to enable them to 'identify and prioritise their needs', plan development programmes, access funds, and manage and maintain local facilities. This means training in management, small enterprise development, 'groups dynamics', planning, budgeting, record keeping and managing bank accounts. In addition, small contractors and 'local entrepreneurs' will be trained in the basic skills for organising labour-intensive construction projects (World Bank 2004b, p. 36).

Liberalism, the state and social transformation

It is clear from these projects that the Bank is concerned intimately with the actual practices of government, and the capacities needed to pursue them. One of the virtues of the work of Foucault and others who have followed a similar line of analysis has been to render these mechanisms and techniques of government as an object of analysis. Michel Foucault has called the constellation of governance capacities that the Bank is attempting to create a form of 'governmentality' which is created by 'the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of [a] very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population' (Foucault 2001b, pp. 219–20). Governmental power was less concerned with the exercise of sovereignty over a physical territory, and more with the increased government of the 'social': 'in contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, and increase of its wealth, longevity, health, etc.' (Foucault 2001b, pp. 216–217). This shift signals a change in the understanding of what a government or state is for. It no longer becomes simply about the maintenance of territorial integrity, or of internal order; rather, in this new vision of government, the actions of the government are directed at controlling and improving the lives of its populace. Foucault also argued that accompanying this shift was a dramatic increase in the monitoring and surveillance capacities of states, 'the development of power techniques oriented towards individuals and intended to rule them in a continuous and permanent way' (Foucault 2001a, p. 300). Foucault calls this kind of power 'pastoral power', by which he means the state's ability to know both its society as a totality, and each individual member of it, and its role in ensuring, sustaining, and improving the lives of 'each and every one' (Foucualt 2001a, p. 307). Associated with this change, and indeed implied by it, is a dramatic increase in the ability of government to 'discipline' its populace, and to generate the possibility for 'action at a distance' (Rose 1996):

> Discipline was never more important ... than at the moment when it became important to manage a population; the managing of a population not only concerns the collective mass of phenomena, it also implies the management of population in its depths and details ... [it] renders all the more acute ... the necessity for the development of discipline. (Foucault 2001b, p. 219)

The ‘disciplinary gaze’ of the state must be dramatically enhanced if it is to manage and act on its population in its ‘depths and details’. As these projects show, the Bank considers this an essential attribute of any modern government, and is manifested in its concern with individual tax identification numbers, accurate property registers, the formalisation of addresses, and the ability of the Ghanaian state to plan, manage and coordinate development activities. It is also manifested in the Bank’s concern to generate the possibility of ‘action at a distance’ through the use of tax systems and tax identification numbers which generate increased ‘self-compliance’. It should also be noted how building state capacity also means that the ‘disciplinary gaze’ of the state is turned upon itself, or, as Foucault has put it, it entails a ‘disciplinarization of the state’ (quoted in Gordon 1991, p. 27). The demands of planning, monitoring and coordinating government action require that the activities of the state, in its own depths and details, are also made available for view, for only in this way can the state learn, plan and act effectively. As Karl Polyani has noted, Bentham’s panoptic principle of ‘inspectability’ had its applications not only for prisons and convicts, but also to ministries and civil servants (Polanyi 1957, p. 110).

Following from this, it is easy to see why Barry Hindess has argued that liberalism is a project of government (Hindess 2004). In this view, Liberalism is an *ethos* and *techne* of government. The *ethos* of liberal government is not to govern too much so as to disrupt the freedoms necessary for the market economy to function; the *techne* is to develop mechanisms which allow the state to govern and manage its population ‘at a distance’ without resorting to coercion which would undermine economic freedom, and destroy the legitimacy of the state. The Bank’s lending to improve governance offers some support for this view. But while it is true that liberalism is intimately concerned with governing, the attempt to create effective forms of liberal governance is about creating the ability to pursue a project of social transformation. The concern with establishing a land valuation database, for example, is not simply to govern, but to change social relations by developing a land market and formalising land tenure. Similarly, the desire to increase the accountability of the state is not simply to encourage it to govern better, but to encourage certain forms of associational life and certain kinds of social relations at the expense of others.

The liberal state, democracy and governance

The arguments presented here allow the connections between liberal theorising about the state and its relationship with its society and the policies and practices of the World Bank to be revealed. This connection suggests that the pursuit of ‘good governance’ is significantly ideologically shaped, and this is so not just in the general sense, but right down to the details of specific projects. In this sense a focus on the connections between liberal theory and the practice of the World Bank helps us to explain what the World Bank is doing. Second, the arguments presented here show the extent to which the construction of the liberal states and liberal politics more broadly, involves a great deal more than just reducing the scope and size of the state and making it more ‘accountable’. It does involve these things, but alongside a series of other changes including the ‘disciplinarization’ of the state itself, the generation of a host of governmental capabilities, and the engineering of society. And these in turn reflect the ambiguities and tensions within liberal thought and the idea that liberalism is itself a political project which has at its heart the use of the state as an agent for the construction of a liberal order.

Finally, the analysis presented here has a number of implications for the understanding of democratic politics in Ghana and in Africa more generally. Two obvious points come to mind. First, the institutionalisation of democratic politics is only one part of a broader agenda for reform of the state and the construction of liberal modes of politics. It is of course an important element of this (or at least is thought to be by Western development agencies) and it is perhaps the most visible, but it is only one part, just as it was for the development of the liberal state in the West. We should not let the stress on democracy blind us to the other more subtle ways in which Western agencies are attempting to reconfigure politics. Second, democracy and the other elements of liberal politics this paper has discussed sit in a somewhat uneasy relationship. To put it briefly, in order for democratic politics to make good on its promises the state needs to be constituted as a governmental entity with the capacity to enact reforms and pursue policies. On the other hand the processes of democratic politics potentially threaten the necessary autonomy and the carefully graduated mechanisms of accountability necessary for the liberal state. Democracy has often been part of liberal politics; but it has never been the only or even the most important element.

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Versions of violence: Zimbabwe's domestic violence law and symbolic politics of protection

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This article argues that political uses of violence and discursive representations of violence are part of a political discourse of legitimacy in Zimbabwean politics, and that this discourse relies on a gendered power matrix in which acts of violence are depicted either as legitimate protection or as illegitimate aggression or terror. The analysis is based on public debates about domestic violence legislation and media representations of political uses of violence in 2006 and 2007. However, this is viewed as part of a longer history of political violence, entailing a symbolic politics of protection and political legitimacy, in which the protection of the nation's women figures as metonymy for 'the people' in need of protection.

Keywords: political violence; gender; Zimbabwe

Introduction

Much has been written about the use of violence in Zimbabwean politics. Indeed President Robert Mugabe's famous assertion that he possessed 'degrees in violence' has become a standard reference in describing what has been termed a political culture of violence. Taking this line further, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni has argued that in Zimbabwe, violence is not only a political culture, but that violence lies at the 'core of statecraft' for the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) regime (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). Inspired by his argument, this article attempts to view political uses of violence and discursive representations of violence as part of a political discourse of legitimacy. And, while academic writing on the politics of violence in Zimbabwe has mostly focused on the culture of violence in ZANU-PF and the legacy of the liberation war, this article argues that the political discourses of violence and legitimacy of the ZANU-PF government relied on the construction of a narrative of 'protection of the people' against an inherently violent aggressor. I argue that this relies on a gendered power matrix that works through acts of violence and through discursive framing of violence either as legitimate or as illegitimate.

I argue that this political discourse works through a gendered imagery of political attributes established during the liberation war, originating, as shown by Mike Kesby, in generational rivalry between young guerrilla soldiers and local patriarchs during the seventies, in which the exercise of violence recreated structures of authority (Kesby 1996,

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pp. 571–573). This authoritative imagery was maintained throughout post-colonial nation-building efforts and during the period of so-called fast-track land reforms discursively constructed as a 'Third Chimurenga', which referred to a continual anti-colonial struggle, working through a discursive binary between patriots and sell-outs, insiders and outsiders and drawing on the gendered matrix of power and protection established during the liberation war (Christiansen 2004, Ranger 2004).

In this article, I focus on the gendered imagery of symbolic politics, analysing public debates on violence before and after the passing of domestic violence legislation in 2006 and 2007: both the immediate debate surrounding the legislation, and the political discourses and practices of violence that formed the background for and context of these debates. These discourses are read against the backdrop of the aftermath of the so-called Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 and the social and economic crisis associated with the policies of land reform. The article is focused on local media debates, and therefore draws predominantly on government-controlled newspapers, which were at the time almost entirely dominating the local media scene because the government, while outwardly claiming media freedom, practised draconian media control, which in effect excluded independent media from the local scene with the exception of a few weekly papers with relatively low circulation.

Within this political climate, I argue, the ZANU-PF regime upheld pre-established categories of insiders and outsiders, maintained through a discourse of violence and legitimacy, with the purpose of establishing the opponent, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), as a violent aggressor. In this scenario, the government portrayed itself in the role of protector. It assumed this role in order to associate itself with anti-violence while portraying the MDC as being inherently prone to violence. This policy, the article will demonstrate, formed part of a long-term discursive strategy in which the government media depicted in-fighting within the opposition party as a natural attribute of their inherently violent and illegitimate political claims. This image was further used in the government's response to international condemnation when it arrested and tortured leading members of the opposition in March 2007. In this situation the government-controlled media propagated an image of a violent opposition; one which was suspected of organising a number of terror attacks in the preceding weeks. Here, I will argue, the government was able to draw on the image of the government-as-protector versus the violent opposition, while drawing on the symbolic politics in which the nation's women appeared as metonymy for 'the people' in need of protection. An analysis of the government's (anti-)violence discourse is therefore interesting as a study of the relationship between the formulation of symbolic politics of violence and political legitimacy, and that of gender and power.

The domestic violence law

On International Women's Day 2007, President Robert Mugabe signed the domestic violence law into effect (*Herald* 2007). On the one hand, the law saw the implementation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) declaration on gender and development, which had been ratified in 1997. On the other, the law was the product of a lengthy process in which a number of women's organisations, in cooperation with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, had lobbied politicians and traditional leaders, and drafted a bill that was a local adaptation of the principles of international treaties on gender equality.[1] The signing of the law marked the end of a period in which this piece of legislation had been the subject of heated discussion among the Zimbabwean public following similar debates in parliament. This debate had at its centre an MDC Member of Parliament (MP), Mr Timothy Mubawu. During the parliamentary debate he had made a strong case against the law, stating that:

> I stand here representing God Almighty. Women are not equal to men ...
> It is a dangerous Bill and let it be known in Zimbabwe that the right, privilege and status of men is gone. I stand here alone and say this Bill should not be passed in this House. It is a diabolic Bill. Our powers are being usurped daylight in this House. [sic]
> The proposed law, Mr Mubhawu [sic] said, was crafted in a manner that promoted western cultural values. (*Herald* 2006j)[2]

Had these statements been made by a member of the ruling ZANU-PF, it is unlikely that they would have been quoted in the government-controlled daily paper, the *Herald*, because of the overriding ZANU-PF command over the government-controlled media. Indeed, similar sentiments voiced by senators and MPs from ZANU-PF were drowned out in the public uproar over Mubawu's much publicised position. The government media quickly turned this public discussion into a 'men vs women' affair, where the government, through the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Gender, were given ample space in which to put across a message of 'anti-violence'.

In other words, Mubawu's comments enabled the ZANU-PF government to portray the opposition as not only being against a law meant to protect women against violence, but to claim that the latter was an essentially violent party. The opposition party became subject to a veritable media storm, as well as a rare demonstration of feminist activists and civic organisations who marched against the MDC, petitioning the party to force Mubawu to retract his statements. The government's acceptance of this demonstration, as well as the state media's positive coverage of the event, was in stark contrast to their more normal violent suppression of dissent. Those who opposed the law were represented in the media via letters to the editor or so-called street surveys, where citizens expressed alarm over the law's interference into patriarchal authority over women.

Two main concerns were expressed in this critique of the law. First, that the law would shift the power relations between men and women in favour of the latter. Second, that the domestic sphere should not be interfered with by any outside force, since, if a woman was able to go outside her family for assistance, the patriarch's authority in the family would be undermined. The logic behind these concerns was that women would be able to use this new legislation as at tool with which to tip the balance of power in their marriages, constituting a legal bias in favour of women. This was viewed as culturally, traditionally and religiously offensive, and destructive of the marriage institution and patriarchal authority, in other words the very fabric of Zimbabwean society. Indeed, those opposed to the law saw their culture as being under threat from Western (foreign and imperialist) notions of women's rights; the law was accordingly depicted as alien to indigenous social values (Christiansen 2009).

Nationalism, gender and violence

This line of argument bears a striking resemblance to President Mugabe's insistence on Zimbabwe's domestic sovereignty. In the nationalist discourse of the ZANU-PF regime, Mugabe's frequently reiterated response to international condemnation of the regime's violent oppression of dissent was that Zimbabwe is a 'sovereign nation', and that pressure constituted 'outside interference into domestic issues'. Analysts have pointed out the skilful discursive use of 'state sovereignty' in an argument against colonialism aimed at the former colonial power Britain, and the West in general (e.g. Raftopoulos 2003, p. 231, Sylvester 2003, p. 29, Muponde 2004, p. 176). In domestic politics it also implied a patriarchal dispensation of power (Campbell 2003, pp. 9–14): Mugabe as a patriarch who would not tolerate resistance from either inside or outside forces. This patriarchal dispensation of power also designated the ZANU-PF government as the protector of the people. The construction of the ZANU elite as the protector of the people is historically linked to the reification of political legitimacy through violence. During the liberation war guerrilla soldiers consolidated their legitimate status through the violent punishment of 'sell-outs' among the civilians in the rural areas in a complex dualism of punishment and protection (Moore 1995, pp. 379–380, Alexander *et al.* 2000, pp. 172–173). Kesby has shown how counter-insurgency tactics on both sides of the conflict relied on violent control of people (Kesby 1996, p. 564); and that in contestation over male authority between the young guerrilla soldiers and local patriarchs, violence was a key instrument with which the young guerrillas achieved authority over local patriarchs (Kesby 1996, pp. 571–573). Guerrilla soldier masculinity thus became the symbolic attribute of power and legitimacy through the liberation struggle.

Norma Kriger (1995, p. 139) has argued that immediately after independence, the symbolic status of the liberation war became 'an important emotional symbol and source of legitimacy for the governing elite', and that the way in which the regime constructed symbols of national identity out of the liberation war was a testament to their 'commitment to hierarchy, bureaucratic control, and top-down decision-making' (Kriger 1995, pp. 145–146). Kriger has later elaborated this argument, showing how liberation-struggle credentials have been important in internal rivalries within the ZANU movement (Kriger 2006). Ndlovu-Gatsheni asserts that ideologically Zimbabwean nationalism has been marred by authoritarian militaristic leadership and a valorisation of violence, which has plunged the country into not only a political and economic crisis, but also a crisis of national identity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009).

The ideological valorisation of violence also has a gendered dimension, rooted in practices of violence and gender inequality during the war, and the subsequent nation-building process. Jane Parpart has argued that claims to power during the liberation war were put in masculinist terms on both side of the conflict (Parpart 2008, p. 186) and that the nationalists perceived the war as 'an opportunity for "real men" ... who regarded violence as key to contesting [Rhodesian] state authority' (Parpart 2008, p. 187). The war was a means by which to regain African manhood from colonial oppression and 'fight like men' in order to 'penetrate' and win back the country (Parpart 2008, p. 191). Tanya Lyons (2004, pp. 253–267) has described how sexual violence against women was both a war tactic and a feature of the lives of female guerrilla soldiers. These practices were clearly not official nationalist policy, although in some cases the practices were widespread and appeared to be systematic. Kesby shows that in practice nationalist mobilisation by the guerrilla soldiers was fundamentally gendered (Kesby 1996, p. 569). Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi describes the gender ideology of the ZANU movement during the liberation war and in the subsequent nation-building efforts as highly ambivalent. Officially the ZANU movement upheld an ideology of gender equality – a mythologised version of women's participation in the liberation war (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000, p. 1); but in practice ZANU subjugated women into subaltern and exploited positions (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000, pp. 1–4, 97, 135–137, 145).

The imagery of the liberation war soldier, which came to symbolise the political legitimacy of the ZANU elite, was depicted as a benevolent masculine force. Violence was equated with the protection of the people, enacted in defence against colonial oppression, or, in the Third Chimurenga version, against neo-imperialists (Ranger 2004, pp. 232–234). The liberation war soldier represented the nationalist victory over the Rhodesians: a just cause, a democratic cause. In the post-war consolidation of ZANU as the legitimate political force in Zimbabwe, the imagery of the liberation war soldier-hero came to hold a symbolic meaning, as the political elite claimed that participation in the liberation war was the only valid political currency.

Despite early overtures towards national unity and reconciliation (Raftopoulos 2003, p. 220), this discourse of political legitimacy entailed generational, racial and class tensions which, during the 1990s and 2000s, laid the foundation for the formulation of the so-called Third Chimurenga and its narrow interpretation of the history of the liberation war into so-called patriotic history (Mugabe 2001, Raftopoulos 2004, pp. 165–166, Ranger 2004). The discursive construction of the Third Chimurenga and its patriotic history, which came to structure the political landscape after the formation of the opposition party MDC in 1999, has been described by Kizito Muchemwa as a product of the 'disruptive nature of the binaries that haunt the nation' (Muchemwa 2009). These binary oppositions have served to exclude political rivals of the ZANU-PF party from political legitimacy, most obviously the MDC. But the inclusion/exclusion function has also been applied to independent media, civil society organisations, human rights activists, the urban poor, whites and non-indigenous blacks.[3] One of the important features of this discourse is the construction of those it excludes as forming a threat to the nation. Depicting the MDC as 'puppet-mastered' by the British in a neo-imperialist attempt to overthrow the sovereignty of the Zimbabwean government is the aim of this discourse (e.g. Dorman 2003, Christiansen 2004, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008). Furthermore, it draws on tropes of the liberation war, depicting political opponents as 'sell-outs', justifying the violent punishments associated with counter-insurgency (Christiansen 2004, pp. 78–81). In the early 2000s, the relative political inexperience of the MDC was utilised by the ZANU-PF government to depict the MDC in this fashion. An example of this was an incident where leaders of the MDC were shown on the Cable News Network channel (CNN) receiving cheques from white farmers who at the time were under attack in the land occupations. This footage was turned into government propaganda, as proof of MDC's 'sell-out' status, having literally taken money from the hands of the white colonists (Willems 2005, p. 101).

By the middle of the 2000s, the potency of the Third Chimurenga discourse was seemingly waning. The chronic inflation, failure of public services and erosion of living standards was becoming painfully tangible to people. The MDC had become more politically mature, and the brutality of the regime was becoming a constant presence for ordinary citizens. Particularly after the so-called Operation Murambatsvina in 2005, which saw 'illegal urban settlements' demolished, and imposed prohibitions on informal trading, leaving thousands of people homeless and without livelihood (UN 2005). In this context, reiteration of the Third Chimurenga rhetoric seemed to be losing currency.

Against this backdrop, my analysis will argue that a new formulation of 'the MDC as the enemies of the nation' emerged from ZANU-PF. This discourse depicted the MDC party as an inherently violent aggressor, against which the government needed to act decisively in order to protect the people. In this discursive turn, the debate surrounding the domestic violence law came to hold an important position, as it tied in with the long-standing strategy of depicting the opposition as violent, and the government as the people's protectors.

Establishing the MDC as a violent party

In the context of people's everyday concerns, even the government-controlled media were by the mid 2000s hard pressed to depict the nation's affairs in a light favourable to the

ZANU-PF government. Even the smallest drop in the *growth* of inflation could be transformed into the lead story on Zimbabwe Television, while the *Herald* was increasingly used by the Ministry of Information as a vehicle for anti-Western propaganda. Therefore, when tensions within the MDC developed into a widely publicised struggle between two factions in 2005, the government media had, at last, something substantial with which to fill airtime and pages. The infighting within the opposition party had taken a violent turn (albeit on a comparably small scale), with candidates using violence to jostle for positions in the party. These incidents and the party leadership's indecisive handling of them was reportedly a contributing factor to the split between the two factions of the party (Coltart 2006a). I will here examine the way in which the government media represented the split and the two subsequent incidents, and describe how the government used the fighting within the MDC create a picture of a violence-prone opposition. I will argue that this representation formed the backdrop of the 2007 violent oppression of the opposition.

The split in the MDC

'Tsvangirai's faction threatens violence' was the headline in the *Herald* on 26 October 2005 (*Herald* 2005). The article below claimed that the MDC president, Morgan Tsvangirai, had threatened violence against MDC candidates who did not side with his faction. This followed a period where the split had largely been seen as a question of different opinions on the introduction of a senate in Zimbabwe. Under headings such as 'Tsvangirai obsessed with violence' (*Herald* 2006d), a punch-up between various MDC youth who favoured one or another candidate was spelt out in detail in the *Herald* and the weekly *Sunday Mail*. Here various news stories and opinion pieces depicted Tsvangirai as a violent character. Later on, when the mediator between the two factions, David Coltart, decided to side with Tsvangirai's opponents (Coltart 2006b), the government media depicted this event with headlines such as 'Coltart bares all on MDC violence' (*Herald* 2006e). This opened the floodgates for articles that claimed to identify a trajectory of violent activity instigated by the MDC. An article in the *Herald* described the MDC as a Janus-faced beast, which to the outside world acts the victim, but domestically reveals itself as an inherently violent aggressor, bent on subduing the nation by force:

> **Violence: MDC's trademark**
> While international propaganda finds good politics in portraying Zanu-PF as a violent party thriving on the blood of its opponents in the main opposition factions, one may need to take a look at the culture of violence in the MDC . . .
> The MDC was the product of the 1998 violent riots where Morgan Tsvangirai . . .
> This was the climax of Tsvangirai's political profile, the height of his political success. It is the standard he has thrived to reach once more by his numerous fruitless attempts at 'mass actions', 'final pushes' and 'winter battles'. (*Herald* 2006f)

This representation of infighting in the MDC as the natural outcome of the culture of violence, said to characterise the party's political strategies, hinged on an assertion that the MDC was plotting to violently overthrow the government. This claim was partly founded on accusations that had been made some months earlier, in relation to a supposed weapons find in the eastern city of Mutare, which had been blamed on two local MDC MPs, Giles Mutsekwa and Roy Bennett.

The Mutare plot

On 8 March 2006, the *Herald* reported that an 'arms cache' had been unearthed on a farm belonging to 'an ex-Rhodesian army and special constabulary member, Peter Hitschmann'

(*Herald* 2006a). According to the police, Bennett, Mutsekwa and Hitschmann were believed to be part of a group of several MDC members, dominated by former Rhodesian soldiers and intelligence agents, who were plotting to overthrow the government:

> The suspects were linked to the so-called Zimbabwe Freedom Movement, a shadowy group of ex-Rhodesians.
> The group claims to have members within the law enforcement agencies, and drawn [*sic*] from ex-Rhodesians and war veterans.
> The cabal is alleged to have come up with a list of targeted individuals whom it wanted to eliminate and consequently cause confusion and mayhem in the country. (*Herald* 2006b)

The minister responsible for national security, Ditymus Mutasa, was interviewed in the article, and asserted that this group was trying to assume power through undemocratic means, and that:

> 'It is only Zimbabweans who can determine their political destiny through a sound electoral process.
> 'So those still pledging their allegiance to Ian Smith and his stooges should note that the whole issue of stocking arms for subversive and destabilising purposes is a wasted effort as this country has the means and capacity to defend itself from enemies both internal and external,' said Comrade Mutasa. (*Herald* 2006b)

The association between the MDC and the alleged arms cache was denied by the MDC. It, in turn, accused the intelligence agency (CIO) of having orchestrated the incident in order to derail the MDC's annual congress, which was due to take place (*Financial Gazette* 2006). The charges against those arrested in relation to the alleged plot were eventually dropped, but the alleged collusion between the MDC and former Rhodesian soldiers and others 'bent on turning Zimbabwe into a colony again' was maintained.[4] And the *Herald* columnist, Caesar Zvayi, went on to compare the 'Rhodesian plotters' to Nazis, arguing that it was a mistake not to have had a 'Zimbabwean Nurnberg trial' after independence, since colonialists and willing stooges were still bent on violently overturning Zimbabwe's liberation (*Herald* 2006c). The MDC was thus depicted as dominated by whites (former white farmer Roy Bennett) and neo-Rhodesians, and their politics could therefore be dismissed as violent and illegitimate.

The attack on MP Trudy Stevenson

The third incident, which preceded the debate about the domestic violence law, had MP Timothy Mubawu from the Tsvangirai faction in a key role. This incident was a violent attack on 2 July 2006 on another MDC MP, Trudy Stevenson, from the opposing faction, an incident that was widely publicised in the government media. Their interpretation, based on police statements, was obvious: that this was yet another outbreak of internal violence within the 'violent MDC party', perpetrated by a member of the violent Tsvangirai faction:

> **MDC thugs batter Trudy Stevenson**
> MDC legislator for Harare North constituency Mrs Trudy Stevenson was admitted in hospital on Sunday afternoon after she, and four other high-ranking officials of her faction, was severely assaulted by youths aligned to the rival camp led by Mr Morgan Tsvangirai.
> Mrs Stevenson, who is recovering at Avenues Clinic, sustained a deep gash on the back of her head, which her colleagues said was inflicted by a machete [. . .]

> 'I had never been physically attacked all my life, and in all my years as an opposition politician. Zanu-PF never physically harmed me, it really hurts to be harmed by people I used to work with,' she said. (*Herald* 2006h)

Pictures of the frail woman, bleeding and crying in a hospital bed, were circulated the world over. And it was not only the top story in the national media, it was also the headline on the many Zimbabwean diaspora web-based news media, which had also become increasingly focused on the infighting after the MDC split.

After a string of random arrests, the police settled on a group of MDC leaders and activists, whom they charged with the assault. Mubawu was thought to be the leader because he and Stevenson were competing in the same district. Mubawu was formally charged, and the two factions seemed now further divided. This forced the Tsvangirai-led MDC to initiate a commission in order to investigate what had happened (MDC Commission of Inquiry 2006). Nevertheless, the government media continued to cover the attack and the divisions in MDC as a product of the MDC culture of violence with headlines such as 'Opposition violent – Mutambara', where faction leader Arthur Mutambara was said to have 'admitted to the increasing culture of violence within the opposition' (*Sunday Mail* 2006a).

At the same time, the government was preparing to pass the domestic violence law through parliament. This was covered alongside the Stevenson attack and consisted of praise of the government's benevolent policies and its determination to pass the law in order to protect women from violence (e.g. *Herald* 2006g).

The domestic violence law – protecting the nation's women

It was against this discursive backdrop that Mubawu gave a diatribe against the domestic violence law. From a strategic point of view, his statements were amateurish, considering that he was the government's favourite poster child for the 'MDC culture of violence' rhetoric. The government thus only had to describe the problem of domestic violence and depict the protection that the government, through this law, would offer women, in order to appear the champions of women's rights. To this end the government-controlled media made long references in a number of articles to the particularities of the law, and quoted at length the Minister of Justice's defence of the law in parliament. These articles served to juxtapose the government's initiative to launch the domestic violence law in protection of the nation's women with Mubawu's misogyny and defence of men's apparent 'right' to use violence against women (e.g. *Chronicle* 2006, *Herald* 2006i, *Herald* 2006k).

What made matters worse for Mubawu and the MDC was the fact that not only was this a chance for the government to appear benevolent and 'opposed to violence'; women's rights groups that would under normal circumstances be counted as pillars of the pro-democracy movement and stand shoulder to shoulder with the opposition now had a rare opportunity to claim neutrality, and thus take centre stage in the media. It is, therefore, no wonder that a stream of well-written articles and opinion pieces written by prominent feminists and human-rights activists appeared in the national newspapers arguing for the merits of the legislation, and supporting the government's initiative to pass the law (e.g. *Daily Mirror* 2006a, *Sunday Mail* 2006a, *Standard* 2006, *Sunday Mail* 2006b). Here, the women's rights lobby described problems of domestic violence, the ministers responsible for the law occasionally gave statements in support of the legislation, and reporters in the government media routinely referred to Mubawu's statements. This painted a picture of a government that was intent on protection of women, and an opposition which was opposed to such legislation.

This stance fitted well with the picture that had been painted of the opposition in the preceding months; after all, the opposition (Mubawu being the prime example), was inherently violent, and this was yet another case which proved this 'fact'. Mubawu did little to rectify this image; rather, he played the government a winning hand, by giving an interview with the government-controlled *Sunday Mail*, where he claimed that he was a lone voice in defence of indigenous culture. The Minister of Justice, Patrick Chinamasa, was quoted in the same article defending the law, saying that violence was not a part of Zimbabwean culture (*Sunday Mail* 2006b), thus constructing a discursive effect, where the MDC was depicted as prone to violence, and the government was depicted as the protector of the nation's women.

This discursive construction was maintained right up until the law was signed. Six months after the first reading of the domestic violence law in parliament, one of the government-controlled newspapers, the *Chronicle*, marked the occasion of International Women's Day, 8 March 2007, by printing an article that featured a woman who had been battered by her husband. She said that she was happy about the domestic violence law because, even if she did not wish to report her husband, the law would have a deterrent effect on his tendency to beat her (*Chronicle* 2007). The article then went on to quote at length from Mubawu's statements in parliament, contrasted with an old quote from the Minister of Gender, Opah Muchinguri: 'The magnitude of gender-based violence is both frightening and choking and the statistics are proof enough as to why we need domestic violence legislation' (*ibid*.). The effect of the juxtaposition was such that the reader was reminded of Mubawu's 'promotion of violence', which was contrasted by the Minister's determination to act against violence. The following day, the acting Minister of Gender, Flora Buka, was reported as rejoicing in the fact that the law had been signed by President Mugabe. This, she said, was appropriately 'in line with this year's [international] theme, "Ending impunity for violence against women"' (*Herald* 2007). That is, according to the government-controlled media, the president, the government and the Zimbabwean people were shown to be full members of the international society of democratic nations, which strive to protect women from domestic violence.

At one level, the debate about the domestic violence law was an example of how the uneven playing field – that is the Zimbabwean media space – operates; one opposition politician steps out of line and all other voices are silenced. The MDC put Mubawu's case before a disciplinary committee, but the damage was done – the government had allowed itself ample media space to depict itself as 'the champions of anti-violence'. At another level, the way in which the government media depicted the debate must be viewed as part of the government's overall discursive strategy to portray the political claims of the opposition as illegitimate. In this respect, the symbolic value of the government as the protector of the people, a perspective underlined throughout the debate, was closely linked with the discourse about violence and political legitimacy, with the government's liberation war credentials as its core claim to power. Having constructed the MDC as an aggressor, and the government as the protector of the people, the government could legitimately unleash violence on the opposition in defence of the nation.

'We say no to violence, and we *will* bash them'

The metaphor of protection of the people which the government constructed throughout the debate about the domestic violence law was at times also conveyed by awareness campaigns that were run either by women's rights groups or by the gender ministry. An example of this is the poster from which Figure 1 is taken. The poster carries the slogan:

Figure 1. Section of a billboard poster advertising the Domestic Violence Law. Picture taken by the author in Harare, 2006.

'*Domestic violence law: the law that outweighs domestic violence'*. It was one of a few very large posters with various slogans against domestic violence put up at strategic places in town and next to the large commuter routes. In this picture, the government (symbolised as a police officer) catches a man hitting a woman, thus protecting her from domestic violence. While the poster was not part of a government-sponsored campaign,[5] the government could not have asked for a better illustration of the perceived consequences of the law. Two different masculine images are at play: the husband representing a damaging, violent and aggressive masculine force, which needs to be contained, and the police officer representing benign, protective masculine strength, which uses its powers positively to protect vulnerable women.

The following lengthy quote, from an article covering President Mugabe's speech at the official celebration of International Women's Day, illustrates the links that the President constructs between the government's commitment to ending domestic violence, and its portrayal of the opposition as being prone to violence. The article makes reference to a number of violent attacks/acts of terrorism that had been committed the week before when a police station and a commuter train had been petrol-bombed, and members of the opposition had been arrested for allegedly being responsible for the attacks:

> **President condemns political violence**
> The Government will not sit back and watch the opposition perpetrating 'terrorist attacks' on innocent citizens while authorities are also geared to stamp out domestic violence, which now

> accounts for 60% of Zimbabwe's murder cases, President Mugabe has said.
> Speaking at a ceremony to commemorate International Women's Day in Harare yesterday, Cde Mugabe said authorities would not tolerate lawlessness. This violence must stop, he said.
> Cde Mugabe made the remarks in the wake of acts of violence unleashed by the opposition MDC in different parts of the country this week.
> In Harare, suspected MDC supporters attacked and injured three policemen while two female officers at Marimba Police Station are in critical condition after a midnight petrol bomb attack on their residence.
> The trail of violence resulted in disturbances in Glen View on Tuesday morning when property was destroyed and vehicles damaged.
> President Mugabe pointed out that there was no need for the violence, as it does not enhance the political interests of the opposition party. If anything, he said, the practice only injures innocent people, and is aimed at illegally bringing about a change of Government in the country.
> 'A new violence, sponsored and directed by our detractors, has been trying to rear its ugly head,' he said.
> 'Scores of innocent people going about their legitimate business have fallen prey to terrorist attacks that are part of the desperate and illegal plot to unconstitutionally change the Government in the country ...
> 'This violence, that was also beginning to affect symbols of Government authority, symbols of law and order, must stop.'
> The President added that the Government advocates peace, highlighting that one could freely form a political party in Zimbabwe. He pointed out that the MDC had, however, taken to violence after the electorate spurned its advances ...
> 'My thanks go to the peace-loving Zimbabwean people who have shown the world who the real perpetrators of violence are.'
> Turning to domestic violence, Cde Mugabe said while Government sought to deal with the social problem though legislative means, the effort should be collectively expanded across society ...
> He added that women are 'mothers of life'. He said Government would continue to work on bringing equality to women across all sectors. (*Sunday Mail* 2007)

Only days after the president had made this speech (but before the news item was printed), the government arrested and tortured the bulk of the leadership of both factions of the MDC, under the pretext of having prevented a violent uprising. These arrests commanded international attention. This was partly because they coincided with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit in Dar es Salaam, and partly because of the graphic pictures of the opposition leaders seriously injured in the process. International pressure was put on the African leaders gathered at the summit. However, when President Mugabe returned to Zimbabwe, without having been reprimanded by his peers, he asserted that he had succeeded in persuading them that the opposition leaders had been arrested because of the string of terrorist acts.

Just as in the case against the alleged plotters in the Mutare arms cache in 2006, none of the alleged attacks was ever proven to have been committed by members or sympathisers of the opposition. Rather, the court cases brought against opposition members have all been thrown out of court for lack of evidence. Nevertheless, President Mugabe claimed that he had 'told SADC that yes, he [Tsvangirai] was beaten and bashed, and I told them that this was done by the police. I did not hide anything' (*Star* 2007). Mugabe went on to further underline this argument at a ZANU-PF Youth League meeting in Harare on 16 March 2007:

> **No to violence – President**
> Government will not allow any criticism to deter it from upholding the law and arresting violent opposition members, President Mugabe has said.
> If MDC repeats the orgy of violence it unleashed between Sunday and midweek, the President

> said, the Government would deal sternly with it . . .
> The President's remarks come at a time when the West has heaped criticism on the Government for arresting MDC leaders and their supporters for engaging in violence while making no reference to the trail of destruction caused by the opposition. (*Herald* 2007)

The fact that the West had 'heaped criticism' on the government was taken as proof of Western control over the opposition and their terrorist acts. This line of argument relies on the discursive construction of the MDC as the inherently violent 'puppets of the West'. The president, the patriarch of the nation, exercises the right to punish those who threaten his people. By portraying the opposition as inherently violent, prior to the public acts of government torture against the opposition leaders, the government could draw on imagery of ZANU-PF, 'a peaceful party', in contrast to the MDC, 'a violent one', a binary that obscured violence against the opposition. In addition, by aligning ZANU-PF with the historically undisputed anti-colonial struggle and constructing a link between the opposition and its historic enemies in the West, the government was able to depict the opposition as an undemocratic aggressor. The practice of violently punishing sell-outs had been established during the liberation war (Christiansen 2004, pp. 78–81); now, in the face of the perceived colonial threat, the renewal of this practice is discursively justified as an act of protection. Indeed, within this scenario, the patriarch who protects his people can 'bash' those whom he defines as posing a threat to them. Mugabe, therefore, makes no apology for the torture of opposition leaders. Seen in this light, President Mugabe's use of the domestic violence law exemplifies his patriarchal position; in addition, the government's anti-violence discourse allows the discursive claim that a 'no to violence' can be interpreted as a licence 'to bash the opposition'. For, after all, the latter is a justifiable pre-emptive strike at an aggressor, an opponent, who has already been proven inherently violent.

Conclusion

Since independence, and particularly since the Third Chimurenga's discourse of political legitimacy, the ZANU-PF regime has defined the nation as being in a permanent state of war against former and potential colonisers. This state of permanent warfare allows for the politics of protection, a neatly defined position in which ZANU-PF can claim authority. It, after all, was the party that had liberated the nation in the first place. In this context, the introduction of, and debate around, the domestic violence law served to symbolically position the ZANU-PF government as the protectors of the nation's women. The coincidental episode and subsequent discursive use of Timothy Mubawu's objection to the law served to highlight the gendered power matrix on which ZANU-PF's symbolic politics of protection relied. Throughout the debate about the domestic violence law, the government's commitment to protecting women was routinely juxtaposed with the MDC politician's misogynistic statements, thus representing the MDC as an aggressive force. Here the nation's women functioned as a metonym for the people or the nation, positioning the ZANU-PF government as the benevolent patriarchal force, which would intervene to protect the people from assault. This happened against the backdrop of a long-term discursive strategy, where the government media and politicians had represented the MDC as a party which was inherently violent. In this discursive context, the arrest and torture of leading MDC politicians in March 2007 was accordingly depicted as the government's commitment to end violence and protect the people from the violent excesses of the MDC.

As such, the government's introduction of the domestic violence law can be seen as an attempt by ZANU-PF to stabilise an ambivalent discourse of violence and political legitimacy, by restoring Mugabe as the patriarch of the nation; a patriarch who protects his people through private and public displays of discipline and protection, by assuming control over all domestic spheres – public and private alike. Thus, women came to matter as symbols of government power over and protection of the people. However, the fundamental ambivalence in the government's discourse on violence consisted of the precarious exercise of carefully inscribing each act of violence committed in the name of the ZANU movement (by agents of the state or paramilitary groups) in the language of anti-colonial war and fitting them into the insider/outsider binary of patriots *versus* sell-outs. In the maintenance of this construction, positioning the domestic violence law and the protection of the nation's women symbolically as metonymy for the government's protection of the people represents a possible flipside, in which the imagery of the benevolent patriarchal force, which protects the people, that could have been turned into a narrative of the 'wife-bashing government', which violates its own people. However, neither the opposition nor the limited space of independent media pursued this line of discourse. And Mugabe was allowed to once again act the patriarch domestically and among his peers in the region.

Note on contributor

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Notes

1. Interviews conducted with Minister of Gender Opah Muchinguri, ministerial officials, and a number of women's non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and activists in Harare 2006 and 2007.
2. The official transcript from the parliamentary debate has not been publicised by the government. I therefore cautiously rely on media representations. The misspelling of Mr Mubawu's name is as written in the source.
3. 'Non-indigenous' was defined in patrilineal terms.
4. The accusation against Bennett was taken up again in recent charges under which Bennett spent one month in custody in 2009 (*Zimbabwe Times* 2009).
5. This domestic violence law campaign was carried out by the Women's Coalition with the support from the Dutch NGO HIVOS.

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Repression of Sudanese civil society under the National Islamic Front/National Congress Party

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Political change in Sudan gathered momentum after 1989, with the government introducing policies of control and restriction on the one hand, and an increasing number of civil society organisations seeking to establish and legitimise their (autonomous) identity and secure their continued existence on the other. This article concentrates uniquely on Sudanese non-governmental organisations and civil society (notably community-based organisations), focusing on the regime's institutions and social organisation and social and political opposition to the regime. It shows how the Islamic movement uses religion and power to sustain and protect a political system which has lost its credibility and legitimacy among many Sudanese. The article focuses on the rise of the National Islamic Front from a small political party, through a period as the third political force after the election of 1986, to a ruling party in the wake of the military coup of 1989. It discusses structures and processes of rule under the National Islamic Front, as well as the causes leading to the failure of its own Islamic project in the country. It suggests that the rise of an Islamic movement in Sudan is itself a reflection of a decline in local or grassroots initiatives for social change, and summarises relations between the National Islamic Front and non-governmental/citizen-based organisations. It concludes that even in the absence of democracy, and under a brutal authoritarian regime, non-governmental organisations can engage effectively and contribute to social and economic change, particularly those affecting the marginalised poor, by raising issues of concern about, and promoting alternatives to, political Islam.

Keywords: Sudan; political Islam; civil society

Introduction

This article addresses the present political situation in the Sudan, including the regime's institutions and social organisation. It focuses on the role of civil society under the current regime, and describes the main social movements and organisations.

An authoritarian National Islamic Front (NIF)/National Congress Party (NCP) regime has clung to power since June 1989, mobilising state resources and institutions to serve the interests of political Islam. That a multicultural and multiethnic Sudan is still to openly confront this legacy is itself a reflection of the dominant influence of the NIF over the country's various regions. However, this is not an accusation that can be directed at the NIF alone. Historically, other regimes in the Sudan have been criticised for of the use of religion in pursuit of power. For instance, political leaders have often called Islam into play during

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crises: for example, the declaration of sharia law by Nimeiri in 1983; and the success of the alliance of Islamists from the Umma Party, National Unionist Party and Muslim Brotherhood in securing the dissolution of the Sudanese Communist Party in 1965, and expulsion of its democratically elected members from the constituent assembly (Mahmoud 1997). This trend was intensified after the coup of 1989, with the Islamic movement using the institutions of the state to structure and legitimise its hegemony. Ruling party policies, strategies and ideology are propagated using the state apparatus, which also provides the governing party with the means for coercion, while also giving it the material resources to divide society.

This article consists of two main sections. The first focuses on the rise and growth of the NIF from a small political party to a ruling power following the military coup of 1989. It discusses the nature of government organisations/institutions and analyses the causes leading to the failure of the Islamic project in the country. The second describes the challenges facing an independent civil society, highlighting how legal restrictions and control, gender inequality and social exclusion have impacted on the different regions of the multicultural state.

The rise of the Islamic movement

The post-independence period

The Islamic movement[1] started as an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement in the mid 1940s. The Unified Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood Organisation was established in 1954. Ten years later, in 1964, the movement established a political organisation called the Islamic Charter Front, which was shaped by its student origins and came to be seen as an urban-centred modern movement, notably when compared to the tradition-bound Sufi orders (*Khatmiyyah*) and the Umma Party (*Ansar*). It was Hassan Al-Turabi, the Muslim Brotherhood's main thinker, who changed the movement's nature and fortunes. Between 1964 and 1969, the movement grew into a pressure group advocating an Islamic constitution, a project that was supported by both the *Ansar* and the *Khatmiyyah* sects, and which contributed to both the dissolution of the Sudanese Communist Party in 1965 and the Nimeiri-led coup of May 1969.

Turabi's opportunistic approach in aligning the Brotherhood with the Nimeiri regime (1969–85) saw the Muslim Brothers becoming, after 1971, the only politically active party in the country and Turabi being appointed Attorney General in 1979, alongside other Muslim Brothers who secured positions in cabinet and other key government institutions. By aligning itself with an undemocratic regime, the Islamic movement succeeded in infiltrating the regime's structures and creating space within official channels, to campaign for Islamisation. Collaboration with Nimeiri was crucial, too, in allowing the movement to build a solid economic foundation, based on Islamic banking and investment. The association presided over an increase in the number of branches of the Faisal Islamic Bank, an expansion in the adoption of Islamic clothing by women and, in September 1983, the declaration of sharia law by Nimeiri. Writing about the last of these. Mahmoud (2007, pp. 275–286) wrote that:

> The regime's shift to the right and its gradual Islamization reached a dramatic climax in 1983 when Nimayri announced the imposition of the Islamic penal code or *hudud*. The new harsh and extreme penal measures of limb amputation and humiliating floggings were enthusiastically promoted and implemented by Muslim Brothers.

Nimeiri observed that the influence of the Islamic movement, and its impact on public life, represented a threat to his regime, which was aware that the Islamic movement did not necessarily bring stability (Gasm El-Sayed, 1996, p. 104). Indeed, widespread discontent at the bad publicity resulting from the implementation of sharia, particularly reports of extreme brutality towards, and humiliation of, anyone considered to have fallen foul of its strictures, led Nimeiri to accuse the Islamic movement of conspiracy to topple his regime (Mahmoud, 1997, p. 2). Such tension, allied to the perceived widespread corruption of the regime, contributed to the escalation of civil war in the south of the country, and to the political and economic crises that led eventually to the people's uprising of April 1985 when trades unions joined forces with opposition political parties to organise a strike which weakened the government and its institutions, leading to the fall of the Nimeiri regime. The years of democratic government between 1985 and 1989 posed a potentially serious threat to the Islamic movement and the economic and religious gains it had recorded up to that point. A major turning point in the fortunes of the movement came in May 1985, when the Islamic Charter Front changed its name to the National Islamic Front, and, according to Turabi, was transformed into a new coalition between the movement and a number of tribal and popular figures which undertook to protect and preserve the Islamic movement's achievements in the face of a campaign by secular political parties and other groups to eradicate completely the Islamic legacy of the Nimeiri regime (Al-Mahboub, 2010, pp. 56–57).

The Islamic movement in power in the post-1989 period

Following the military coup of 1989, the National Islamic Front adopted a very hostile and aggressive attitude towards civic institutions such as trade unions, women's and student groups, political parties and civil society organisations. Democratic rights to free expression and association were curtailed. In their place, the NIF established hundreds of organisations to which it offered tax and customs exemptions, and which became vehicles for accumulating shares in privatised public bodies. Not surprisingly, the then-Minister of Finance, Abdelwahab Osman, was critical of these practices in his budget speech, identifying them as factors leading to the weakness of the government revenue base (El Nagar 2006, p. 76).

Alex de Waal described the Islamic movement's organisations in the Sudan thus:

> they can act as trading companies, may assist in training and feeding the soldiers, and are active in proselytisation. Peace Camps run by Islamic agencies are an integral part of the government's counter-insurgency strategy. In some of the war zones, Islamic agencies have become virtually indistinguishable from the government. (de Waal 1997, p. 98)

Such observations concerning the role of Islamic organisations working in war zone areas act as a prelude to further enquiry into the quality of their services, as well as into who benefits from these services and at whose expense.

Al-Tayeb Zein Al-Abdin (2003), a Sudanese Islamist scholar, has divided these Islamic groups into voluntary agencies and national sects, on the one hand, and government institutions on the other. The former include the *Ansar* and *Khatmiyyah* sects, the modern Islamic movement known as the National Islamic Front, Muslim Brothers, *Ansar Al Suna Al-Mahamedyyah*, other Sufi groups, and sub-organisations and associations under the structures of the main groups. The government Islamic institutions fall under the Ministry of Guidance, *Al-Zakat* Chamber, Islamic studies sections of higher education institutions such as Omdurman Islamic, *Al Koran Al-Kareem* and International African Universities, the Islamic Education Department at the National Curriculum Centre in Bakht el-Rida, and the Religious Programme sections at Televisions and Broadcast. The Islamic regime's own copycat Cultural Revolution has had devastating effects on the education system, leading to an almost entire generation of inadequately educated individuals. Many of the newer of Sudan's 30 universities would not meet accepted international standards that qualify academic institutions for the status of university. Mohamed Saeed Al-Gadal (2004) observes, for example, that 'Khartoum University has become the possession of a political party, because appointments and promotions occur according to the party loyalty.'

The NIF's alliance with the Nimeiri military regime, starting in 1971, facilitated its accumulation of wealth. Although outlawed at the time, NIF was allowed to operate freely, including in business, where it benefited from access to the resources of financial institutions like Faisal Bank. According to de Waal (1997, p. 98), the coup of 30 June 1989 'was the culmination of ten years of NIF financial dominance in Sudan and in government. The NIF was able to take that process to its logical conclusion.' While some of the institutions and organisations which facilitated NIF expansion and the consolidation of its power and influence predated the 1989 coup, new ones were created after the coup. The most important of these are given below.

Relief and Islamic Mission (Dawa) organisations

The Islamic movement established a number of relief and advocacy organisations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The best-known ones are Islamic Mission (*Dawa Islamiyyah*) and the Islamic Relief Agency. A key reason for their establishment was to attract funding from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. A second reason for their existence was to provide vehicles for Islamic advocacy and social activism which were not directly NIF organisations. In reality, these and other relief, voluntary and *Dawa* organisations like them are under the direct and indirect control of the NIF. Thus the first chairperson of the Trustee Council of *Dawa Islamiyyah*, which specialises in service delivery and caters for internally displaced victims of natural and man-made disasters all over Sudan, was a military officer who worked for a long time in Saudi Arabia, and whose appointment ensured strong support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the Emirates. Ten of the members of the Trustee Council were known Islamists and members of the NIF. Of the three others who were not NIF members, one was a former vice-chancellor of the University of Khartoum, while the other two were from the Muslim Brothers Party and *Ansar Al Suna Al Mahamediyyah*, respectively. *Dawa Islamiyyah* operates in the name of the National Islamic Front (Al-Mahboub 2010, p. 26).

Islamic student and youth movement

The Islamic student and youth movement, which encompasses members from both secondary and higher education institutions, represents the most dynamic vehicle for NIF's social, cultural, political and religious activities, as student unions in all universities were controlled by the NIF between 1974 and 1990. Furthermore, the NIF succeeded in involving this social group in its activities after graduation, by employing them in its economic and financial institutions, charities and political and security structures.

Islamic women and youth movement

The main women's and youth organs of the NIF were the National Women's Front, *Nahda* Pioneers Association (for women) and Youth-Building Organisation (for men). The National Women's Front was very active during the 1986 election campaign, organising political rallies, workshops and one-to-one contacts both in residential areas and places of employment on behalf of the NIF. Indeed, members of the National Women's Front participated actively in all political campaigns during the democratic interregnum between 1985 and 1989, when the NIF was represented in parliament by two female Members of Parliament (MPs). On the social front, Islamic women's organisations prepared and implemented projects and activities for families, widows, orphans, destitute female-headed households, female prisoners, displaced and street children, and female vendors. This big effort was closely co-ordinated with, and supported by, other Islamic organisations such as the Islamic Relief Agency and *Dawa Islamiyyah*. One of the largest such schemes involved group or mass marriage ceremonies of young couples attracted by cash and other inducements offered by the NIF during these *Al-Zahra* marriages, which were aimed at creating social units favourable to the NIF in all regions of the country. The other well-known project was *Guntar Dahab*, which involved collecting gold from well-off Sudanese women at home and abroad, and using this to fund Sudanese military forces fighting in the civil war against the South. Sudanese Television campaigned for this project as well.

Islamic trade and professional unions

As labourers were not well represented in the NIF, the Labourers' Front was considered one of the weakest of the NIF organs (Woodward 1990, pp. 210–300), particularly when compared to the Communist Party's successes. The NIF's weakness in infiltrating trade and professional unions continued until 1989 (El Nagar 2006, p. 59), when the coup of June that year saw an oppressive NIF regime banning unions and other democratic institutions. Most labour leaders who supported other political parties were either dismissed or imprisoned, while Islamic cadres were appointed to replace elected union officials, and unions were directed to support the new regime and its policies.

NIF's community-based organisations

NIF organisations and approaches did not encounter challenges at grassroots and community levels. Rural Muslims appeared to lack organisation and direction, while non-Muslims in camps for the displaced and in the South were poor and desperate for educational and health services, food and relief aid. The NIF political and social network reached into all aspects of life in rural and semi-urban areas. The coup of 1989 imposed new political structures throughout Sudan, including Popular Committees with wide-ranging mandates covering security, elections, economic activities, displaced camps, and so on. Thus the NIF programme for Comprehensive *Daawa* was well known all over the country, with its cultural, social and religious components. The latter, for example, involves *Al Koran Al Kareem* sessions for children at kindergarten and for female householders. These activities are undertaken in mosques and schools in almost every village. Other social activities focused, for example, on sport (particularly football, the most popular sport for men in Sudan), with sports teams being formed and supported by Islamic organisations. Attention was also devoted to mosques and their role in Islamic advocacy. Sheikhs were trained in advocacy to prepare them to both promote and defend NIF political, social and economic programmes, while mosques were built in every ministry and government institution, and NIF members advised to visit mosques and pray regularly. Regular attendance at mosque was considered by some government institutions as a main criterion for staff promotion.

Publication and media

In the area of publications, the NIF established a number of publication companies, centres and bookshops in Khartoum State, with the express purpose of producing, publishing and disseminating Islamic literature. On the media, the NIF allocated both human and financial resources to train and equip Islamic institutions with well-qualified Islamic staff and high-tech equipment, tools and technologies.

The failure of the regime and its project

What the foregoing suggests is that the NIF was prepared for, and had put in place, strategies for long-term political, social, religious and cultural change. Over the last two decades, the NIF has infiltrated Sudanese society and tried to mainstream its political agenda, often through Islamising markers of secularity and modernity such as schools, insurance and sports associations. This has produced an immature Islamic experiment in the country, one characterised by a lack of respect for democratic practices and institutions on the part of an NIF. However, many progressive forces believe that a tolerant Sudanese Islam operating as part of a pluralist democracy can effectively counter the NIF's brand of political Islam (Al-Zobier Ibrahim 1996, pp. 310–312, Hale 1997, pp. 11–12).

According to Ahmed (2007, p. 1), for example, 'Abdelsalam Al Mahaboub, one of the leading Islamists in Sudan, confessed ... that the Islamic movement had created a conflict due to its isolationism and alienation from the Sudanese society and the dilemma of viewing the whole society as the other or the enemy.' In turn this has led El-Affendi (1999, p. 45) to suggest a new Islamic movement, whose main driving force is self-criticism, listening to and communicating with others. In any case, the effects of the spread of education, secularisation and globalisation are likely to contribute to a shrinking of the space for Islamism. This raises the interesting question of whether the Sudan, after all these years of Islamic experiment, is an Islamic state or a state with an Islamist government or regime. An Islamic state cannot easily be divorced from Islam, because Islamic principles are built into the system. The Islamist regime in Sudan, on the other hand, is far shallower and more easily undermined. Thus Sondra Hale has written how

> [i]n Sudan Islamisation was a movement from above, not an autonomous movement; it was a method of consolidating state control by exerting cultural (religious) hegemony. Most of the lower to middle-class women I interviewed, for example, claimed to be religious, but distanced themselves from what they viewed as fanatical Islam. Muslim southerners, too, exhibited religious sentiment but resented state control over religion. Through the years, I have known Sudanese, both northern and southern, to view religion as a private matter. (Hale, 1997, pp. 11–12)

According to Hayder Ibrahim (1996, p. 312), the experience of the Islamic regime and the NIF's civilisation project represent a complete failure for the following reasons:

(1) The nature of the regime in Sudan, since the military coup of June 1989, has neither a constitutional basis nor an ethical, philosophical or logical rationale. It is an illegal and authoritarian regime which does not respect the rule of law, and

which is neither recognised nor accepted by the Sudanese people. The regime, whose authority derives from a mixture of ideology and the power of the security and military apparatus, has little or no legitimacy.

(2) Since 1989, the Islamic movement's main concern is to control the political life in the country and to allocate all efforts and resources to maintain power. The state simply has been unable to achieve that which it has promised to achieve. These promises have been met with a discouraging performance. The state's policy performance can be characterised overall as a failure to pursue the regime's own declared goals. Despite all resources and assets, the Sudanese state failed to bring about the social control it sought.

(3) The Islamic state declared the war in the South a religious war, in order to mobilise all resources and to involve young Northerners, for the first time, in the longest civil war. This resulted in the escalation of the war and in the increase of poverty. The regime promoted a culture of violence, extended to the educational systems of all levels and even to songs for children in the primary schools. Belal and Nimat (2005, p. 60) report that the drop-out of students in elementary educational level reached 9.7% in 2000.

(4) The Islamic movement considered *Al Ansar*, the Umma Party members, its natural allies, and *Al Khatmiyyah* its potential partners, since both sects advocated for the Islamic system. Despite this network of allies, the Islamic movement failed to attract them sufficiently to establish an Islamic front ensuring the northern cultural and religious dominance.

Additional factors contributing to the crisis are an incompetent state bureaucracy and poor quality of public service delivery, conditions aggravated by the government's attitude toward social capital represented in humanitarian voluntary work. In a country of one million square miles, divided into 26 states and even more administrative districts, and characterised by an absence of capital at the local level, as well as limited local government autonomy in fiscal and non-fiscal matters, the ability of government to initiate local-level development projects is heavily compromised.

Sudan also lags behind in its accomplishments in scientific and technical education, with many high school students preferring general education rather than technical education. Ironically, the government favours support for higher education and overlooks basic education, and thus supports the rich and undermines the poor.

Military and security expenditure are extremely high. The World Bank reports that:

> By 2000, defense and security expenditure was estimated to account for about 3% of GDP, while development expenditures stood at about 1.5% of GDP (and were biased toward capital-intensive investments in energy and subsidies for large-scale irrigation). (World Bank 2003)

Sudan has taken remarkable strides in domestic production of weapons for the purpose of internal control. Its impressive array of armaments and sophisticated war technologies comes at the expense of education, agriculture and health, for without training and scientific education, such systems often become irrelevant and useless.

As mentioned earlier, some Islamic reformists have critically reviewed the status of the Islamic movement and suggested an Islamist alternative. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, a former member of the National Islamic Front, described the ambivalence in the organisation's set-up:

> On the one hand, Turabi had an inner circle of followers whom he addressed with complete frankness. And on the other hand, Turabi had a different message for the general public. That led to mixed results. First, it led to the emergence of a clique within his inner circle that claims to have better understanding for the Islamic doctrine than their peers have. Second, Turabi's inner circle began to develop and display low opinion about the rest of Muslims, as well as undermining the understanding of the religion and religious teachings. (El-Affendi 2006, p. 3)

This raises questions relating to the personal ambition of NIF political leaders and the extent to which their leadership style influences the Islamic movement, and how it relates to people's needs and their survival circumstances.

Earlier, and commenting on human rights violations in Islam, El-Affendi, who would become both an active NIF member and press attaché at the Sudanese Embassy in London, had observed that:

> [a] more controversial issue here is the role of states that are asked to back the action against thinkers and artists. There is a question about the legitimacy of these largely undemocratic states, which have no religious or popular legitimacy and no inclination to promote freedom of Islamic values. (El-Affendi 1999)

Ironically, the Sudan, which experienced the bloodiest era in its recent history under the NIF, has neither been singled out for criticism on these grounds nor been recognised, by those members of NIF who still believe in just such an Islamic solution, for the object lesson it is.

Regime violation and corruption

The Islamic regime's severe violation of human rights was reported from the onset. It restricted and banned the work of civil society organisations such as trade unions, opposition political parties, student unions and women's groups (Human Rights Watch 1996). It succeeded in damaging the capability of the society to express itself through its organisations and unions. All elections have been falsified. Both its military and authoritarian nature, and its religious ideology, mark the present regime as the most hostile and aggressive one since independence in 1956. That it continues to privilege selected elite interests reflects an absence of overt opposition from the grassroots, particularly the rural poor.

In the absence of such protests, a class of capitalists benefits from economic policies such as the privatisation of successful public enterprises, as well as from widespread corruption and mismanagement. Corrupt privatisation robs the government treasury of needed funds. Corruption of the legislature and the judiciary undermines the goals of democratic choices and impartial legal decision making. At the same time, the regime's obsession with security has created a range of young security operatives and opportunists who, utilising their security and political position in the regime, capitalise on the functioning of the market and civil society to benefit illegally from tax and custom exemptions.

Corruption is a symptom of bad governance and undermines any serious progress in state building. *Al Watan* newspaper (2006) reported, for example, that representatives of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), partner organisation of the National Congress (and representative of the Islamic movement) in the National Unity government, left a meeting of the National Council in Southern Darfur in protest because it was discussing financial allocations of 518 million Sudanese dinars to institutions and organisations belonging to the National Congress Party. Similarly, the Southern Darfur state government reportedly donated 50 million dinars for People's Defense, 150 million dinars to the Women's Union, 50 million dinars to the Youth Union, 100 million dinars to the Security Department and hundreds of millions to other Islamic organisations (*Al Watan* newspaper 2006). The SPLM protested, claiming that these organisations were not independent bodies but National Congress affiliates, and referred the case to the Constitutional Court for resolution (*Al Watan* newspaper 2006).

According to the Mo Ibrahim Index of national governance (2009)[2], Sudan is rated 49th out of 53 African countries in areas such as commitment to participation and human rights. This is supported by the World Bank's governance indicators, which show low scores for voice and accountability, as well as a score of 2.2 out of 10 on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score of degree of corruption (Transparency International 2004, pp. 8–9). The Corruption Perceptions Index of 2005 ranks the Sudan 144 out of 158 countries (CPI of 2.1), with the accompanying report indicating that: '70 countries scored less than three, indicating rampant corruption that poses a grave threat to institutions as well as to social and political stability' (Transparency International 2005, pp. 16–17). Between 2003 and 2005 Sudan scored 2.3, 2.2 and 2.1 on the Corruption Perceptions Index, showing how, under the Islamic regime, the country was rated as progressively more corrupt (Transparency International 2005).

Islamist use of, and control over, humanitarian aid has been criticised by international organisations, Christian Sudanese organisations and other Sudanese independent groups (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003). The Islamic government has shown preference not to local organisations, as claimed by Ghazi Salah Eddine Atabani, an influential NIF official defending government policy, but rather to Islamic organisations such as *Daawa Islamiyyah* and Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA), Committee for International Charity, *Muwaffaq Al-Kheiriya* and others (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003, p. 122). Throughout Islamic government rule, the only organisations allowed to work with internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees have been Islamic organisations, while institutions like churches, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and trade unions have been identified as sites of opposition to the regime. During periods of war and other crises, only religious organisations were allowed access to either affected areas and internally displaced people or international aid and assistance in northern Sudan.

In an interview with the secretary general of the Sudan Council of Churches in Khartoum in May 1996, Jérôme Bellion-Jourdan wrote that: 'According to Rev. Enoch Tombe, the NGOs were in the service of the NIF which sought to prolong the war in order to be able to Islamise the South. Christian communities are bound to lose members in the Islamic hands which are protected by the government.' According to Rev. Tombe: 'The policy was part of a broader aim, the Islamisation of Africa, deriving from a duty to fill the vacuum motivated by the strong assumption that Africans have no religion and are pagans.'

The challenge facing an independent civil society

There are a number of factors that affect the functioning of civil society. First is the existence of space for members of an autonomous civil society to operate and fulfil their developmental and other roles. Related to this is the second, which concerns the power and influence of those sectors of civil society, like cultural and educational organisations and media institutions which are affiliated to the state and benefit from privileged access to resources, and their divisive effect on the rest of the sector. Third is the political dominance of the regime, or *Altanzeem*, which uses power as a self-serving tool for the sole interest of the ruling junta or group. Although some sections of civil society see the regime as criminal and immoral, others capitalise on their links with the regime and, in the process, compromise NGO norms and wider civil society values. Thus El Nagar (2006, p. 79), for example, observes that funds made available to Islamic organisations from *Zakat* (*Zakat* is the third of Islam's Five Pillars, which are known to all branches of Sunni Islam, and is a financial commitment to give up a fixed proportion of one's wealth for specified good reasons), and charity donations, for which they do not appear to have to account.

And yet, while there is a clear need for an assertive and representative civil society, it is not clear how best to guarantee its existence, autonomy or effectiveness. What does an independent civil society need to thrive, given the current political economy, notably the long history of injustice, neglect, violence, torture and violations of all types of human rights? An independent and active civil society *should* be at the forefront of the search for solutions to difficult social problems; tracing the progressive erosion of local indigenous culture and mores under pressure from globalisation impulses; presenting alternatives to existing and/or orthodox development policies and strategies; and, finally, highlighting the constraining effect of state socio-economic and other policies on voluntary initiatives, including the lack of government interest in mobilising local resources, supporting local talent and promoting integrity in public life. What, then, are the restrictions preventing civil society from fulfilling these roles?

Restrictions on voluntary work

Emergency Law, which has been in effect continuously since the coup of 1989, gives the government sweeping authority over society and control of its activities: restrictions on freedom of expression and association; censorship of printed materials; and arrest on the basis of suspicion. And this, despite the state's latest constitution of 2005 recognising the right to freedom of association and organisation: 'Citizens shall have the right of association and organisation for cultural, social, economic, professional or trade union purposes, without restriction save in accordance with the law'. In addition, legislation governing NGO activity is under constant review as part of a never-ending attempt by the state to regulate the growth and influence of the non-state sector. Concern with internal security has already led to the introduction of legislation providing government with instruments for vetting and controlling NGOs, which are not consulted during preparation of the legislation. Furthermore, decisions concerning official NGO registration and/or authorisation are determined by political considerations rather than by a calculation of the (potential) contribution of the *NGO sector as a whole* to social and economic development.

Thus repressive state measures (including blocking official registration of 'suspect' or independent groups as non-profit organisations and thereby restricting their capacity to function effectively as civil society actors) continue to be openly enforced, even while the state provides financial and logistical support for NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) affiliated to the government in secret. In many cases, disadvantaged groups have suffered disproportionately from these policies and practices, and individuals and organisations advocating social and political reforms have been especially targeted. In truth, the present mechanism for NGO registration appears to be aimed more at restricting rather than facilitating NGO activity. Unresolved tensions between the state and NGOs are likely to become heightened in the absence of a socio-political space for NGOs to operate legally and in a largely unhindered way. While government laws and structures are often rigid, hierarchical and autocratic, NGOs need legitimacy, recognition and acceptance, all of which are essential for their accountability and performance. Since 1989, the government has maintained a great degree of control over the secular independent voluntary sector, even as increasing numbers of NGOs, academics, development specialists, political and human rights activists have sought the reform of laws governing non-profit organisations.

The government does not appear to be moving towards any type of accommodation with these groups and, indeed, may not have to. Hundreds of suspected government opponents have been arrested throughout the country and detained without charge or trial. Most detainees were members of political parties or civil society organisations, including those devoted to human rights activism. There have been many cases of prisoners being detained without charge or trial for sufficiently long periods to qualify for the status of prisoners of conscience (that is, prisoners detained or imprisoned on the basis of their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin, language or religion that have not used or advocated violence). Human rights organisations have documented hundreds of cases of torture by government security officers, notably officers of the Interior Ministry's Internal and External State Security Directorate. There are many reports of severe beatings and of cruel and inhumane treatment of prisoners, which has on occasion led to death. Quoting from Jemera Rone (Human Rights Watch 1996, p. 57): 'Dr Ali Fadl arrested on March 13, 1990, he was severely tortured in a ghost house and he died of internal haemorrhaging.' The international community has noted that widespread human rights violations continued throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Amnesty International reported in July 2010 that Sudanese Security Service carries out a brutal campaign of arbitrary detentions, torture and mental and physical intimidation against opponents and critics of the government. The government has been relentless in pursuing and eliminating opponents to its rule, confiscating equipment and supplies, closing NGO offices, cultural centres and training and research institutions. Sudanese and international human rights reports document not only the violation of rights of journalists and women, but also the failure of government to admit responsibility and put on trial those responsible for torture and abuse.

Women and the state

Sudanese women have won significant gains since independence in 1956. They have the right to vote, hold prominent political positions and are Members of Parliament. The 1964 constitution states that: 'All persons in the Sudan are free and equal before the law ... No disability shall be attached to any Sudanese by reason of birth, religion, race, or sex' (Ministry of Justice 1964). The 1973 constitution reiterates this: 'The Sudanese have equal rights and duties irrespective of origin, race, locality, sex, language, or religion' (Ministry of Justice 1973). And the 1998 constitution guarantees, yet again, that: 'All people are equal before the courts of law. Sudanese are equal in rights and duties with regards to functions of public life; and there shall be no discrimination only by reason of race, sex or religious creed. They are equal in eligibility for public posts and offices not being discriminated on the basis of wealth' (Ministry of Justice 1998).

Moreover, during the period between 1965 and 1989, a number of specific acts were issued in favour of women's equal rights. They include:

- Article 16, Part 6: Equality in Civil Service, Civil Service Act, 1973
- Article 9: Equal Pay for Equal Work, Public Service Act, 1973
- Article 80: Equal Pension and Gratuities, Social Insurance Act, 1974
- Article 6: National Training Act, 1976
- Maternity leave and other types of leave.

Experience suggests, however, that simply mandating or legislating civil rights and democratisation from the top is not enough to sustain these processes. After the June coup of

1989, for example, the acts in support of women's rights were reversed as part of government adoption of Emergency Law. According to Kamal Al-Gizouli (2000, pp. 25–26): 'the Public Order Law of 1996 is imposed by the Islamic regime on the majority as an external power to control the life of the people and to reshape their behaviours.'

The state represents the setting within which other institutions operate. The government often plays proactive roles in reinforcing gender inequalities through policies and legislation, and by combining secular and customary or religious laws. The status of women is low. In indicators such as maternal mortality, literacy and primary enrolment, women in Sudan are far behind their counterparts in other developing countries. Under structural adjustment policies (SAPs), gender inequalities are perpetuated. According to Sudan Gender Profile (2004): 'Female unemployment rate is 28% compared to 13% for male. Low employment opportunities, low salaries, increasing poverty forced women to join the informal sector.' Females constitute 85% of the informal sector and they are young displaced women and rural and urban poor who lack skills and work under difficult conditions, and are often subject to harassment and intimidation.

The state has an interest in perpetuating the dominant gender ideology so as to fulfil its role as facilitator of market forces. In other words, the unpaid labour undertaken by women within the household elevates the living standards of the working class above that granted by wage alone, and provides the services of care and socialisation of children, who are the future labour force. These are services which can only otherwise be delivered less proficiently, and less cost effectively, to capital by the state. Indeed, the state is interested in the domestication and re-domestication of women, an interest which can be summarised in the following two points: (1) maintaining family integration secures the supply of manpower for production; and (2) women bearing the responsibility of domestic work and reproductive activities beyond their biological reproductive role have created an opportunity for the state to rely on them to shoulder extra activities which used to be the state's responsibility, but were terminated as a result of the implementation of SAPs in most third-world countries, i.e. social services such as health care for the elderly and the sick. The state is male-biased and patriarchal, and aims to control women's sexuality and freedom through the management of property. To this end it adopts oppressive measures against women to keep them domesticated or to re-domesticate those in public life (F. B. Mahmoud 2002, p. 283). It is not only the religious-minded who fear women's non-domestication: most of the educated middle classes, who may be living a Western lifestyle, often hold ideas that encourage control over women's freedom and their sexuality and match such control with social morality and affinity.

Conclusion

The rise of an Islamic movement in the Sudan can be viewed as part of the decline of the local community as the centre of social capital. Clearly, the Islamic movement has not brought into being the future envisioned by ordinary Sudanese people. Moreover, in Sudan as elsewhere, once Islamic regime discourse is appropriated as the language of an authoritarian regime, its ability to serve as an agent for progressive social change is surely compromised. With respect to the links between state and religion, it is high time for Islamists to recognise that their persistent attempt to impose political Islam cannot succeed in a country in which popular Islam is deeply rooted.

The regime promised to break the monopoly of power by the coalition of traditional, sectarian and secular forces, with the intention of leading a process of societal regeneration and renewal, before handing power back to the people. In reality, however, the outcome has been radically different. Political and economic crises continued unabated, civil war spread, internal strife became more common and, recently, the ruling NIF forces seem to have become wracked by intra-factional conflicts over power, which have weakened their political and ideological resolve. Under pressure from internal opposition, and faced with mounting challenges from external opposition and the international community, the regime seems to have consented to reform.

On the other hand, there are still social forces and community-based organisations which have asserted themselves, notably the silent and peaceful revolt against official structures and processes of injustice and instability. In other words, traditional forms and modern practices of social capital have been strengthened, despite the frustrations associated with a hostile macro-political environment. In any case, mutual co-operation in Sudan has historically taken the form of struggles to redress the uneven distribution of incomes and access to benefits and services, in which solidarity has given strength to those who have neither income nor assets.

Concern over the intractable nature of many of these constraints has led to growing interest in the contribution that civil society organisations and NGOs can make to development, particularly in the areas of community participation, social justice, human rights and social inclusiveness. In particular, interest is clearly growing in the extent to which there are practical complementarities between NGOs and government, and which NGO approaches might be incorporated into governmental programmes. Much of the interest in, and respect for, NGOs has been driven by host communities, which find them practical, participatory and honest. On the other hand, the lack of interest in NGOs on the part of government has been fuelled by suspicions about their loyalty, political affiliation and accountability. Despite these challenges, CSOs, NGOs and community-based organisations have succeeded in creating strategies to work with government at all levels and in different settings, both urban and rural. The establishment of partnerships and mechanisms of dialogue and communication, particularly with government technical departments, assures that even in the absence of democracy, and under brutal authoritarian regimes, NGOs can engage effectively and contribute to social and economic change, particularly those affecting the marginalised poor.

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Notes

1. 'Islamic movement' and 'National Islamic Front' are terms that are used interchangeably. However, the Islamic Movement was a senior level consultative committee (*Shura* group) of 60 members within the Islamic movement structure (Al-Mahboub 2010, p. 89).
2. The Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance is a comprehensive ranking of sub-Saharan African nations according to quality of governance. It assesses national governance against 57 criteria. The index was first published in September 2007. Available from: http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/index-2009.

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India's rise to power: where does East Africa fit in?

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Considerable uncertainty surrounds the intentions and aspirations of rising powers, particularly the extent to which they are *status quo* or revisionist. How a new power behaves with some of the weakest members of the international system provides a useful indicator of how it will go on to behave as it emerges as a Great Power. In this paper, India's engagement with East Africa is analysed. East Africa offers a particularly rich ground for conducting such an analysis: it comprises some of the world's poorest countries with which India has had a long history of foreign relations, and has also attracted considerable involvement in recent years by China (another major power on the rise). While the central focus of the paper is on India's East Africa foreign policy, China's presence in the region offers an important point of comparison that helps us identify some of the unique features of India's pathway to power. The analysis generates several interesting findings on India's negotiation strategy as a rising power, its willingness to provide leadership, and a set of development ideas that it offers as a potential alternative to not just the Washington Consensus but also the Beijing Consensus.

Keywords: rising powers; negotiation strategy; leadership; visions of global order; China; India; East Africa

India's expanding relations with Africa have received comparatively little scholarly or media attention, in contrast to the burgeoning scholarship and popular writing on China's African diplomacy (examples include French 2006, Kurlantzick 2006, Large 2008, Taylor 2008). Exceptions to this include a small but rich repertoire of analyses of the impact that the 'Asian drivers' and 'emerging donors' are having on Africa, which usually focuses on China and India. But three important gaps remain. First, some of this literature, by conflating China and India into the categories of 'the Asian drivers' or 'emerging donors', misses out on key differences in the motivations and strategies of the two countries (Lee 2006, Woods 2008). Second, while studies that do draw the distinction between Chinese and Indian diplomacy in Africa are successful in isolating the impact that either country has either individually or comparatively (Goldstein *et al.* 2006, Jenkins and Edwards 2006, Broadman 2007, Geda and Meskel 2008), an important limitation persists: they do not analyse the equally important flipside of the question of the motivations driving Chinese or Indian foreign policy in the region. Third, very few of these studies, even when focusing on both the motivations and impact of India's interaction with Africa (e.g. Beri 2003), explain these with reference to India's geopolitical ambitions

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and evolving foreign policy as a rising power (one exception to this is the work of Vines and Oruitemeka, 2007).

In this paper, I aim to address all three gaps. I focus particularly on India's engagement with East Africa (rather than 'Chindia's' collective policies towards Africa), and use evidence of the shape that this engagement takes to offer new insights into India's rise to power. The argument proceeds in three parts. First, I explain why a study of India's East African diplomacy provides us with a particularly useful lens into India's pathway to power. In the second section, I summarise the important developments in India's East African relations. While the focus of the paper is on India, I also draw on examples of the diplomacy of established and other rising powers with the same region, particularly China. Such comparisons help us assess which aspects of India's African policy represent the rational, strategic behaviour of a new power with Great Power ambitions. They also aid the discovery of any traits to this diplomacy that are uniquely Indian in the vision that they bring or strategies that they use. In the third and concluding section, I analyse exactly what the continuities and changes in India's African diplomacy add up to, and further what they tell us about India as a rising power.

This paper sits within a broader debate on the impact that new powers have on the system. A central puzzle that surrounds the rise of the new powers of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) is the extent to which they are *status quo* or revisionist powers (Schweller 2006). Or alternatively, whether the rise of these new powers represents conformity to the established hegemonic system or a challenge to it (see for instance, Hurrell 2006, Ikenberry 2008, Narlikar 2010). Amongst the variables that can be studied to better understand the regime-conforming *versus* revisionist inclinations of a rising power, three crucial ones are negotiation strategy, leadership and vision/ideas of global order.

The refusal to make concessions and instead play hardball (or what negotiation analysts call a 'distributive strategy', see Odell [2000]) at the multilateral level and in bilateral negotiations with the established powers usually points to revisionist intentions. In contrast, 'integrative strategies' involving a willingness to make concessions, and explore new solutions jointly with one's negotiation partners that are designed to expand rather than split the pie (Odell 2000), suggest greater regime conformity on the part of the new power. Importantly, the use of an integrative strategy with allies of counter-hegemonic coalitions (including Third-Worldist movements such as the G77 or coalitions such as the G20 and G33 in the World Trade Organization [WTO]) can be a part of a broader distributive strategy towards the established powers. Hence for instance, if we see a rising power using conciliatory policies with poorer countries, especially in conjunction with the use of hard bargaining with the North, then we can be certain that the established power is not one that has been socialised into the system.

The second useful indicator of the *status quo* versus revisionist intentions of a new power is its willingness to provide leadership (Narlikar and Vickers 2009, Narlikar 2010). Leadership involving the provision of public goods such as free trade, climate change mitigation, or freedom from nuclear proliferation all point towards greater buy-in on the part of the new power into the system. In contrast, leadership in the form of provision of club goods[1] – such as South–South co-operation, regional arrangements, or Third Worldist coalitions – suggests the persistence, renewal, or even creation of alternative visions of global order. If the new power's provision of club goods involves costs to itself, and even more so if the provision of the club good is likely to deter the new power from taking on leadership of the provision of international public goods, then we have strong evidence of a new power that will pose a challenge to at least some aspects of the dominant hegemonic order.

Finally, if the new power espouses the mainstream ideals of democratisation, human rights, the Washington consensus, and conditionality-based lending, there is a greater likelihood that its rise to power will be system-conforming. In contrast, however, if the new power appeals to an alternative set of ideas, such as heterodox economic policies, developmentalism, and a hard adherence to the principle of sovereignty, then we can expect that its rise will present an alternative vision of global order that challenges existing hegemony.

How the new power behaves with some of its weaker allies where it is already in a position of relative power provides a strong indication on the sort of great power it will evolve into and what sort of impact it will have on the system as its power rises. Hence an analysis of India's role in East Africa, as a region with which India has had long-standing historic links and also as a region which comprises a large proportion of some of the world's poorest countries, offers some promising insights into all three of the above variables and thereby treads the balance between regime conformity and revisionism.

India–East Africa: a lens on India's rise to power

That India is expanding its enterprises in Africa – economic and military – is certain, but the East African case is a particularly important one as it allows us to tackle three key puzzles of Indian foreign policy.

First, even though there is general agreement that India's trajectory is a rising one, there exists considerable divergence of opinion on the kind of power that India will evolve into. Broadly, these different views can be grouped at two ends of a spectrum. One end is represented in the writings of C. Raja Mohan, who traces five changes in the direction of Indian diplomacy since the end of the cold war that 'are unlikely to be reversed': (1) the transition in national consensus from socialism to capitalism; (2) the transition 'from the past emphasis on politics to a new stress on economics in the making of foreign policy'; (3) 'the shift from Third Worldism to the promotion of its own self-interest'; (4) rejection of the 'anti-Western mode of thinking'; and finally (5) the transition from idealism to pragmatism (see Mohan 2003, pp. xviii–xxii). At the other end of the spectrum are the writings of Stephen Cohen (2001), who points to the frustrating experience that dealing with India can be for the West, and indeed describes its foreign policy stance aptly in terms of 'The India that can't say yes.'

Depending on which account we find more convincing, two very different images emerge of India as a new power. If Raja Mohan's picture is correct, then we are likely to see a much more open India, driven primarily by a capitalist ethic, ready to engage with the West, motivated primarily by strategic considerations rather than idealist considerations or past Third-Worldist loyalties, and as ready to join in the 'scramble for Africa' as China or any of the other Great Powers. If Stephen Cohen's picture is more accurate, however, then the new India that we are likely to see is one that continues to be a difficult negotiating partner for the West, not yet ready to abandon its old Third-Worldist principles, a leader of counter-hegemonic coalitions, and willing to consider collective gains of coalition allies than simply go it alone as a Great Power.

Of course, between the two extreme positions, there lies considerable middle ground. For instance, India may not be willing to abandon its Third-Worldist alliances just yet, but these may be framed differently, and retained not as a result of a commitment to some Quixotic idealism but because they serve a strategic purpose. It is worth noting that one of the reasons for the divided scholarship on this is that the signals from India have themselves been quite mixed. The India that signed the nuclear deal with the US, for instance, fits perfectly with C. Raja Mohan's model, but India's willingness to block the Doha negotiations at the WTO and espouse the cause of developing countries in multilateral trade fits nicely with Stephen Cohen's model (on these inconsistencies, see Narlikar 2006). The first image is one of a rising power that shows increasing conformity of interests with the established system, and perhaps even tendencies towards greater socialisation as a result of engagement. The latter image, however, suggests the emergence of a power with at least some regime-challenging intentions that represent a traditional Southern vision of Third Worldism (albeit usually couched in very different language from the 1970s; see Hurrell and Narlikar 2006), placed amidst a context where there is far greater scope for contestation and alternative discourses than neoliberal accounts would have us believe (Kahler 1997). A focus on India's policy towards East Africa helps us sift the rhetorical from the real. For instance, grand pronouncements either pro- or anti-Third World are easy to make, but much more can be learnt from the actions of a new power towards some of the weakest and smallest members of the international system. Use of such an indicator can give us a reliable steer on whether India retains its commitment to Third-Worldist ideas and develop further new and alternative norms to the established Western ones as its power rises, or whether its increasing power will be accompanied by increasing conformity to the values and policies endorsed by the established Great Powers. Depending on the costs that India is willing to incur to sustain its East Africa relationships (and particularly its relationship with the least developed countries [LDCs] in East Africa), or alternatively forego certain gains by ensuring that India's involvement in East Africa does not take an exploitative form, we can learn a good deal about whether Indian commitment to professed ideals is real or just what game theorists describe as 'cheap talk'.

Second, Indian–East African relations provide a useful test of the kind of leadership that India has proven able and willing to provide so far (Narlikar and Vickers 2009, Narlikar 2010). Defined broadly, leadership is the ability and willingness to provide public or club goods, which usually requires a willingness to bear the costs of agenda-setting and free-riding. As mentioned in the previous section, a readiness to provide club goods does not necessarily translate into a willingness to provide public goods. And while a commitment to provide public goods translates into greater buy-in into the system from the new power, the opposite may be the case if the new power invests in club goods that detract from the provision of public goods. At least at the multilateral level, India's reluctance to assume responsible leadership commensurate with its rising power has invited comment and criticism. In the world of multilateral trade, India was grouped into the small list of 'can't do' countries by the US in the aftermath of the Cancun Ministerial of 2003, and its trade negotiator was singled out as 'Dr No' for his stance in the July talks of 2008. The urging by the Obama administration that India, along with other rising powers, take on greater leadership of the system, reinforces the point that such leadership has not been forthcoming so far: 'As today's fastest growing economies, China, Brazil and India have enjoyed a new level of influence and will be expected to take on an increased level of responsibility to make the trade-liberalising decisions and contributions that would benefit not only their own economic interests, but also promote global economic growth and development to the benefit of all developing countries' (USTR 2008, p. 3). A similar pattern is seen in other multilateral institutions. Xenia Dormandy (2007, p. 126), for instance, observes: 'Aside from its role in the tsunami response group and in UN peacekeeping operations, the government has been less than enthusiastic about burden-sharing mechanisms ... Leading pundits in India agree, expressing no great need for India to take on wider responsibilities, considering the costs they involve and the possibility of being perceived as a US pawn.' Importantly, however, there are other levels besides the systemic one where a rising power may choose to demonstrate leadership.

While reluctant to engage in burden-sharing with the established powers, India has been much more forthcoming in its willingness to take on the leadership of developing countries. This is especially true in the case of certain issue-areas, such as international trade, where India's leadership of coalitions of developing countries has been much more prominent than China's, and also more consistent than Brazil's. India has, since the days of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), willingly borne the costs of coalition formation, incorporated demands of allies in the agenda in which it has no individual stakes, and tolerated free-riding by smaller members. This leadership is well recognised; hence, for instance, references to India being the 'voice of the voiceless' in the World Trade Organization (Hurrell and Narlikar 2006). It is worth noting that India's leadership of strong coalitions in the WTO has, paradoxically, detracted from its ability to provide systemic leadership. This is because, for a variety of reasons, the new and strong coalitions (often India-led) find it particularly difficult to make concessions and facilitate compromise; while empowering developing countries by giving them representation and credible voice, they also make the multilateral trading system deadlock-prone. India's major and successful contribution to the club good of coalition stability has ironically also thus detracted from its ability provide the public good of freer trade at the multilateral level (Narlikar 2010).

Placed against this backdrop, India's dealings with East Africa become even more interesting. Any evidence of a greater Indian willingness to lead here reinforces and helps us generalise the finding discussed in the previous paragraph: India may be unwilling to engage in burden-sharing with the West, but its commitment to provide certain club goods to developing countries is not limited to the WTO alone. The details of its engagement with East Africa are discussed in the next section. At this point, suffice it to note that India's aid flows and investments to East Africa are on the rise; it has granted preferential treatment to LDCs (33 of which are in Africa, and 14 in East Africa). While still poor in terms of *per capita* income and backward in terms of infrastructure, it has still managed to use its limited resources to provide development assistance to the region. By all primary and secondary accounts, India's past and current African relations take a more benign form than Chinese relations with Africa. India's African policy suggests that Indian leadership is more forthcoming in certain forums than others. Understanding the basis of India's 'Getting to yes' policy towards Africa can help us better understand its 'Just say no' diplomacy elsewhere. The two, in fact, go hand in hand, and point towards a continued tendency to counter-hegemonic behaviour with revisionist tones.

Third, beyond a rhetorical commitment to democracy, pluralism and equality, it is not clear what vision India brings as a rising power, or indeed what vision of world order would India espouse as a Great Power. A comparison with China here is in order. Whether Chinese officials themselves view their policy as propagating a 'Beijing consensus' remains disputed, but at least outsiders perceive China as offering an alternative model of development to developing countries (Ramo 2004, Thomas 2005, Lammers 2007). It is worth investigating if a rising India offers an alternative path to development and power to other developing countries. A study of India's engagement with East Africa – an area which has seen the engagement of China as well as the established powers – is further particularly useful to compare the extent to which the Indian pathway overlaps with the Beijing Consensus or the Washington Consensus, or if it represents a third way.

Finally, it is important to point out that while this paper could have focused on India's African policy in general, the case of East Africa provides us with a harder test of India's motivations, leadership potential, and development model as the sub-region excludes the oil-rich economies concentrated in West and North Africa.[2] Expanding trade with and investment in West and North Africa are unsurprising, given India's growing energy demands; in contrast, India's East African relations reveal that India's foray into Africa is not driven entirely by the search for energy and other resources. If anything, commitment to East Africa may be indicative of an Indian willingness to lead, support weaker allies, and perhaps even offer an alternative model for development and power. Its historic links with modern-day East Africa, moreover, allow us to trace the continuities in the relationship as well as changes that are occurring in conjunction with India's rise to power.

What continuity and what change? India's East Africa relations

There have been some important developments in the Indian–East African relationships, which are borne out in areas of trade, aid, investment and security. In this section, I provide a snapshot of these developments. However, this snapshot must be located against the long history of Indo–African relations.

Several interviewees based in Delhi (government officials, former government officials, senior researchers in think tanks and journalists) reacted strongly against any suggestion that India was attempting to play a game of catch-up with China, or that its African engagement was driven primarily by its growing need for energy and other primary resources. Emphasising the continuities rather than the changes, they pointed to India's support for the process of decolonisation in Africa (and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa); commitment to Third Worldism citing Nehru's role in Bandung in 1955; and India's technical aid programme in the shape of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)[3] and went back to 1964 when the country was very far from having the status of an emerging power bestowed upon it.[4] When pushed on the radical increase in India's recent engagement with Africa, one interviewee argued that: 'We simply didn't have enough resources to do this in the 1960s. Now we can.' (Interview, senior researcher in think tank, New Delhi, 19 September 2008).

Besides emphasising continuity in the Indian–African relationship, interviewees also stressed what they saw as the 'benign' character of India's engagement. Key phrases that recurred in these accounts were 'the principle of co-development', 'partnership', 'South–South cooperation', and 'common purpose' (Interviews, New Delhi, September 2008). On being asked to draw comparisons between the Indian pattern of engagement in Africa versus the Chinese, one interviewee responded: 'We have the concept of teaching them how to fish rather than to give them fish' (Interview with Indian journalist working with national press and specialising on Africa, 20 September 2008). Another senior official in the Ministry of External Affairs, pointing to the Indian strategy of training and employing African labour (and contrasting this strategy with the use of Chinese labour in Chinese investment projects) argued: 'While we also have energy considerations etc., our model is different. The Indian way is the softer way.'[5]

There are of course alternative interpretations of India's history and current motivations in relation to East Africa that we could point to (Sharma 2008), and debate the accuracy of each version. But for the purposes of this paper, the consistency with which the Indian foreign policy elite see the Indian engagement with Africa as fundamentally benign is significant. Rather than present India's engagement with Africa as one driven by gung-ho realpolitik and self-interest (which Indian policy makers are certainly not reluctant to do when discussing Indo–US relations, for instance) (Interview with senior bureaucrats in Ministry of External Affairs, September 2008, January 2006), we get a much more nuanced, development-friendly, Third-Worldist account of India's relations with Africa that is more akin to the account presented by Indian trade negotiators (Narlikar 2006). In addition, this story finds some support in the numbers too, both in terms of the continued engagement with

East Africa (rather than rapid diversion to West Africa) as well as the specific characteristics of this relationship, as highlighted below.

Trade flows between Africa and Asia have increased dramatically in recent years – a significant development in itself, given the overall concern with the decline in African shares of world trade and the well-established positive linkages between trade and development. While exports from Africa to Asia grew annually by 15% from 1990 to 1995, this rate of growth increased to 20% from 2000 to 2005. The World Bank study by Harry Broadman reports that Asia accounts for 27% of African exports, thereby making Asia a comparable trading partner to the European Union (EU) and the US, which account for 32% and 29% of African exports respectively. It is true that between China and India, China has seen a much more rapid increase in African exports, which grew by 48% annually between 1994, compared to 14% for India (Broadman 2007, p. 9). But interestingly, of the seven African countries that constitute 90% of Africa's exports into China, not one is in East Africa. In contrast, of the nine countries that represent 90% of African exports into India, at least two are in East Africa, namely Kenya and Tanzania. Similarly, in the case of the 16 African countries constituting 90% of Chinese imports into Africa, five are East African (Mauritius, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya), whereas of the 14 countries constituting 85% of Indian imports into Africa, five are in East Africa (Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, Mozambique and Uganda) (Broadman 2007, p. 80). In other words, East Africa constitutes a bigger proportion of Indian imports and exports than the Chinese import–export basket.

While oil and natural gas constitute the single most dominant African export to China, followed by ores and metals, and agricultural raw materials (62% of total African exports to China, 17% and 7% respectively), the Indian–African trade pattern appears to be more diversified with ores and metals constituting 61% of African export shares to India, followed by agricultural raw materials (19%) and manufactured materials (14%) (Broadman 2007, p. 76). Africa's trade with India thus includes important products besides oil, and it is also less concentrated than its trade with China. A significant portion of Indian imports from Africa are in ores and metals, where the suppliers are predominantly in West and Southern Africa, and agricultural products supplied mainly from countries in West Africa. But some representation even in the category of agricultural products is found from East African countries. Tanzania is thus a major supplier of cotton to India, while Mozambique and Tanzania are major exporters of nuts. Besides West African countries, important importers of Chinese and Indian cotton fabrics are East African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania. In fact, in 18 of the top 20 categories of products that are imported from India, East African countries feature in all categories amongst the top five importing countries; in contrast, seven of the main import categories of Chinese products do not include any East African country amongst the top five importers (Broadman 2007, pp. 111–112).

Besides the above figures which reveal that India's commitment to Africa is not limited to the search for energy and primary commodities, we find further evidence of this at the multilateral level. It was a leading ally of the Africa Group in the run-up to the launch of the Doha Development Agenda, and a party to the successful campaign on access to medicines, which resulted in the Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) and Public Health Declaration at the Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001. It has also submitted several proposals jointly with African states as part of the Doha negotiations (Chaturvedi and Mohanty 2007, pp. 61–64). Very importantly, and at some cost to itself, India has led coalitions of developing countries such as the G20 on agriculture, which have worked in close co-operation with the Africa Group, forming 'Alliances of Sympathy' that ensure that their competing agendas are not used by the North to strike side-deals (Hurrell and Narlikar 2006). As part of its Doha commitments, moreover, India has announced a Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme for least-developed countries (LDCs). The scheme was announced as part of the India–Africa Forum Summit of African Heads of States/Governments in April 2008; with over two-thirds of the LDCs being African states, it will be of considerable benefit to the continent. Products of immediate interest to Africa covered in the scheme include cotton, cocoa, aluminium ores, copper ores, cashew nuts, cane-sugar, ready-made garments, fish fillets and non-industrial diamonds (Ministry of Commerce 2008).

In keeping with India's rising power, its total overseas aid and assistance have expanded, and Africa has benefited from this expansion as have other recipients. In 2007, sub-Saharan Africa received 64% of Export–Import Bank of India (EXIM) loans, making the region the largest recipient of such bank loans, with West Asia following as a distant second and receiving 12% of the loans (Chaturvedi 2008). In the Africa Summit in 2008, India promised to more than double the amount offered in credit lines from US$2.15 billion to US$5.4 billion over the next five years. Admittedly, EXIM bank lines represent tied aid. But at least some recognition and sensitivity is shown in Indian declarations to African needs and priorities; hence for instance the emphasis that these credit lines are to be used 'to promote projects prioritised by Africa for its development needs and objectives ...' (Sen 2008). Other forms of aid have also been forthcoming. While the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa–India Movement (TEAM-9) initiative of India and eight west African states is targeted towards providing a credit line of US$500 million to improve India's relations with West Africa, East Africa has featured in other ways. For instance, as part of the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC II) initiative, India has agreed to write off the debts of five African countries, four of which are East African: Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, besides Ghana (Jobelius 2007). Accompanying such schemes is India's well-established Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scheme, which was further expanded to the training of 1600 Africans per year (from 1100) at the India–Africa Summit, and also the launch of the new Pan-African E-Network (Sen 2008). Such training schemes were emphasised in our interviews as unique to India's engagement with Africa and a reflection of the idea of 'partnership in development' (and contrasted with China's 'show-casing schemes' and 'prestige projects').[6]

Amidst these differences between the Chinese and Indian pattern of development engagement in Africa, one important similarity does stand out: Indian aid, similar to Chinese aid to Africa, is not accompanied by good governance conditionalities (in contrast to Western aid as well as multilateral aid; on both the positive and negative implications of this, see Mawdsley [2010]). In all the interviews conducted by this author, particularly striking was the reference to the double standards of the West in its strategic selection of which authoritarian governments to deal with and which to sanction; a former Secretary of External Affairs said, only half-jokingly: 'At least we are consistent in our policy towards dictatorships, we don't have the selectivity or the double standards of the US!' (Interview, New Delhi, 23 September 2008). India's willingness to engage with African governments of different types, with few moral strings attached, was justified using some very traditional logic based on respect for sovereignty and the principle of non-interference (with references to Nehru thrown in). A corollary is that we are unlikely to see the emergence of India as a flag-bearer for democracy in Africa in the near future.

Usually, as Matthew Jobelius points out, Indian aid usually goes hand in hand with investment and trade. 'Many individual examples do suggest that Indian ODA [overseas development assistance] plays at least a small and not unimportant role in accelerating export trade and foreign investment . . . India maintains one of the largest bilateral aid programmes outside South Asia with Tanzania, over the course of which both the volume of Indian ODA and mutual trade and investment activities have been increasing steadily for years' (Jobelius 2007, p. 5). While Indian foreign direct investment (FDI) is generally much smaller than Chinese FDI (for instance, in 2003, Chinese FDI stock amounted to US$37 billion, whereas the India stock was just US$5.1 billion), a significant proportion of it goes to Africa. The share of FDI flows from 1996–2003 from India to Mauritius and Sudan together equalled the share of India's FDI going to the US (which was also the largest recipient of its FDI) (see UNCTAD 2004). Alex Vines and Bereni Oruitemeka (2007) also trace deepening economic relations amongst members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation, particularly India's relations with Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, Mozambique, Kenya and Tanzania.

Very importantly, and supporting the anecdotal evidence based on research interviews, Harry Broadman (2008) writes of Chinese firms in Africa as 'creating business entities that are vertically integrated, buying supplies from China rather than local markets, and selling in Africa mostly to government entities. They rarely facilitate the integration of their workers into the African socio-economic fabric. Knowing that they can rely on Beijing's deep pockets, they are often able to outbid competitors for procurement contracts from local governments.' He continues on Indian firms in Africa, which 'are less vertically integrated, prefer to procure supplies locally or from international markets (rather than Indian suppliers), engage in far more sales to private African entities, and encourage the local integration of their workers.' Broadman (2007) also reports that Chinese firms employ the largest percentage of workers from China or other East Asian countries, accounting for 17% of total employees, whereas Indian firms hire about half as many (9.8%) of their workers from India.

It is important to note that while all the above examples suggest a spirit of 'co-development'emanating from the Indian side, they should not be taken to mean non-strategic behaviour. Indian willingness to incur the costs of freeriding (for instance through the grant of preferential market access to LDCs, or the support for the cause of African countries in the WTO via support for their coalitions, capacity building and technical assistance) is not driven by charity. One official in the Ministry of External Affairs stated rather pragmatically, 'There is no such thing as unconditional aid,' but then went on to emphasise that India had consciously tried to veer away from the stigma accompanying Western aid by emphasising the importance of 'partnership' in the process and steering clear of good governance conditionalities akin to those accompanying aid from the Bretton Woods institutions. Maintenance of friendly diplomatic relations with difficult regimes may fit in easily with India's commitment to the *principle* of sovereignty and non-interference, but the fact that those relations also fit well with India's *self-interest* is not incidental. Freeriding by Africa in trade, or aid and investment in East Africa, effectively form part of a bargain that brings important gains to India as well. Most concretely, and in the realm of hard power, an important benefit is improved maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region for India (a gain of considerable importance in the context of a rising China) (Vines and Oruitemeka 2007). Another important gain includes greater legitimacy and prestige in international institutions. Other concrete benefits include the support that India receives from the African politicians and bureaucrats that it trains who go on to occupy high-level positions in Africa. Moreover, there is also the hope of future gain, for instance support for a seat for India in a reformed Security Council.

On balance then, India's engagement with East Africa reveals a commitment to Third Worldism and alternative ideas of sovereignty and economic development than more neoliberal accounts would predict. While not framed explicitly in terms of an alternative ideology, we see a broad commitment to sovereignty and non-interference resembling the Chinese and in contrast to the conditionality-based, Washington Consensus-driven lending policies of the multilateral institutions and bilateral Western donors. Importantly, however, India's African policy displays some significant differences from the Chinese scramble for Africa, and aggregates to a strategic but nonetheless benign form of engagement, which involves greater costs to India and allows more freeriding for the poorer countries of East Africa. The 'softer Indian way' in Africa is in fact India's unique pathway to power.

Implications

The last section demonstrates that India remains committed to and invested in East Africa, even as its power rises. Except for a relatively conditionality-free aid policy that it shares with China, India's East African diplomacy shows several unique traits that suggest an alternative pathway to power. Quantitative data, supported by interviews, offer a story of relatively benign engagement rather than an overt scramble for African resources.[7] Note that such benign engagement, as was pointed out in the first section of this article, need not and does not go against realpolitik. Rather, it represents an alternative pathway to power, whose main features are highlighted below. Each of these features offers an answer to the three puzzles that were set out at the beginning of the paper. They are further reflected across the three variables that indicate the form taken by India's rise to power, which were discussed in the introductory section of the paper: India's negotiation strategy, its willingness to lead, and the role of ideas.

India's negotiation strategy as a rising power

Indian negotiation behaviour has traditionally been associated with 'playing hardball' and highly distributive behaviour (Narlikar 2006). Particularly at the multilateral level, India's inability to say yes has invited comment from analysts and practitioners alike. To some extent therefore, India's 'softer way' in East Africa comes as a surprise. But compare this to India's use of traditional, Third Worldist alliances in the WTO, and the results become less surprising. Even as a rising power, and contrary to some expectations that India would abandon its old-style, defensive Third Worldism, India is still very much reliant on its Third World partners. Note that this is not a straightforward replay of the old Third Worldism with its alternative ideology of import-substituted industrialisation. After all, it is worth bearing in mind that the India that signed the nuclear deal with the US is very different from the India that had for decades fought against what it dubbed 'nuclear apartheid'. But given how contested the deal on the nuclear debate in India was, it is also true that strains of anti-colonialism and Third Worldism remain strong. Additionally, one of the key sources of India's legitimacy as a rising power lies in the coalitions that it has formed with other developing countries, and the leadership that it has provided to the developing world. The old India's diplomacy, represented by at least four of the five features that were highlighted in Raja Mohan's model – socialism, limited stress on economics in the pursuit of foreign policy, Third Worldism, and anti-Western mode of thinking – is very much alive and kicking. Socialism takes the shape of an emphasis of egalitarianism abroad and suspicion of trade liberalisation at home. Economic motivations have certainly not superseded moral or political ones, as India's behaviour with East Africa as well as other developing countries (particularly and interestingly over economic issues) suggests. Indeed, had economic pragmatism achieved primacy, we would have expected to see far greater engagement by India with North and West Africa than East, and we would further have expected this engagement to take a form similar to the Chinese engagement. Third World-ism persists, albeit in a newer form as suggested above. And anti-Western modes of thinking find expression in the refusal to link development aid to ideals of democracy and good governance and instead retain a strong commitment to non-interference and sovereignty (Hurrell and Narlikar 2006, Narlikar 2006). However, this does not amount to the pursuit of idealism over pragmatism; all four characteristics of Indian diplomacy together constitute India's pathway to power.

India's willingness and ability to lead

The above pathway to power is not one where India can abdicate the responsibilities of leadership. But as was discussed in the first section of this paper, this leadership is indirect in that it is forthcoming not at the systemic level, but in coalitions in multilateral forums and in certain bilateral and regional relationships with other developing countries. While reluctant to provide any public goods (e.g. multilateral free trade), India has shown considerable willingness to provide club goods to Africa (e.g. the Pan Africa E-Network, development assistance, technical assistance, preferential trading arrangements) and specifically to East Africa (trade, investment, FDI that creates greater employment in the region). The provision of this leadership is important for India in that it cultivates allies that can support its pathway to power, concretely for instance by supporting its bid for a permanent seat on the Security Council and also through the emergence of broad-based coalitions that back its agenda (e.g. the G90 at the Cancun Ministerial that brought together members of the G20, G33 and the Africa Group). Such leadership moreover also speaks to a wider audience, where responsible leadership in East Africa by India can help it gain greater legitimacy internationally. Note however, as was pointed out in the first section, that the ability to provide certain club goods can detract from a leader's ability to provide public goods. Just as India has successfully managed to lead strong coalitions in the WTO but found it (partly as a result of this leadership) difficult to make the concessions that are necessary if it takes on international leadership, its strategies in East Africa may result in a similar incompatibility between its role as a responsible international power versus a responsible power in Africa. Whether this will turn out to be the case depends on the vision of development and power that India brings.

The role of ideas: an emerging 'Delhi consensus'?

While much has been made of the Beijing Consensus versus the Washington Consensus, with Africa representing the testing ground for each model, India's engagement with Africa suggests the potential emergence of a different approach. Unlike the Washington Consensus and closer to Chinese engagement with Africa, Indian aid does not come ridden with conditionalities, nor is the Indian engagement framed in democracy promotion. But in many other ways, as the last section has highlighted, the Indian approach differs from the Chinese. This is captured both in terms of its continued and expanding engagement with East Africa (rather than just West Africa) as well as the multiple specificities that were captured in the idea of the Indian way being the 'softer way'.

A part of the reason for the difference between the Chinese and Indian approach is simply based on resources: as India cannot match China dollar for dollar, it must rely on alternative means that include a deeper level of engagement in Africa (represented by the deeper integration of its firms in African society for instance, as well as the emphasis on partnership and co-development rather than 'showcasing' schemes). Lacking the economic clout of China, the 'softer' approach is a good alternative for ensuring the support of allies from the developing world. But additionally, India's political culture (shaped by its historical experiences of colonialism and lessons learnt in the post-colonial period) also contributes to the shaping of its East African foreign policy.

Insofar as India's rise to power has been a direct result of its ability to represent the cause of the poor and weak internationally – and this basis of its power is recognised by key sectors in its government as is the case currently – East Africa is likely to form an important part of India's foreign policy as a rising power. Reinforcing this trend is another relatively recent phenomenon, i.e. India's improving relations with its diaspora. As the actual and potential contributions of Indian emigrants acquire greater recognition and respect, East Africa is poised to become an even more important consideration in Indian foreign policy. Secondary writings and primary sources so far have indicated the limitations of an Indian vision of world order, or indeed what India's role might be as it becomes a Great Power. As noted earlier, Indian foreign policy itself reveals some schizophrenia. This is why a study of India's role in East Africa is particularly important. Examining India's negotiations from a position of power and opportunity – and East Africa is indeed a region where India's relative position is of considerable power – provides us with some unusual insights into how it might behave as its power increases further in relation to other states higher up the development ladder.

The conclusion is mixed on what East Africa tells us about India's rise to power. India's use of integrative strategies with its African allies and willingness to provide leadership in the sub-region are in fact paradoxical indicators of its suspicion and potential challenge to existing hegemonies. But this revisionism is less well defined than the Chinese challenge, nor is it quite as ruthless. Not only is the Indian vision of world order not backed by anything quite as coherent as the Beijing Consensus, or the political system that underpins this set of ideas, but its existing commitment to East Africa has been fundamentally benign. In other words, what we see before us is a new power that will certainly not 'roll over and play nice' with the West across issue areas, but also a new power that will be driven by a more nuanced political vision than China's (and which, for all the difficulties that it poses, will still pose an easier fit with the West than China). Whether this nascent vision will be developed more concretely and articulated coherently as a *Delhi Consensus* – an alternative both to the Beijing Consensus but also the established Washington Consensus – remains to be seen.

Notes

1. Club goods, unlike public goods, are partially excludable and rivalrous.
2. The UN classification of geographical regions and sub-regions is used here, with East Africa taken to comprise the following countries: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Réunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm [Accessed 1 August 2009].
3. See: http://itec.nic.in/
4. A classic exposition of this view is to be found in the accounts of Anand Sharma (2007), former minister of state for external affairs, who played a key role in the India–Africa Summit. Note

also, in contrast to ITEC, that the Chinese began giving official aid to Africa in the 1970s (Broadman 2007, pp. 249–250).

5. Interview, Ministry of External Affairs, 22 September 2008. This reference to the 'softer Indian way' may seem scarcely believable to Western diplomats who have been accustomed to dealing with India's 'Just say no' diplomacy and regular resort to distributive tactics. But going back to the idea that was advanced in the first section of this article, this matches with the notion of an India that systematically plays hardball, but uses softer tactics when dealing with other developing countries, as Third-Worldist alliances may offer it greater legitimacy, representation and power.
6. Interviews, 20, 22, and 23 September 2008, with leading journalist, senior bureaucrat in the Ministry of External Affairs, and a former Secretary for External Affairs respectively.
7. This relatively positive story operates entirely at the inter-state level. It does not, in any way, suggest that people-to-people contacts between East Africa and India are improved, or indeed any lessening of racial tensions between immigrant Indians and African communities. On the subject of East Indian and African relations, see Gerard McCann's article, 'Ties that bind or binds that tie? India's contemporary African engagements and the political economy of Kenya', also in this issue.

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Ties that bind or binds that tie? India's African engagements and the political economy of Kenya

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This paper analyses contemporary non-Western engagement with Africa through the lens of the second most significant, but surprisingly neglected, 'Asian driver' – India. Much of the literature on India's renewed interest in Africa is panoramic, highlighting concepts of 'South–South' cooperation in ways relatively uncritical of continued Indian claims to the Nehruvian moral high ground in the developing world. This article, by contrast, focuses on critical realities of India's relations with a single country – Kenya, a nation with which India has had ostensibly close links due to the historic presence of South Asian communities in the region. It critiques notions that 'diasporic' ties between India and Kenya facilitate contemporary Indian economic ambitions. Rather, the paper argues, fractious historical race relations in Kenya, and the cynosure of 'African' homogenisation of 'Asians' within an 'ethnicised' post-colonial political economy, might partially impede Indian ambitions relative to capital-rich foreign suitors devoid of such historical baggage. The second major argument holds that the specific state-led imperatives of much economic liaison within Kenya today favour certain 'partners' with statist investment models in contrast to India's more explicit, but not absolute, private sector-led engagement. Most importantly, analysis within a localised African context points to African agency in encounters with the 'Asian drivers', a term implying a certain unidirectional power flow. The competitive interest of a range of 'new' suitors has allowed African leaders, not least in Kenya as this paper suggests, unprecedented choice in international negotiations. The danger, however, is that these new liaisons can reify divisive socio-political conflicts in which many African nations are mired. This appears to be pertinent to Kenya where strains within the elite political sphere are being somewhat exacerbated by foreign investment, particularly from China and the Arab world.

Keywords: political economy; international relations; diaspora; investment; India–Africa relations; Kenya

Africa, it seems, is once again in the global spotlight, but in very different circumstances to those prevailing only a few years ago when the *Commission for Africa Report* and G8 thrust Africa onto the international centre stage in 2005. Changing geographies of geopolitical and economic power are being conspicuously played out in Africa. African resources are being re-evaluated, producing a set of economic logics that have complex consequences when interwoven with areas of concern such as 'development' and 'security' (Kraxberger 2005). Increasing attention in this regard has been directed towards the activities of the 'Asian drivers' (IDS 2006, Kaplinsky and Messner 2008). The bulk of this scrutiny has

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focused on China, given its astounding economic rise and, more generally, China's long-standing location as an ideological competitor to the West, despite its own particular engagement with the neoliberal world order. Although some good studies of China–Africa relations have appeared over recent decades (Snow 1988, Brautigam 1998), sustained scrutiny is still relatively new (Taylor 2006, Alden 2007). The *Commission for Africa Report*, which emerged from Tony Blair's (messianic and largely fruitless) African endeavours, barely mentioned China, a surprising oversight then, unthinkable after China's glitzy African jamboree, the third Forum on China–Africa Cooperation, in 2006.

Notwithstanding some excellent recent academic work, which seeks to unpack the complex relations emerging between different 'rising powers' and various African countries, sectors and interests,[1] most policy and media analysis has been coloured by unsophisticated fixation with Chinese exceptionalism in the problematically labelled 'new scramble for Africa' (Mawdsley 2008). Chinese engagement has presented moral challenges, but obsession with Darfur especially (in public, if not academic, spheres) has often reduced China's profile to caricature, rather than engaged its increasingly constructive international roles. This is certainly not to excuse China's often deplorable human rights record or deleterious local effects of its investment projects in Africa. Yet parallel scrutiny must be placed on the many Western and other Asian firms/nations which take a 'soft line' with a plethora of authoritarian regimes with which they do business. Such examinations have simply not occurred to a great extent in light of the Chinese 'threat' and the ways in which this challenge shapes US (and indeed other Western power) self-imaginations (Pan 2004).

Analytical myopia has not merely related to contrasting spurious Washington or Beijing 'consensuses'. Even within early 'Asian drivers' discourse there were tendencies to 'hyphenate' the two largest players – India and China, just as the term 'BRICs' – Brazil, Russia, India and China – obscured contested dynamics within global economic power transitions (Armijo 2007). Little space has been devoted to the range of supposedly 'new' players quietly engaging Africa. Paltry attention has been paid to Japan, for example, despite the constructive official Africa policies manifested in its four singularly multilateral Tokyo International Conferences on African Development since 1993 (Ampiah 2005). Indeed Ampiah has noted that Japan should be given credit for keeping African issues alive during the 1990s when Western donors faced apparent 'aid fatigue'. As a rapidly industrialised non-Western power, Japan offers compelling alternatives to 'donor'-led visions of 'development'. Significant investments from Malaysian state firm Petronas in Sudan or development assistance channelled through the Korea–Africa Economic Conference have also been largely absent from media and policy documents (although see Kaplinsky and Farooki 2009). Furthermore, it is only until very recently that controversial African investments from the sovereign wealth funds of nations such as Qatar and Kuwait, particularly in the acquisition of real estate, have piqued concerns. The picture of 'new' foreign presence in Africa is thus skewed, driven largely by the ideological proclivities and more materialist anxieties of various Western actors.

This paper will analyse contemporary non-Western engagement with Africa through the lens of the second most significant, but surprisingly neglected, 'Asian driver' – India, and in fashions relatively absent from the existing historiography. The embryonic corpus of scholarship on India–Africa relations, in contrast to recent China–Africa work (Taylor 2007, Haglund 2008, Maryesse and Gennan 2009), has tended to be panoramic,[2] focusing at length on nebulous concepts of 'South–South' cooperation often in ways relatively uncritical of continued Indian claims to the Nehruvian moral high ground in the developing world (Dubey 1989, Biswas 1992, Jamal 1992, Vohra and Mathews 1997, Jha 2001, Sheth 2008). This article will concentrate, by contrast, on critical ground-level realities of India's relations with a single country – Kenya, a country with which India has had ostensibly close links by African standards due to the historic presence of South Asian communities in the region and support for African liberation from the 1940s.

The article will, however, critique common, *intuitive* narratives claiming that these ties facilitate contemporary Indian economic flows. Rather, the paper will argue that a fractious history of race relations in Kenya, and the cynosure of 'African' homogenisation of 'Asians' within an 'ethnicised' post-colonial political economy, seem to *partially* impede Indian ambitions relative to other non-Western suitors devoid of such baggage. At the very least, the paper holds that 'Kenyan Asian' communities have little instrumental or lubricative influence on the designs of Indian actors at this early stage of resurgent interest in Africa. This contradicts much official rhetoric and a broader literature arguing that diasporic networks facilitate domestic entrepreneurship in creating avenues of local, idiomatic liaison and thereby establishing globally competitive transnational production networks. South Asian 'diasporic' communities, long-resident in East African polities, estranged from post-colonial India and asserting paramount local allegiances, actually appear to be remaining aloof from incoming Indian capital. Such realities might frustrate, rather than facilitate, what one report has speculated might be a 'Tatafication of Africa' as a result of Indian corporate engagement (CKS 2008).

Most importantly, this analysis within localised *African* contexts points to African agency in relations with the 'Asian drivers', a term implying a certain unidirectional power flow. Whilst some writing has focused on African 'perspectives' on Chinese investment (Manji and Marks 2007, Baah and Jauch 2009), less has highlighted the ability of Africans to *influence* agendas and outcomes. Bayart famously concluded that Africans have a long history of 'extraversion' in the utilisation of external influence in their own mechanisms of control (Bayart 2000). Alden noted that engagement with China affords choice – 'an Africa that can say no' (Alden 2005); indeed a recent Chatham House report highlighted impressive abilities of Angolan leaders to shape engagement with Asian state oil firms (Vines *et al.* 2009). African leaders now enjoy the capacity to take advantage of a range of suitors. The potential of such agency is to be celebrated. Yet, the opportunities presented by this competition can also reify divisive conflicts in which many African nations are mired. This paper therefore concludes with thoughts on resurgent Asian engagement and African 'development'. In the 1970s, scholars debated 'dependency' in the 'first Kenya debate', while in the 1990s the 'second Kenya debate' contested the iniquitous influence of local 'Asian' capital on 'African' industrial development. With the energy of a new set of 'external' actors from Asia in twenty-first century Africa, perhaps an (as yet) ill-defined 'third Kenya debate' is emerging. This is a discussion often couched in familiar idioms of 'neo-colonialism', yet today's circumstances present a very different set of challenges.

This paper places India within these broad African brushstrokes and the specific case of Kenya, based on literature reviews and around 20 semi-structured interviews conducted in Nairobi in March–April 2009. Most informants hailed from the Indian High Commission and 'Kenyan Asian' business community. Some Kenyan officials were successfully targeted, while experts in local policy, media and academic organisations were also consulted. The returns from these latter quarters on India's specific dealings with Kenya were disappointing. Such conversations attested to a local preoccupation with China–Africa matters, one flagged more generally above. This paper hopes to partially redress the balance with an historicised and critical account of India–Africa relations.

India–Africa relations in the new millennium

India's relations with Africa have undergone a sea change in recent years. Bilateral trade for 2008 stood around US$30 billion, a nine-fold increase on 2000. The inchoate political links of Afro–Asian solidarity and 'non-alignment' have made way for more hard-nosed Indian strategic and economic assertiveness in Africa, a result of India's global ambitions (e.g. a permanent seat on the United Nations [UN] Security Council), energy demands and expansive private sector horizons. That is not to say that assertions of 'South–South' cooperation have been expunged from India's diplomatic vocabulary – far from it. India's 'Pan-Africa e-network', publications such as *Africa Quarterly*, and even the hosting of the cricketing Indian Premier League in South Africa during the 2009 Indian general election, attest to India's 'cultural diplomacy' with southern 'partners', while associations such as the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) forum, instituted in 2003, represent more formal linkages.

The rhetoric of 'partnership for mutual benefit' pervading these developments was ubiquitous at the 2008 India–Africa Forum Summit and five high-level (and numerous regional) 'India–Africa Project Partnership' business conclaves organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and India's Export–Import (EXIM) Bank since 2002. It cannot be denied, however, that there is now a more pronounced realpolitik to India's African endeavours, especially in the quest for resources – notably oil. We have therefore witnessed shifts in the locus of interest somewhat away from East Africa and Anglophone Commonwealth nations, with whom India had been relatively close by African standards during its early post-colonial South Asian introversion, to West and even Central Africa (Singh 2007a, Mawdsley and McCann 2010). South Africa has retained its centrality to India's Africa policies, as it did politically during apartheid and economically after 1994.

India's recent engagement has been energised largely by the private sector, a characteristic ostensibly representing the key differentiation from the 'statist' Chinese model. Such binarism is reductive. There is growing prominence of Indian state energy companies and RITES, the consultancy wing of the Indian Railways, throughout Africa. The Indian state also supports its private sector in more surreptitious fashions, much as Western governments offer largesse to entrepreneurial nationals overseas (Mawdsley and McCann 2010). China has been accused of exercising 'soft power' for extractive reward in the construction of party headquarters and stadia to create conviviality with African rulers. India has also begun to emulate such liaisons/tactics. In 2008 Ghana's new presidential palace, for example, was built thanks to a 'soft loan' from India. India and Ghana have historical links – Kwame Nkrumah visited India in 1961 – but it should be remembered that Ghana claims one of the largest offshore oilfields in West Africa, since the discovery and development of the Jubilee Field by UK-registered Tullow Oil and US-based Kosmos Energy in 2007/8. Indeed in July 2009 ONGC-Videsh Limited (OVL), the overseas arm of India's state energy firm, enacted due diligence on a US$3 billion bid to acquire a 30% stake in Jubilee owned by Kosmos.[3]

Nevertheless, a number of Indian-origin conglomerates have been independently stretching their wings in Africa like never before, although many had these wings clipped by the financial crisis. One such company, Mittal Steel (now Arcelor Mittal), renegotiated (but has now significantly downsized) a huge, and at times controversial, iron ore deal under the Johnson Sirleaf administration in Liberia, a country with which Indian public or private sectors had few links previously. In more familiar terrains Indian corporate giants Essar and Bharti Airtel have been penetrating telecommunications markets in Southern Africa since 2008, while Tata continues to expand its vehicle market share.

Historical India–Kenya relations

India's contemporary relations with Kenya broadly correspond to the 'market-seeking' private sector proclivities replicated in other non-resource rich African countries, despite the lauded presence of Indian 'diaspora' intuitively providing more profound linkages between the two nations. Kenya's historical relations with India or with 'Indians' paint more problematic pictures, however. Despite Nehru's assertions of the primacy of African 'liberation' over the concerns of Indian communities in Africa and the 'nationalist' sympathies of Apa Pant, the first Indian High Commissioner to East Africa, India–Kenya relations were not especially close.[4] India did disproportionately patronise Kenya through its Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) aid scheme,[5] yet its diplomatic activities in independent Kenya were relatively meagre.

In fact a fractious history of colonial and post-colonial race relations coloured many Kenyan leaders' impressions of India, despite the rhetoric of 'non-aligned' solidarity emanating from Delhi. It is well documented that many popular 'African' impressions of local 'Asians' (as Kenyans of South Asian origin were simplistically known) were fundamentally homogenising, with almost no disaggregation of diverse South Asian regional, religious or caste origins for instance. Many, if not most, 'African' impressions dwelt on sentiments of 'Asian' exploitation rather than friendship (Theroux 1967, Atieno-Odhiambo 1974, Furedi 1974, Balachandran 1981, Twaddle 1997). This tension had deep structural roots, based on the position of 'Asians' (especially as traders) within the colonial economy, and sites of Indo-African contact this created. African antipathy was not much assuaged by the key organisational roles of a few 'Kenyan Asians' in anti-colonial protest – much to the chagrin of the greater number who celebrated this heritage. Populist politicians such as Martin Shikuku made considerable political capital 'scapegoating' falsely essentialised 'Asians' for the continued economic malaise of the *wananchi* in the early decades of *Uhuru*.[6] Relations remained uneasy.[7] The depth of 'African' distrust provoked an array of responses amongst 'Kenyan Asians'. Some created networks in Britain and North America, while the emanicipatory activism associated with *Awaaz* magazine has attempted to position 'Asians' within nation-building narratives to assert local legitimacy and patriotism (Interviews with Zarina Patel and Zahid Rajan). This range of reactions reflects profound historical diversity in East African 'Asian' communities.

Kenya's relations with India were partially viewed through the lens of this localised 'Asian Question', especially as even many elite Kenyans falsely believed local 'Asians' to have closer links to India than existed. Such opinions became increasingly inaccurate as Nehruvian diasporic dissociation from the 1950s provoked some sentiments of abandonment among the Indians of Africa. There were even occasional calls in the 1960s for 'Indian repatriation' from certain Kenyan politicians – a situation few Indian leaders or 'Kenyan Asians' desired. Such tensions and conflations were manifested during the 1962 Sino–Indian War, for example, when a bizarre public spat saw a number of Kenya African National Union (KANU) leaders openly supporting China (despite widespread suspicion of 'communism') while prominent 'Asian' party members defended India, but asserted their paramount local identity. At the height of 'anti-Asianism' in 1968 a diplomatic quarrel saw Indian Minister of External Affairs, B.R. Bhagat, denied an audience with Jomo Kenyatta on the grounds that India was interfering with Kenyan affairs.[8] Such developments provide crucial context given the tenacity of 'anti-Asian' feeling in contemporary East Africa (as witnessed in Uganda's Mabira Forest in April 2007).

In international relations, one should, however, also note more general Kenyan political introversion as domestic concerns of Kikuyu enrichment under Kenyatta and graft under

President Daniel arap Moi dominated affairs. Kenya's foreign policy, such as it was, was largely focused within eastern Africa or towards the west, rather than Asia or multilateral arenas (Interview with Patrick Mutahi). Moi was principally concerned with courting various Western donors. These powers certainly overlooked authoritarianism in Kenya (Brown 2001), but became increasingly exasperated by the 1990s and tried to coerce Moi into implementing promised political reform. Current foreign-policy interests (largely related to attracting investment) are, by contrast, shifting towards China and the Middle East (Mogire 2008). As shall be seen such embryonic developments are still *ad hoc* (Interview with Godfrey Mutisya) and controversial.

A profile of Indian investment in Kenya

India's contemporary activities in Kenya are primarily characterised by private sector investment activity, with 'aid' inflows and diplomatic exchanges scant. This prominence of capital at the frontier of India–Kenya relations has historical continuities, although capital was far more state-directed before India's liberalisation in 1991. In the 1970s perhaps half of India's meagre African foreign direct investment (FDI) was directed to Kenya (Personal communication with Stephen Gelb), although this tailed off in the next two decades. The majority funded manufacturing. One Indian firm in Kenya was Birla Group. Through a local subsidiary, Orient Paper, Birla entered into a joint venture with the Kenyan government and the World Bank International Finance Corporation in 1969. The result, Pan-Paper, in which Birla became the majority shareholder, became East Africa's biggest paper manufacturer. Despite such activity, India's South Asian foreign policy introversion, economic insularity before 1991 and dissociation from the 'diaspora' before 1998 actually dictated weak *de facto* Indian linkages to East Africa, except in rhetorical, kin and cultural senses, or through institutions such as the Bank of Baroda. Kenya's foreign policy reserve and tense local Afro–Asian relations compounded this aloofness.

With Indian diplomatic endeavours and diasporic engagement in Kenya still patchy, Indian companies are seeking opportunities largely without the aid of 'Kenyan Asian'[9] and Indian state networks. The most significant investment was made by Mumbai-based Essar Group in telecommunications, one of Kenya's most dynamic sectors, as witnessed in the initial public offering of Safaricom in 2008. After investment in South Africa-based Econet Wireless International, Essar purchased a majority share in Econet Wireless Kenya (EWK) in December 2007 and announced an investment of US$500 million over two years (International Herald Tribune 2008). Thanks to this capital, EWK opened Kenya's fourth mobile phone network – *Yu* – in November 2008, adding competitive pressure to an industry that had been dominated by two players for nearly a decade. EWK struggled with market penetration given the dominance of the innovative Safaricom behemoth. Despite its early woes, EWK rebranded itself as Essar Telecom Kenya in April 2009 (Daily Nation 2009a), more conspicuously marketing the company as an Indian addition to Kenya's corporate landscape and providing the confidence for a US$94 injection from Pan-African Infrastructure Development Fund, Africa's largest infrastructure equity fund, in July 2009[10] (*The Financial Express* 2009). With such backing Essar hopes to become a major regional sectoral player, to which end it entered into talks with Dhabi Group to secure equity to broaden its African portfolio.[11]

Essar also jostled for position in local petroleum markets. In July 2009 Essar Oil and Gas finally acquired a 50% share in Kenya Petroleum Refineries, the sole refinery in eastern Africa, and Essar's second such asset after the Vadinar refinery in Gujarat. Essar will invest US$400 million to upgrade the 40-year-old installation. The deal had been controversially contested. When Essar won the tender to acquire the share put on sale by BP, Shell and Chevron in 2007, the government invoked its pre-emptive rights and offered the stake to Tamoil, despite the fact the Libyan firm had declined to participate in the initial tendering process. Essar emerged victorious, however, as energy crises and a major oil scandal in Kenya dictated pressure for more transparent and efficient official deal making (Interview, Mutisya). The acquisition is not about securing oil for domestic consumption, as in the Gulf of Guinea or Sudan – indeed Kenya's natural resources are scarce, despite oil prospecting concessions for China's National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) in northern Kenya. Rather Essar's desire to retail fuel in Kenya and export to Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and even Uganda before its recent Lake Albert discoveries possibly spawn a new local refinery.

Indian companies have added to the plethora of local 'Kenyan Asian' manufacturing enterprises although, unlike local concerns in Nairobi especially, there has been little focus on light engineering. Since 2005 Tata has been producing soda ash at Lake Magadi.[12] In July 2009 one of the world's leading cement producers, Sanghi Group, paid US$80 million for the right to mine limestone in West Pokot from 2012. Its local subsidiary, Cemtech, will build a modern plant in one of Kenya's least developed regions.[13] Indian pharmaceutical companies such as Ranbaxy and Beta are interested in marketing affordable drugs in Kenya, which provides around 50% of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)'s pharmaceutical needs (The Standard [Nairobi] 2008). Indian companies have also penetrated more controversial Kenyan sectors. In October 2007, for instance, Bangalore-based Karuturi Networks, India's biggest floriculture company, acquired the holdings of Dutch–Kenyan flower farm giant Sher Agencies on Lake Naivasha.[14]

As the Essar cases, and numerous interviews with local Indian and African businessmen indicated, Kenya is often viewed as a 'gateway' for investment in the wider eastern African region, due to its coastal position and relative infrastructural advantages (Interview with Olusanya Ajakaiye). In this sense, despite the mitigating issues to be described below, Kenya could remain a hub for initial Indian investment in Africa, especially as the fibre-optic cables reaching East African shores facilitate the ability to do business. That said, as other regional powers such as Rwanda and Ethiopia court Indian officials and entrepreneurs, and vice versa, Kenya's graft issues and the cultural baggage of historical 'Asian' presence might push Indian investors elsewhere. One such destination looks to be Uganda with its newly discovered oil and a president who has engaged expelled 'Asians' since the 1990s and now sets his sights further afield. Another might be 'South Sudan' after 2011.

The following sections of the paper analyse the effects of Kenya's historically 'ethnicised' political economy and, secondly, the consequences of cleavages within the elite political sphere on the relatively large investments of corporations with origins in various 'rising powers'.[15] These business developments have been at the forefront of 'India's' engagement with Africa, and Kenya, in the new millennium. This is not to say that India–Kenya trade (as unbalanced as it is) is not important,[16] rather that such economic activity has not been at the heart of recent dynamism and was less easy to penetrate in Kenya. Furthermore, given limited time in the field and opaque data, the article will shy away from consideration of the burgeoning activities of small-scale traders and businesses from India. Like recent China–Africa work, as India–Africa scholarship develops, so hopefully will analysis of the effects of India's energetic small and medium enterprises, which were praised at the 5th CII-EXIM Africa conclave.[17] Future researchers might also consider how Indian companies use Kenya as an export platform – for example to take advantage of African Growth and Opportunity Act access to US markets (Kaplinsky and Farooki 2009) – given Kenya's established trading links with India.

The next sections do not suggest that mitigating factors of historical relations and 'ethnicised' political economy in Kenya are totalising for Indian actors, as Essar's activities demonstrate. They merely propose that localised African socio-historical factors and political influences have contemporary consequences for competition between investors from Asia. It is important not to fall into the trap of intuitively concluding that certain factors ('diaspora' for example) provide innate advantages to selected economic actors, rather to historicise dynamics within the context of local polities. Such issues are often not sufficiently factored into quantitative analyses of Africa's relations with Asian 'rising powers'. Qualitative social factors do, however, influence political risk and the decision making of investors. Commentators should not shy away from examination of their impacts. Such analysis also crucially elevates consideration of African agency in international encounters. This is to be universally welcomed.

'Asians' and the political economy of Kenya

The tragedies following the December 2007 elections and the continued failures of the coalition government have demonstrated the continued centrality of 'ethnicity' – however imagined, simplistically conceptualised and cruelly exploited – in Kenyan politics and to the development of the economy. The 'ethnicisation' of Kenya's political economy gained momentum under Jomo Kenyatta, who stood accused of patronising his Kikuyu support base with land and advantage in the industrialising economy. Despite his early rhetoric, Kenyatta's presidential successor, Daniel arap Moi, set about dismantling Kikuyu dominance to shore up his own political base (especially following the 1982 coup attempt) and boost material opportunities. Of relevance to this paper was Moi's skilful mobilisation of 'Kenyan Asian' (and some Indian) capitalists to his ends within a political economy where 'Asians' and emergent Kikuyu capitalists sat uneasily together.

During the 1960s–70s, Kenyatta had attempted to protect 'indigenous' capitalists from 'Asian' competitors in certain sectors, facilitating credit to ensure Kikuyu trading monopolies in certain commodities, forcing 'Asians' out of petty commerce and into manufacturing (or indeed out of the country altogether). Nevertheless, some 'Asians', though restricted, continued to compete with Kikuyus from whom they were supposed to be sectorally separated. In the relative absence of non-Kikuyu capital in the same urban environments as elite Kikuyu business, it seemed that utilisation of an historically unpopular, but economically astute, minority provided Moi with a means for aggrandisement, while cleverly diverting blame for economic failure and graft from the KANU machine. Certainly 'Kenyan Asians' became 'typed' as close to Moi,[18] and were perceived to impede the advance of Kikuyu capital as Moi erected obstacles to certain Kikuyu endeavours (such as banking start-ups) in the 1980s.[19] The fall of KANU in 2002 altered the ethnic politico-economic playing field. The power of resurgent Kikuyu capital and its proximity to the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) and later the Party of National Unity (PNU) became notable, as exemplified by scrutiny of the 'Anglo-Leasing' scandal for example (Wrong 2009). Many Kikuyu elites have not forgotten enforced competition with 'Asian' economic malfeasants under Moi. It may be that Kibaki and his allies have a posture to India conditioned by the highly competitive position of historical 'Asian' vis-à-vis Kikuyu capital.

The conditioning of such 'external' alliances arguably continues today with Raila Odinga perceived to be close to a number of 'Kenyan Asian' capitalists, an impression no doubt buttressed by the presence of Raila and Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) ministers Musalia Mudavadi, Henry Kosgey and Chris Obure at the 'Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit' in January 2009. 'Asians' had made contributions to the political ventures of Oginga Odinga, Raila's father, whose relations with Kenyatta became increasingly acrimonious in the late 1960s. Certainly there was little economic competition between Odinga's Luo cohorts or ethnic groups to whom Moi appealed, in contrast to Kikuyu enterprises. The fact that these older ethnicised issues of competition and collaboration are entering into ODM/PNU rancour could well affect investment from Asian nations. Given the homogenising imperatives of ethnic/racial conceptualisation locally, informants indicated that the fallout from this political economy might partially affect perceptions of actors from India too, despite the very localised nature of acrimony. As interviews revealed, there is a surprising conflation of older 'Kenyan Asian' business with new Indian concerns even among elite Kenyans (Interviews with Godfrey Mutisya and Hirji Shah). This negative posture of Kikuyu capital to 'Asians' may transfer to India itself, despite distant *de facto* links between India and its diaspora in Africa.

It seems clear that local ethnic politics has indeed shaped foreign investment. Kenya has witnessed a recent capital influx from China, Libya, Qatar and elsewhere (Interview with Jaindi Kisero); revenue which is allegedly flowing into the coffers of PNU leaders. The Grand Regency debacle, which saw one of Nairobi's luxury hotels sold to a Libyan consortium by the Central Bank of Kenya at a fraction of its true value, caused uproar (and considerable acrimony within the fledging coalition government) over the clandestine and seemingly corrupt means by which the deal was apparently pushed through by PNU leaders. The episode ultimately necessitated the resignation of then finance minister Amos Kimunya.[20] It was even rumoured that Kimunya and Kibaki himself might have received an oil tanker from Gaddafi as thanks for convivial Kenya–Libya relations.[21] With such liaisons bearing fruit for Kikuyu and allied politico-business leaders, Indian competitors might themselves be struggling to attain advantage, a situation partially exacerbated by Kenya's historical race relations and the ethnic politics of the post-colonial state.

The 'brown face' of corruption

The controversial impressions of prominent 'Asian' roles in Kenya's corruption scandals are linked to these dynamics. Such perceptions recurred throughout interviews carried out with Kenyan officials, businessmen, journalists and academics. Beliefs about 'Asian' corruption in Kenya have a long genealogy, based on Afro–Asian trade and labour relations, as well as broader paternalistic colonial ideologies of the corrupting influence of foreign 'middlemen' on 'natives'. For instance, the shady actions of certain 'Asian' contractors in securing work from the Nairobi City Council to build African housing in Nairobi's Eastlands was flagged in the 1955 Rose Commission, which investigated corruption in Nairobi's construction industry (Anderson 2002). The poor quality of the work undertaken on these estates compounded negative judgements on the rectitude of 'Asian' firms.

Broader essentialised sentiments of 'Asian' exploitation and corruption gained traction during the 1980s–90s given supposed 'Asian' complicity with Moi's ethnic politicking and grand corruption. When a number of banks headed by controversial figures such as Ajay Shah crumbled in the 1990s, having apparently received forced deposits from fragile parastatals (funds allegedly utilised to bankroll Moi's electoral campaigns) it was initially the 'Asian frontmen' who shouldered much of the public blame in the context of historical impressions of Indian avarice. The fact that many of these supposed 'crooks' fled Kenya grated on citizens desperate for justice. Alnoor Kassam, architect of the infamous Trade Bank, accused of obtaining KSh1.2 billion from the Central Bank of Kenya through falsified documents, fled for Canada in 1993 and even stood for Mayor of Calgary. The spectacle of Kamlesh Pattni publicly explaining his centrality to the 'Goldenberg Scandal', the complicity of the Kamanis in 'Anglo-Leasing', or the culpability of Yagnesh Devani in the 2009 Triton oil scandal compounded (unfair and essentialised) historical impressions of 'Asian greed' (Interview, Mutisya). This is not to say that 'Asians' were exclusively blamed for graft in Kenya, merely that their organisational centrality became unfairly exaggerated in the context of historical antipathy (Interview, Shah).

Although applicable principally to local 'Kenyan Asians', these spurious conceptions of 'Asian' duplicity came to colour partially impressions of businesses from India itself (even when not conflated with 'Kenyan Asian' concerns), despite meagre Indian engagement in Kenya until recently. A 1990s scandal involving Indian firm Mahindra and Mahindra hit the headlines when a number of its jeeps were bought by the Kenyan police at rates well above market value in a contract secured by Chamanlal Kamani. The jeeps were popularly characterised as defective despite the high price tag, tainting impressions of the quality of Indian goods, despite the budget specifications to which Mahindra was instructed to work by avaricious dealmakers (Interviews, Shah, Kisero).

Notions of the disingenuousness of businesses from India became even more salient during the Pan-Paper debacle. The aforementioned Pan-Paper joint venture, of which India's Birla (through its Orient subsidiary) became a majority shareholder, was put into receivership in early 2009 after years of chronic financial strife, despite an unparalleled and controversial series of protectionist government concessions. Blame was firmly placed on the ineptitude and 'greed' of the exclusively Indian expatriate management. It was claimed that managers were able to repatriate millions to India despite the fact Pan-Paper had not been profitable for 15 years, not least as apparently huge fees were based not on profits, rather turnover – a result of supposedly deceitful negotiations in the 1980s–90s (*Daily Nation* 2009b). Conclusions that Birla had leeched off the Kenyan state, but voraciously pocketed the rewards for India, appeared frequently in Kenya's public sphere in early 2009. Whilst official public-private venture negotiation skills were called into question, devious Indian methods employed to acquire the majority sharehold were also noted.[22] Other commentators disagree with the line taken in the Kenyan press, stating that the uproar was more about Kenyan politicians applying pressure for a more advantageous settlement in upcoming renegotiations of the joint venture, which the Indians merely resisted.[23] In any case, despite apparent hyperbole, there was manifest public fear that Indian capitalists, in the mould of the Orient, could recruit managers with no knowledge of, or interest in, the wellbeing of Kenya, rather merely capital flight.

Some believe that such outcry, informed partially by the local politics of race, had subtle impacts on the ability of Indian firms to gain contracts in Kenya in the context of growing international competition. India has been famously beaten by China to oil concessions in Angola and Nigeria of late, yet the ideological biases of much reporting has dictated little light being shed on unsuccessful bids in sectors less geopolitically contested than African resource extraction. Indian diplomats interviewed were almost exclusively preoccupied with discussion of 'South–South' cooperation, while Indian businesspersons focused on positive impacts on human resource development in Africa. One leading Nairobi businessman, however, raised the example of the refurbishment of the Rift Valley Railway. In 2006 South Africa's Sheltam was awarded a 25-year concession, but was expelled in 2007 after chronic non-performance, with familiar rumours of political irregularities and poor Kenyan due diligence reported.[24] Shelton had edged out an Indian-led RITES consortium in a hotly contested bid. Such decisions are informed by many things: the strength of presentations, capital outlay or the opportunism of aspirant politicians. Yet, in the view of the businessman, poor impressions of Indian goods, services and honesty, a legacy of such encounters with Mahindra and Pan-Paper, and more general aloof relations with 'Kenyan Asians', were also salient to some extent (Interview, Shah). Controversy over RITES' management of the Tanzanian Railways may well have also affected official decision makers, but RITES certainly had far more experience than Shelton in overhauling such infrastructure. This is not to suggest that Indian businesses are intrinsically disadvantaged, as Essar has proved, rather that socio-historical factors might play a role in the economic development of Africa's 'rising powers' nexuses – notions which should be probed.

The political mechanics of foreign investment

The emotive issues discussed above are linked to controversial assessments of perception and its inherent analytical biases. They do nevertheless provide social context for a more tangible set of factors which undermine the notion of India's supposedly advantageous historical and 'diasporic' links. We must also place developments within a critical international relations crucible and conclude that the animated encounter with competing Asian actors is increasing the potency of African elite agency – concurring with the views of Alden (2005) and many others. Such an optic dictates placing greater importance on organisation in Kenya's previously lethargic and *ad hoc* diplomacy outside Africa (Interview, Mutahi). Indeed, in August 2009 the Foreign Ministry announced the impeding publication of Kenya's first foreign policy document.[25] This new direction has initially focused on conviviality with China[26] and the Middle East, with news in July 2009 that Kenya is opening 'strategic' missions in Rabat, Qatar and Dubai for business development.[27] These liaisons are situated within the ethnicised mechanisms of governance and accumulation in Kenya.

Despite aforementioned large Indian investments, it seems that particularly Chinese, but also Libyan, Qatari, and perhaps soon Iranian, actors are representing a larger and faster growing quantum of (often highly visible) investment in terms of capital intensity and project number, despite relatively distant historical relations with Kenya. Any visitor to Nairobi sees the proliferation of Chinese-built roads, while in 2008 state-owned construction firm China Wu Yi began construction of a road between Isiolo and Moyale, transforming Kenya–Ethiopia transportation capacity. Small Chinese industrial and service companies continue to spring up. In December 2008 Kibaki entered into talks with the Emir of Qatar for a US$3.5 billion deal to construct a port in Lamu, while in 2009 Kenya entered a 99-year lease agreement with Doha to lease 40,000 hectares in the Tana Delta for food production.[28] In March 2009 a deal between the Kenya Airports Authority and a number of Qatari businessmen (perhaps linked to a sovereign equity fund) to build a luxury hotel near Jomo Kenyatta International Airport also created controversy. Libya too has been proactive in controversial deals, with alleged affinity to PNU particularly. In 2007 Tamoil, in which the Libyan government has a controlling stake, bought Mobil Kenya assets (now Oilibya) for US$200 million. As mentioned, the share in Kenya Petroleum Refineries was initially awarded to Tamoil after government (widely believed to be PNU) intervention. It was thought that the eventual victory of Essar in the deal was largely pushed through as pressure mounted (particularly on under-fire energy minister Kiraitu Murungi) for transparent deals as the dust was settling on Grand Regency, and oil and maize scandals created unrest and shortages.

Dynamic Kenyan relations with China and many Arab countries, relative to India, can be somewhat placed against tense relations between 'black' Kenyans and 'Kenyan Asians', their effects on perceptions of India, and historically aloof relations between Kenya and the Indian state. It is also, more crucially, related to the mechanics of foreign investment and politico-corporate liaison in Kenya. The methods of large deal making in Kenya are often conducted in markedly opaque, clandestine and extremely elite state-to-state arenas. The monetisation of Kenya's post-colonial politics and the intertwining (even similitude) of political and business elites are important in this regard. India's domestic polity and economic profile, however, render access to these controversial avenues of economic advantage sometimes problematic. Despite a degree of state stewardship, its largely private-sector-led African initiatives (and therefore responsibility to shareholders), diplomatic proclivities/abilities and transparency pressures from vibrant domestic 'civil society' organisations have consequences within African contexts. This is often telling relative to state-led bids from China or Middle Eastern countries, which frequently enjoy higher liquidity and capital intensity than Indian interests (Interview with Manu Chandaria OBE). These 'newer' actors have, in short, quickly developed more statist access-led styles, which are more effective within the existing contexts of rentier statehood in much of Africa. The ascendance of Kikuyu capital under President Mwai Kibaki, and the willingness of Libya and China to create convivial relations with PNU leaders particularly, exacerbates India's disadvantages in the context of Kenya's historical political economy, as outlined above.

Moreover, the statist biases of much corporate liaison further disadvantage Indian players even if they were willing and able to utilise 'Kenyan Asian' networks, which are themselves often distanced from the state. It is perhaps for this reason, as much as recognition of distant local African–Asian relations and post-colonial 'diasporic' estrangement from India, that few Indian firms have utilised such an apparently intuitive instrumentalist asset as 'diaspora' in Africa. That said, this aloofness is not rooted in competition. Local 'Asian' enterprises, deeply embedded at various levels of the Kenyan economy (especially in manufacturing) do not directly vie for position with aspirant capitalists from the Indian subcontinent who target different sectors (Interviews, Shah, Chandaria).

Equally, the Indian state has done little to aid Indian investment in Kenya at this stage, in contrast to resource-rich nations in West Africa. Renewed Indian diasporic engagement after the election of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the 1990s[29] (a reversal of Nehruvian dissociation) was initially targeted at attracting FDI and remittances *to* India from the West and Gulf. Such engagement even then was perhaps too late – a 'missed opportunity' (Lall 2001). Only lately has the remit of this diasporic conviviality extended to Africa (and principally South Africa) to catalyse FDI *from* India. Kenya is a low priority in this regard as energy spent there appears to yield fewer returns than other regions of Africa.

More important within the context of Kenya's statist investment mechanisms is the evident lethargy of India's diplomatic architecture in Nairobi. It was apparent in several visits to the Indian High Commission (HC) in 2009 that India's official mission in Kenya appears to be a poor conduit of state-to-state relations and an ineffective propagator of the economic imperatives that increasingly characterise India's new African initiatives. This is in marked contrast to the Chinese Embassy (Interview, Kisero). It is argued that the HC has been hitherto driven by personalities articulating concepts of traditional 'South–South' cooperation, rather than institutionally energised by the economic ambitions that preoccupy a younger generation of New Delhi technocrats (Interviews, Shah, Chandaria, Mutisya). This is slowly changing, although Nairobi lags far behind sister missions in Johannesburg, Dakar and even Addis Ababa for instance. These cities each now boast a branch of India's EXIM bank, an increasingly influential institution in moulding India's African policies. India's diplomatic energy in some African nations has indeed appeared somewhat driven by energetic individuals such as ex-Ambassador Gurdit Singh in Ethiopia, and India became the largest investor there in 2008. This is a country with a regime of highly authoritarian proclivities, yet India has managed to leverage official contact to its advantage (arguably because of African Union presence in Addis, as well as market opportunities). This goes to show that India is not necessarily disadvantaged in liaison through statist channels in Africa – merely that its modest resources dictate selective engagement according the opportunities and obstacles apparent in various destinations. Further studies in different African contexts are therefore in order.

Future debates and conclusions

Critiques of 'external' influence on African 'development' are not new. Such terrain provided the liveliest early post-colonial economic debates in Africa, especially related to Kenya. A rich body of work from the 1970s–80s, initiated by Colin Leys, contested 'dependency' on 'neo-colonial' capital – the 'first Kenya debate' (see Schatzberg 1987). A less weighty historiography in the 1990s – the so-called 'second Kenya debate' – revolved around the relative inhibitive influence of 'Kenyan Asian' presence on African industrial and economic development (see Himbara 1994, Chege 1998, Vandenberg 2006). Now, perhaps, we are emerging into another, as yet ill-defined, discussion. This potential 'third Kenya debate' concerns the role of 'new' Asian engagement on Kenyan, and more general African, economic development and governance.

As Bayart asserts in broad historical senses, and Chris Clapham argues for renewed China–Africa relations, foreign powers engaging with African societies face resilience to, and incorporation of, their external influences. Like others before them, Asian actors will necessarily broadly conform to long-established patterns of Africa's external engagement rather than fundamentally transmogrify them (Clapham 2008). The danger is, however, that such competitive engagement can reify divisive ethnic and socio-political conflicts in which many African nations are mired. This is arguably pertinent to Kenya, as it appears that PNU sympathisers have more greatly benefited from the rewards of recent foreign 'partnership' than competing ODM cadres. This was implied by Prime Minister Raila Odinga himself in April 2009 after visits of the Turkish and Iranian presidents to Kenya. These meetings, during which economic deals and diplomatic memoranda were agreed, were held at Kibaki's State House without Odinga's inclusion as prime minister in the coalition government (Sunday Nation 2009).

As Angola's oil diplomacy and Liberian renegotiation of the Mittal iron ore deal has shown, the influx of new 'partners' has strengthened African international agency, especially in the development negotiation *skills*. Again the reinforcement of divisive existing political conditions is a danger. In some parts of Africa, the nature of patronage necessary to retain power continues to propagate a certain *short-termism* in negotiations with economic partners. This engenders continued castigations of governmental transparency. It cannot be denied that in most oil-rich African nations that have courted new Asian investment, the health of official coffers has had little ameliorative effect on the wellbeing of most citizens. Cognate accusations appear in Kenya. Following the Grand Regency scandal, Kibaki was openly charged with 'selling' Kenya to China, India, Libya and even Iran by ODM opponents.[30] They stated that his 'Look East' policies were reinforcing Kikuyu cronyism, rather than forging national development. The aforementioned deal to sell land near Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to Qatari developers was negotiated by George Muhoho, head of Kenya Airports Authority and one of Kibaki's closer allies. One newspaper stated that 'clearly, the Qataris are no ordinary investors. That they managed to easily clinch such a big deal is a statement about the amount of political clout they wield within the corridors of power.'[31] The comparative presence of diverse suitors and their liaisons with African elites is at the core of the 'third Kenya debate'.

On more overtly economic levels, it seems that few 'Asian drivers' in Africa are proactively catalysing vitally important local manufacturing – thereby possibly initiating a so-called 'flying geese model' of development (Brautigam 2008). Scrutiny should also be placed on comparative labour relations, and consequences for local production and trade. For example Indian firms, like Mahindra in Ghana, claim that their products (in that case tractors) are more suited to *local* conditions and do not endanger African production in contrast to China's 'dumping' of low quality goods on African markets. Such avowed contrasts must be soberly analysed with empirical fieldwork. China's financial abilities dictate that it has stolen a march on the field in terms of infrastructural development (Foster *et al.* 2008), the crucial initial step towards sustainable development in the opinion of diverse African bodies, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Bank.[32] Other Asian actors, including India, are, however, increasing the thrust of such activities. Indian state firms such as RITES and OVL are developing African railways and oil installations. Indian firms are involved in rural electrification in Ethiopia thanks to 'tied' lines of credit from India's EXIM bank, while Indian conglomerates are diversifying African telecommunications. One 'Kenyan Asian' informant believes that India must 'think big' and avoid its natural timidity in infrastructure development, despite problems of competitiveness with China, to make an impact in Africa (Interview, Chandaria). A myriad of endeavours indicate such confidence is tentatively forthcoming from a range of Asian suitors. Yet, domestic economic imperatives, pressures from international and local 'civil society', and, above all, the strategic thinking of African 'partners' provide a complex and challenging geopolitical and economic canvas. Such concerns must also take centre stage in any debate.

So for India, despite necessary circumspection given certain constraints, there are fashions in which it constructively engages in Africa, utilising its own particular strengths. One notable contribution has been in peacekeeping, including the training of African troops (Singh 2007b). Much of India's engagement has been articulated in terms of Indian skill transfer within the rhetoric of 'South–South' partnership, not least in information and communications technology development. Such linkages are slowly growing through the 'Pan-Africa e-network' and technology transfer centres in Ghana and Senegal. Such nascent institutions might not engender the immediate dramatic impacts of infrastructure, but could have sustained effects as submarine fibre-optic cables now hook Africa to the global digital regime. India's position as a leading producer of generic pharmaceuticals and biofuels, or legacies of India's 'green revolution', are also beginning to manifest themselves in Africa. Such developments could have the most significant human impacts of all, although commentators should avoid complacency in such analysis as events are very much in their infancy. It can be argued that some work on India's 'unique' relationship with Africa, certainly in comparison with China and the west, makes reductive ideological assumptions on the 'progressive' versus 'reactionary'.

Whilst Mahatma Gandhi was partially correct in his assertion that 'the commerce between India and Africa will be of ideas and services, not manufactured goods against raw materials after the fashion of Western exploiters', public and private sector engagement is dictating Indian adherence to less idealised contact in extractive and market-seeking environments. This is dictated by changing geographies of India's African ambitions and abilities, but, as importantly, by localised dynamics of politico-economic liaison within different African contexts. These are factors that the initial volley of 'Asian drivers' scholarship did not sufficiently articulate. Within Kenya we see that salience of local race relations and the methodologies of economic liaison within Kenya's specific political economy as crucial to shaping the investment climate. Capital is entering the country on certain roads, for better or worse, and factors such as 'diaspora' could actually *partially* undermine India's supposed advantages of historical conviviality with Kenyan 'gatekeepers' relative to other aspirant partners. Hopefully, future work will similarly disaggregate specific *African* contexts to complement more panoramic discussions of twenty-first century dynamism in the developing world.

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Notes

1. E.g. http://asiandrivers.open.ac.uk/
2. Although see Singh (2007a), Harris and Vittorini, and Patey in Mawdsley and McCann (2011).
3. See: http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/News-By-Industry/Energy/Oil-Gas/OVL-in-race-for-Ghana-fields/articleshow/4774500.cms [Accessed 14 July 2009].
4. Nehru's championing of 'non-alignment' of course dictated the primacy of domestic sovereignty. Therefore, while there was some Indian material support and constant assertions of 'friendship' (goodwill not always as so warmly reciprocated), India did not seek interventionist roles in Africa.
5. Founded in 1964, the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation, India's first formal 'development' institution, focuses on providing short training programmes for individuals in a range of practical sectors. Around 50% of its African students hailed from Kenya in the late 1980s (D'Souza 1997).
6. *Wananchi* denotes 'citizens' in Kiswahili, although the connotation was of 'indigenous' (i.e. 'black') Kenyans. *Uhuru* is translated as 'freedom'.
7. Naturally, relations between 'Africans' and 'Asians' are by no means ubiquitously tense. Politicians and leading 'African' businessmen, for example, are close to many elite 'Asian' entrepreneurs in professional senses, and sometimes also even social settings, such as Lions or Rotary Clubs. Other personal relationships of course flourish, especially among younger generations.
8. *Daily Nation* (Nairobi), 27 March 1968.
9. Future research might probe if the regional origins of 'new' Indian investment, largely from outside Gujarat and Punjab, the principal 'homelands' of East Africa's 'Asian' communities, have any effect on the inclination of some East African 'Asians' to liaise with incoming Indian actors.
10. See article available from: http://www.financialexpress.com/news/African-fund-pumps-Rs-450-cr-into-Essar-Telecom-Kenya/483292/ [Accessed 3 July 2009].
11. At the time of review in October 2009 Essar announced its desire to acquire the African holdings of Kuwaiti telecoms firm Zain, having negotiated for the acquisition of Dhabi Group's Warid Telecom Uganda and Warid Congo. Bharti Airtel had also indicated interest following the collapse of renewed talks to merge with South Africa's MTN in September 2009, a bid which Reliance had also failed to clinch in 2008. Available from: http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/jul2009/gb20090720_467821.htm [Accessed 20 July 2009].
12. Tata even came under pressure from environmental lobbies over a desire to expand such activities to Lake Natron in Tanzania, endangering the ecosystem on which a large population of flamingos rely.
13. See http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/-/2560/622502/-/5jdwgaz/-/index.html [Accessed 14 July 2009].
14. See article available at: http://www.financialexpress.com/news/Karuturi-Networks-buys-Kenyan-co/231420/ [Accessed 6 August 2009].
15. The paper is not intended to be a comprehensive survey of Indian foreign direct investment (FDI) in Kenya, for one, given lack of personal disciplinary grounding in economics. Moreover, datasets published by the governments of Kenya and India proved unhelpful in pinning down bilateral FDI flows. A general picture can be grasped from UNCTAD's *World Investment Directory* (2008) vol. x. [Africa], and its forthcoming updates, although even this does not include disaggregated data on specific investments from different countries. Stephen Gelb of the

EDGE Institute in Johannesburg has been conducting some interesting quantitative research on India, Africa and ‘South–South’ FDI, which is yet to be published.
16. For example, as the 1981 Indo-Kenya Trade Agreement attests.
17. See: http://smetimes.tradeindia.com/smetimes/news/top-stories/2009/Mar/25/huge-potential-for-indian-msmes-in-africa.html [Accessed 7 July 2009].
18. This impression has recurred frequently in personal conversations in Kenya over recent years.
19. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer and Godwin Murunga for useful information here.
20. See: http://www.eturbonews.com/3593/kenya-government-gifts-major-hotel-libya-peanuts [Accessed 12 July 2009].
21. See: http://muthumbi.blogspot.com/2008/07/deals-pnu-must-approach-very-cautiously.html
22. It appears that the World Bank’s IFC stake in Pan-Paper was sold to a Hong Kong-based company which belonged to Birla, a fact of which the government was ignorant, and which Orient did not flag. *Daily Nation*, 23 March 2009, ‘Why the government must tread carefully’.
23. Interviewees preferred to remain anonymous on this point.
24. See: http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=1144018054&cid=4& [Accessed 29 June 2009].
25. See: http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/637140/-/ulmifp/-/index.html [Accessed 9 August 2009].
26. See: http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6695425.html [Accessed 17 July 2009].
27. See: http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/631544/-/ulifnm/-/index.html [Accessed 28 July 2009].
28. See: http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/496966/-/tm5rcj/-/ [Accessed 25 April 2009]; *The Standard*, 8 March 2009,‘The West gets jitters as Kenya embraces new trade allies’.
29. This was partially related to catalysing Indian economic development, but was also part of a wider push to buttress the strength and appeal of Hindu nationalism. BJP leaders and allied organisations had long been courting Hindu organisations overseas.
30. See: http://www.politicalarticles.net/blog/2008/07/14/political-corruption-mwai-kibaki-is-selling-kenya-to-libya-china-india-turkey-iran/ [Accessed 28 November 2008].
31. See: http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/554250/-/view/printVersion/-/pqy0bn/-/index.html [Accessed 28 March 2009].
32. See: http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/629528/-/r1ooflz/-/index.html [Accessed 27 July 2009].

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Oil as the 'curse' of conflict in Africa: peering through the smoke and mirrors

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This article interrogates the framing of the resource curse as a central causal mechanism in the resource abundance–conflict nexus in Africa. It is argued that explaining such conflicts on the basis of the ways natural resources either act as an incentive/motive for rebel groups, or erode and weaken states, does not adequately capture the complex histories, dimensions and transnational linkages to civil conflict in Africa. The article lays bare the attempts by a hegemonic discourse to obfuscate the reality of the fundamental and transnational underpinnings of the resource–conflict nexus. It is argued that the resource curse perspective cannot fully explain conflict in African oil states, and rather, a case is made for an alternative model based on radical political economy which lays bare the class relations, contradictions and conflicts rooted in the subordination of the continent and its resources to transnational processes and elites embedded in globalised capitalist relations.

Keywords: Nigeria; resource curse; oil

Introduction

This article is structured around three broad questions: is oil endowment really a 'curse' to Africa? To what extent can studies based on a statistical correlation between oil abundance and the onset, duration and intensity of armed conflict (Ross 2003, Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Lujala 2009, 2010, p. 15) adequately capture the complex roots, forces and local and transnational ramifications of armed conflict in oil-rich African states? How is the resource curse constructed and reproduced and whose interests does it serve? These questions are impelled by the trend in some scholarly, policy and media circles which identifies oil endowment as a major factor of conflict, institutional weakness and corruption on the continent. In this essay, although 'oil' and 'resource' are used interchangeably, the emphasis is on oil as Africa's most strategic and sought after commodity in global markets.

The 'oil curse' perspective defines oil largely in terms of a central role in increasing the risk of violent conflict, poor economic growth, or acting as a disincentive for peace (Basedau and Lay 2009, p. 758). At its core lies the notion of resource/oil abundance as underpinning the financial motives/opportunities for rebels to engage in armed conflict, or as a causal factor in (rentier) state weakness either through the propensity for corruption, misrule, authoritarianism or instability (Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000, Herbst 2000, Sachs and Warner 2001, Ross 2003, Auty 2004, Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Fearon 2005, p. 483–507, Rosser 2006, Billon 2007, pp. 163–182, Collier 2007, Ross 2008, Lujala 2010).

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More recently, some of the claims of the resource curse theorists have been challenged (Rosser 2006, Alexeev and Conrad 2009, pp. 586–598, Basedau and Lay 2009), leading them to partly move away from the initial debates over the 'greed versus grievance' causal binary. Much of the emphasis has shifted to issues related to the risk, onset, duration and intensity of armed conflict in resource-rich countries, and the exploration of the links between resource endowment and the viability or capacity of rebel groups. Of note in this regard are the works of Ross (2006, pp. 265–300), Collier and Hoeffler (2005, pp. 37–59), Collier (2007, p. 21), Humphreys (2005), De Soysa and Neumayer (2007, pp. 201–218). Of note is the recent work of Lujala (2010, pp. 15–16), which examines 'empirically how the location of natural resources affects armed civil conflict', and concludes that 'oil substantially prolongs conflict when located inside the conflict zone', thereby rendering oil endowment a critical factor in the location, duration and intensity of armed conflict.

The protagonists of the resource curse thesis explore the connection between the paradox of resource abundance, conflict and poor economic growth. They seek to 'explain civil war statistically, looking at a range of possible causes: social, political, geographic and economic' (Collier 2007, p. 18). Their postulations are rooted in 'causal mechanisms linking resources and bad developmental outcomes' (Rosser 2006, p. 558). Lujala (2010, p. 15) aptly sums up the current state of knowledge by making a point of distinguishing the two main strands in resource curse thought: between resource abundance as a 'motivation and means' (incentive) for 'rebel uprisings' (armed conflict), and as a causal link to 'poor policy choices and a weak state'.

A raft of post-cold-war civil wars in resource-rich African countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the insurgency in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region have provided some material and further reinforced this perspective. Such wars were specifically labelled after natural resources: as 'diamond' conflicts, 'oil', 'timber' or 'cocoa' conflicts (Smillie, Gberie and Hazleton 2000, Global Witness 2001, 2002, 2007, Alao 2007, International Crisis Group 2002). The labelling of African wars after natural resources was also given further fillip by investigative reports on the natural resource trade, corruption and conflict involving African state elites and rebel militias by international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as Global Witness, Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group (ICG). Even the Hollywood entertainment industry chanced upon this discourse to produce films such as *Blood Diamond*, which dwelled on the tragic role of armed rebels driven by the lust for 'conflict diamonds' in Africa's brutal wars by focusing on the Sierra Leone civil war.

The resource curse perspective has been more recently incorporated into a global development and security policy discourse to suggest that 'weak' or 'failing' resource or oil-rich states both harbour and represent a serious threat to development and security in a post-9/11 world (Morris 2006, Pham 2007, Thompson and Pearson 2007). In this context, oil-rich African states like Nigeria, Chad, Sudan and Angola have been associated in the literature or media reports with corruption, political instability and violent conflict.

The contention here is that the resource curse thesis feeds certain perspectives on the nature of the African oil-rich states built upon an internal resource conflict nexus that is subversive of development, democratic governance, national, regional and global security. Such perspectives need to be critically interrogated. Beyond such an interrogation, we need to get to the core of what is really an ideological notion of oil resource-determinism that obscures, rather than promotes an accurate understanding of the roots and wider ramifications of violent conflict in Africa.

This article is divided into four broad parts. The introduction sets the background to the resource curse thesis, while the conceptual section critically analyses the place of Africa's oil in the international political economy. It also includes a critique of the resource curse thesis as a basis for explaining violent conflict in oil producing African states. The concluding section sums up the arguments and suggests an alternative explanatory framework for violent conflict in African petro-states.

African oil in the global political economy

Blind spots in hegemonic discussions of the oil curse in Africa include the place of Africa's oil in the global political economy, and how transnational actors and structures are deeply implicated in the corruption and armed conflicts in oil-rich states. Although Africa holds about 9% of the world's proven oil reserves, an amount that may be considered small compared to the Middle East's 62%, Africa's oil has assumed critical importance in the context of a tight global oil market in the wake of increased global demand and the shrinking number of significant oil finds to replace rapidly depleting oil fields across the world. African leading oil producers include Nigeria, Angola, Sudan, Algeria, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Chad, Libya, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Egypt.

The continent has emerged as a key factor in global energy security calculations amid growing US dependence on African oil imports,[1] and the growing concerns in the West following the recent arrival of energy-hungry Asian state oil corporations (Chinese, Indian and Korean) intent on securing a foothold in the Africa's oil fields.[2] This so-called 'new' scramble for Africa's oil is impelled in part by a rapid increase in global demand by emerging industrial powers and has not only contributed to the prioritisation of the continent's prized hydrocarbon resource for global economic growth, but also included, in a post-cold-war world, its integration into a US-led paradigm of global security. However, in the context of this essay, the main focus is on the connections of transnationalised oil to capitalist accumulation on a global scale and the impoverishment of oil-producing locales in Africa.

Crude oil or petroleum is widely considered the most viable source of energy in the world. It is the energy lynchpin around which modern capitalism and consumerism as a global system revolves. Oil is a key element of global power (Obi 2009, p. 471). Thus, the stakes in controlling oil are very high, and constitute a core interest of the world's powers. It also means that Africa as a valued source of oil and gas supplies is central to the strategic calculations of the world's oil-dependent dominant powers.

Since oil is found more in the developing world, of which Africa is a part, its production and export has invoked historically constructed adverse political and social consequences and deleterious environmental consequences (Watts 2004, Obi 2010). It also produces and reproduces specific power relations between peoples, states and international oil companies. In this regard, African oil-owning states operate in partnership with oil multinational corporations (MNCs) that dominate the technology of oil production, alongside the global shipping powers and navies that ply and patrol the maritime oil supply routes. In this way, African oil-rich states are locked into complex and opaque transnational ties with global powers based largely on the joint exploitation of oil 'enclave investments' (Ferguson 2005, pp. 378–379).

However some analysts have argued that national/state oil Corporations which own the oil reserves and control oil supplies (through resource-nationalism) are richer than the oil MNCs. While this may be true in some cases, there are four fundamental issues that oil/resource curse perspectives overlook. The first is the reality that oil MNCs largely dominate the sophisticated technology, management skills and globally integrated operations of the upstream section of the oil industry in Africa, giving them considerable leverage in dealing with individual largely 'revenue-collecting' oil-dependent states. However, oil MNCs are bound to local elites in a transnational partnership hinged upon their common interests, marked in part by a revolving-door relationship between top-level oil MNC local elites (a faction of transnational elites) and the state (Obi 2007).

The second is that the oil MNC-backed Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) designed to improve 'governance and transparency in payments to resource-rich countries' has been critiqued for blaming failures in 'development and economic growth in mineral-exporting countries' on 'internal corruption, rather than deficient company remuneration for drilling and extracting, and sharp corporate practice which simultaneously denies and removes profits' (Bracking 2009, pp. 3–17).

Thirdly, in the period 1970 to 2008, Africa lost an estimated $854 billion to capital flight, with its 'fuel exporters' being the largest losers, underlining the connection between oil endowment and high rates of capital flight from the continent (Kar and Cartwright-Smith 2010, pp. 10–12). This is illustrated with the case of Nigeria which between 2000 and 2008 is estimated to have 'lost capital at the rate of nearly $10 billion per year' (*ibid.*). The foregoing assumes further significance in a context where oil MNCs made record profits (Boles 2006, Porreto 2007, 2008, Macalister 2007, 2008), and their earnings both in terms of what they make from Africa's oilfields and in terms of leveraged profits from their partnership with African states remain largely hidden behind opaque international accounting and banking practices (Adusei 2009, Bracking 2009).

Fourthly, and linked to the foregoing is the neglect of the linkage between the burden of external debt overhang and poor economic performance of resource-endowed African states. Indeed substantial resources that could have been invested in development are lost to capital flight. As the Director of the Tax Justice Network, John Christensen, notes: 'Since the 1970s, for every dollar in external loans to Africa, roughly 60 cents left as capital flight in the same year.' Drawing upon the cases of Zambia and Angola, he notes that 'Zambia has lost US$19.8 billion in capital flight, representing 272% of the debt stock as at 2004', while 'Angola has experienced US$50 billion of capital flight representing 535% of that country's external debt' (Quoted, Tax Justice Network 2008).

Kar and Cartwright-Smith (2010, p. 1), note that illicit flows from Africa have a lot more to do with capital flight resulting from the 'proceeds of commercial tax evasion, mainly through trade mispricing', and much less to do with the 'proceeds of bribery and theft by government officials'. This position is given much credence by the study by Ndikumana and Boyce (2008), and reports from the Tax Justice Network (2008, 2009), that emphasise how the 'aggressive tax avoidance policies of multinationals are among the darker sides of globalisation' (Tax Justice Network 2008), and also cause African resource-endowed countries to suffer the loss of massive amounts of capital.

Thus, Africa's oil remains anchored in a global political economy, consigning the continent to the position of a supplier of 'cheap' oil to the world market as well as a supplier of capital. This process of the subordination of Africa's oil production to domination by oil-MNC and transnational elites, and the demands of the global market has meant that oil investments 'have been concentrated in secured enclaves, often with little or no benefit to the wider society' (Ferguson 2005, p. 378). In a post-9/11 world, additional priority has been given to the security of Africa as a source of oil supply, the protection of Western oil investments and shipping, and the ability of African states to effectively police and neutralise transnational crimes, including terrorism. For this and other reasons, violent conflict in oil-rich African states is not strictly speaking the inevitable outcome of purely internal predatory or opportunistic activities. It connects a complex maze of transnational-local linkages and also includes the cumulative impact of global financial processes and policies towards Africa.

There is some evidence that in Nigeria's Niger Delta, some oil companies either made direct payments to armed groups or awarded contracts to them ostensibly to provide 'security' for oil installations (WAC Global Services 2003), thereby fuelling local conflict dynamics. Such oil multinationals have also sought to blame oil spills on acts of sabotage by oil thieves and militias while playing down the intimate relationship and complicity between the oil company and the state, in part symbolised by company payments to state security forces guarding oil installations, and bribes paid by multinationals to top state officials to secure oil contracts (Garuba 2009, Voreacos 2010).

In the case of the oil industry, corruption is not an entirely internally driven process. Oil MNCs are complicit with political and economic elites in engaging in corruption and violence, taking advantage of the character of the Nigerian petro-state and elites to reap superprofits. Commenting on the scale and scope of corruption in Nigeria, the former chairman of the country's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu recognised his limitations (while in office) when confronted with multinationals bribing top government officials, thus: 'Most of this is happening outside Nigeria. The documents are not in Nigeria. The money is not in Nigeria. The entire transactions do take place outside' (Quoted in Bergman 2009). This underscores the transnational nature of high-level corruption based on the common interest in profit and wealth by foreign MNCs and Nigerian political elites.

The transnational nature of extractive oil actors operating in oil-producing enclaves such as the Niger Delta underscores the point that the global political economy plays a defining role in power and social relations around oil and its 'curse'. Therefore the oil curse is not entirely internal to the oil-rich state, nor is the conflict or corruption limited to local and state actors, rather it is embedded in the commodification of oil by transnational economic forces as an object of high profit and strategic value in the global market, making such actors central to the negative spin-offs from globalised oil extraction in Africa.

The oil curse thesis: a conceptual overview

An overview of the existing debate indicates that the oil curse thesis is far from being a settled issue. According to Ross (2004), 'natural resources play a key role in triggering, prolonging, and financing conflicts'. This resonates with Billon's view with regard to the recently ended Angolan civil war, that 'abundant and secure oil rent allowed the MPLA party to wage a long and violent civil war against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) since the 1970's' (2007, p. 39). Zeroing in on oil, Ross (2008, p. 2) also notes, 'oil wealth often wreaks havoc on a country's economy and politics, makes it easier for insurgents to fund their rebellions, and aggravates ethnic grievances.' Exploring the resource abundance – conflict nexus, De Soysa and Neumeyer (2007, p. 202), identify 'two distinct and prominent models explaining the link – finance for rebellion and weak states', a point similarly made by Lujala (2010, pp. 15–16). The institutional weaknesses that plague resource-rich countries are attributed to the 'rentier effect' that fuels corruption and misrule by predatory elites who privatise and personalise state power and subvert the developmental process (Herbst 2000, Fearon 2005).

As noted earlier, some of the claims of the protagonists of the resource curse thesis have been challenged. Of note in this regard is the study by Alexeev and Conrad (2009, p. 587), in which they 'reject the claim that natural resource wealth is a curse that makes countries worse off in any significant way'. Rather they argue, based on 'long-term growth measurements of GDP per capita levels rather than calculating growth rates over a given period of time, that oil and mineral resources enhance long-term growth, and are neutral with respect to the quality of the countries institutions' (2009, p. 586). Their regressions and conclusions 'contradict most, if not all, of the empirical literature on the resource curse' (Alexeev and Conrad 2009, p. 592), and do point to some of the methodological flaws inherent in the assumptions underpinning the resource curse thesis. They also direct attention to some of the 'blind spots' in the data sets used by resource curse protagonists, and cast some doubt on the validity of their claims.

In another vein, the neglect of the stabilising aspects of resource endowment on states by the resource curse protagonists has been critiqued. Thus, contrary to the aspect of rentier state theory which posits that resource-rich states are weak, corrupt and authoritarian and therefore susceptible to conflict, it is argued that 'governments use abundant resources to buy off opposition or suppress armed rebellion, thereby contributing to political stability and preventing armed conflict' (Basedau and Lay 2009, p. 758). A similar point is made by Oliveira (2007, p. 62), who notes that resource endowment can lead to 'astonishingly successful strategies of political survival amidst decay.' Basedau and Lay draw attention to 'country specific factors' and how these can lead to different outcomes by comparing (a conflict-impacted) Nigeria with (relatively peaceful) Saudi Arabia, noting that 'countries oil-rich in per capita terms are spared from internal violence despite being highly dependent' (2009, pp. 758, 774).

The oil curse: a critique

Lujala's recent conclusions that 'oil substantially prolongs conflict when located in the conflict zone', and access to oil plays a key role in determining the viability of rebel movements and financing conflict merit close attention (2010, p. 18). While the literature on conflicts in oil-rich African countries is largely absent from the study, it is mentioned briefly that oil may be a better financing source (for rebels in the Niger Delta), through oil theft (illegal oil bunkering) (2010, p. 26). While Lujala makes a contribution regarding the 'lootability of oil', it is unclear if any strong connection between looted oil, Niger Delta rebels and conflict is established beyond using the abstract model to fit reality, except that in this case, the reality is far too complex for the model. Some of the shortcomings of such an approach have been earlier empirically demonstrated by Watts (2007, pp. 637–660), who noted that any rigid demarcation between government and rebels is flawed (2007, p. 651), as is the absence of the agency of oil companies operating in the Niger Delta in the 'models of rebellion or civil war'. Also a recent field study by Omotola (2010, p. 50) notes the 'considerable levels of support for youth militias among the people of the region', but also recognises the complications posed by violence and criminality to the struggle for resource control in the region. This further points to the problem of drawing conclusions on a rather narrow reading of a complex conflict such as that of the Niger Delta, whose roots predate the discovery of oil, and connect both 'localised global' and globalised local forces of extraction and resistance.

Another recent study challenges the view that resource endowment inevitably leads to the curse of conflict (Basedau and Lay 2009). By differentiating between the impact of resource wealth *per capita*, and resource dependence on the risk of civil conflict, it is posited that countries with high resource wealth *per capita* are able to avoid internal conflict, through distributive politics, co-optation and effective use of a sophisticated security apparatus. This point is illustrated using a high wealth *per capita* country – Saudi Arabia, where civil war is absent, and a low wealth *per capita* country – Nigeria, which faces an insurgency in the oil-rich Niger Delta region.

It is not clear to what extent these conclusions hold valid for conflicts in African petro-states, particularly since they leave out the role of historical factors, and external forces, particularly in the context of the securitisation of Africa's oil by hegemonic transnational forces. Even when the authors invoke the 'outside protection' factor to explain the role of a French garrison in securing Gabon (2009, p. 773), they do not go as far as to explain its connection with French political, strategic and oil interests in the country (Shaxson 2007), nor do they examine the role of oil companies investing in the oil sectors (and funding the petro-states) in Libya and Equatorial Guinea.

The resource curse thesis can be faulted on the basis of its 'prevailing evaluation methodologies on the basis of measurement errors, incorrect specification of the models and the high probability of spurious correlations' (UNRISD 2007, p. 12). The pathologies of an oil curse therefore thrive on a determinate relationship between aspects of oil endowment and negative outcomes, a position that simplifies what is in reality a far more complex relationship that is neither inevitable nor natural. Such pathologies inform mainstream analyses of oil-endowed states such as Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea and Angola, that on the surface reflect most of the features associated with the resource curse – corruption, conflict, instability and high levels of poverty.

Two critical points are missing in such postulations. These are the absence of the ways in which dominant global interests provide support for, and profit from, the behaviour of African petro-states. The second relates to the ways in which the 'curse' is really a political and economic construct, a product of a particular constellation of extractive transnational social forces, histories and hegemonic power relations built upon the commoditisation of oil for the global market. Oil as a commodity is not the curse, rather it is 'cursed' by the high premium placed on it by the world's most powerful and strategic actors for whom it represents a most critical fuel of globalised capital and industrial power.

It is these dominant global forces and their local partners – the ruling elites of African petro-states that have subordinated African oil more to the interest of a globally integrated oil market, and less with the demands and interests of local people and economies. While local peoples live out the harsh realities of the 'cursed oil' in the polluted oil communities of the Niger Delta, the forcibly displaced communities of Sudan or outside the fenced-off portions of oil MNC camps in Equatorial Guinea, and Angola (Ferguson 2005), the oil MNCs, transnational elites and their local partners live up the full blessings of oil wealth.

Critiquing the perspective linking oil abundance to violent conflict, Di John (2007, p. 977) argues that the view that 'oil states are more prone to civil conflict' as represented on the abstract modelling of the resource curse protagonists, 'does not demonstrate causality'. Such analysis is largely ahistorical, apolitical and selective in the variables and data sets that it uses in its analysis. It adds up to smoke and mirrors, as the reality of resource conflict is definitely more complex with connections that transcend the oil-rich state and its economy (Lahiri-Dutt 2006, pp. 14–17, Watts 2007).

The case of Nigeria

The conflict in the Nigeria's Niger Delta[3] has also been analysed from the resource-curse perspective (Ikelegbe 2006, Collier 2007, p. 30). Of relevance to the analysis is the focus on rebels/militias, local elites and the state motivated by the greed-driven quest to corner oil wealth/rents. Apart from this, the oil-related conflict in the Niger Delta has been analysed in the context of a 'critically weak Nigerian state' (Rice and Patrick 2008, p. 16), considered unable to ensure security within its territory (Pham 2007). When applied to the Niger Delta, the resource curse analysis leads to the conclusion that oil 'blocks' democracy (Ross 2001, 2008), and promotes corruption and violent conflict.

Such a conclusion would be rather superficial, given the nature of the political and economic elite, and the ways oil production and commoditisation spawn or deepen social contradictions, unequal power relations and inequities at two levels: state–society and local–global. In many regards, the unequal power relations and (ethnic minority) grievances in the Niger Delta were well established before oil became a significant factor in Nigeria's political economy. The emergence of oil as the fiscal basis of the state from 1970 only added a rather volatile dimension to pre-existing grievances and the quest for local autonomy in the oil-rich Niger Delta region.

The roots of violent conflict in the Niger Delta as in other oil-rich contexts in Africa do not lie in pools of oil; they lie in the inequitable (transnational: local, national and global) power relations embedded in the production of oil and the highly skewed distribution of its benefits and pernicious liabilities (Obi 2007, 2008, 2009). This was manifested in the non-response to – and later repression of – peaceful protests against the exploitation and pollution of the oil-rich region by a state–transnational oil alliance whose activities alienated the ordinary people from the land and means of their livelihoods, poisoned the ecosystem, deepened pre-existing inequalities and grievances, and paved the way for the descent into violent conflict (Ukeje 2001, Okonta 2005, Ukiwo 2007, Obi 2010). They can also be explained by the high-handed response of the state to initially peaceful protests, the militarisation of the region and the complicity of oil multinationals and transnational elites benefiting from oil production (and pollution) in the region.

Some premium has been placed on the violent and criminal activities of ethnic militias and armed groups involved in oil theft, kidnapping of oil workers and extorting oil companies, thus posing threats to oil investments in the Niger Delta (Collier 2007, pp. 30–31, Ianaccone 2007). Some analysts have even gone as far as to speculate on a 'terrorist threat' possibly to attract the attention of the Western security establishment (Cesarz, Morrison and Cooke 2003, Marquardt 2006). Such analysis and projections only tell part of the story. What is not usually explained are the fluid boundaries between resistance, militancy and criminality, and how the social conditions created both by the operations and policies of the state and oil MNCs have directly contributed to, and in some cases nurtured, the emergence of opportunistic elements manipulating the groundswell of grievances, high levels of youth unemployment and poverty to pursue different agendas. The other side of the coin is that broad brushstrokes criminalising all forms of protest in the Niger Delta region gloss over the roots of the crisis and the basis for legitimate protest, and increase the risk that such flawed analysis will lead to wrong conclusions and policies that may prove to be either short lived, or ineffective, or both.

As mentioned earlier, the WAC Global Services (2003) document has established how some oil companies through patronage/largesse to local elites and youth groups to ease entry and provide 'protection' to company interests and assets provided 'fuel' for conflict between the groups, between them and their benefactors, and within and between communities. In spite of the large sums of money devoted to oil company corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets for the Niger Delta, these have not adequately addressed the needs of the communities, while in some cases, they have fed into cycles of intra- and inter-community violence (Human Rights Watch 2002, 2005, Obi 2004, Best and Kemedi 2005, Ikelegbe 2006, von Kemedi 2006).

Either way, the profits go to the state, the transnational elites (including Nigerian power elites), global financial institutions and oil corporations, while the costs and real curses go to those whose lands and livelihoods are polluted or expropriated, and whose rights are trampled underfoot as they continue to live out a paradoxically impoverished existence in an oil-rich, but blighted context. What flows from the foregoing is the emergence of a transnational hegemonic class united around a common interest of the extraction of oil – and the sharing of its spoils – but having little or nothing in common with the ordinary folk in the Niger Delta, even when they share the same nationality as the Nigerian faction of the global elite.

Conclusion: peering through the smoke and mirrors

From the foregoing, it is argued that the 'oil curse' is a fetish hinged upon a partial reading of the internal processes in oil-rich African countries without capturing its connections to globalised class relations and capitalist accumulation by dispossession, in which transnational elites appropriate the resources that could have gone to African workers, peasants and people in the informal sector. It seeks to divert attention from the class identities of the winners and losers from oil endowment, and the ways the (violent) oil-extractive ethos drives particular social contradictions that fuel conflict either in the form of ensuring the conditions for exploitation, resistance to dispossession, or struggles for ownership of oil (Obi 2010).

Oil endowment is not the curse, though oil is cursed by the high premium placed on it by globalised capitalism, spawning inequalities and contradictions fed by an insatiable greed for finite hydrocarbon resources by the world's industrial powers, and often at huge environmental and social costs to its victims. There are several resource-rich countries that have 'escaped' the resource curse, including Norway (Larsen 2004), and Canada. The reasons behind their 'success stories' is as much about history, as it is about politics, class relations, economic power and their control of their resources, having 'escaped' the pillage of their resources by interventionist and predatory local and transnational forces. Given this situation, the challenge is the need for a grounded understanding of the historical, socio-economic and political conditions and structures that 'can and do mediate the relationship between resource abundance and developmental outcomes' (Brunnschweiler and Bulte 2006, UNRISD 2007, p. 12).

Therefore, rather than an excessive focus on the ways in which abundant oil endowment provokes the 'failure' of African states: poverty, corruption and violent conflict, much more attention needs to directed at the historical construction of grievance(s), the nature of state–society relations and the linkages between the local–national–global in what is in reality a transnationally constructed relationship, which benefits all the dominant factions embedded in globalised oil-led capitalist extraction, transfer and accumulation. Those who experience oil as a curse are mainly the majority – who are poor and whose livelihoods are alienated and threatened by the political economy of globalised capital – and the depredations of a rapacious transnational elite.

Another challenge relates to the need to transcend 'resource–conflict determinism' in the search for the complex roots of, and local–global linkages to violent conflict in Africa. An important issue to focus on is the role of the heavy external debt burden and capital flight from the continent, of which corruption is responsible for less than 10%. Given that the bulk of the capital flight from Africa has been shown to be linked to transfer pricing by multinationals, corporate sharp practices and tax evasion using transnational financial and banking processes (Tax Justice Network 2008, Bracking 2009), it is apposite to also focus attention on this source of greater loss of Africa's resources, and the mass transfer of natural wealth outside the continent by transnational elites. By analysing such processes and the impact of market-oriented economic policies aimed at deregulating

Africa's economies in the 1980s and 1990s in the name of structural adjustment, the ways in which processes of financial globalisation contributed to the impoverishment of the continent can be laid bare. Beyond this, it also shows some of the limitations of ahistorical and short-term data sets that inform statistical analysis of the resource–conflict nexus.

The present conjuncture in the continent throws up a specific challenge to social scientists and humanists to radically re-engage with the oil-development discourse, and devise new vistas for the analysis of how transnational processes and actors extract and export capital from African oil-rich states, and how the contradictions from such processes and activities spawn crisis and conflict in the continent. This is a necessary step towards overcoming the limitations of perspectives that distort the picture by obscuring the role of transnational actors and processes, and pave the way for a better-informed model based on a radical political economy, which exposes the inequities, unequal power relations, inequalities and hegemonic global class relations that underpin conflict in the continent.

At the heart of an alternative model should be devising strategies for winning back the bulk of Africa's resources and capital exported from the continent rather than being directed at the development of its people. The fundamental questions posed should be: who controls the oil and whose interest(s) do they serve? For in the service of the people: through equity, social justice and sustainable development, oil can be a source of peace and 'blessings' to the majority of African people.

To tap into the blessings of oil, two issues are fundamental to a new struggle to reverse the mal-effects of an artificial oil curse: a radical transformation of the African oil state and institutions away from the current ethos that serves narrow interests, and hegemonic and transnational forces intent on fostering the integration of the continent into the global capitalist system on clearly disadvantageous terms, and the emergence of a visionary and radical leadership capable of building a new social pact with the people based on an emancipatory, transformative, environmentally sustainable and participatory developmental democracy.

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Notes

1. Africa presently accounts for about 12% of US oil imports and that is expected to increase to 25% by 2025, making some US strategic analysts see the continent as an 'alternative' to dependence on an oil-rich, but volatile Middle East.
2. These Asian countries also consider Africa as being strategic to their global energy security concerns. China, currently the world's second largest oil importer, and India, that relies on an estimated 70% oil imports, are looking on to Africa for more oil to fuel their rapid economic growth. Both countries have framed their quest for Africa's oil within the context of an Asian aid diplomacy that is developmentalist and non-interventionist.
3. According to the most recent figures, as a result of the insurgency in the Niger Delta that has resulted in damage to oil infrastructure and oil production shut-ins, Nigeria has for the first time been overtaken by Angola as the continent's leading oil exporter.

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DEBATE

Poverty reduction is not development

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A couple of generations ago, basic notions of development economics were widely understood. It was common for policy makers and foreign aid agencies to discuss strategies of industrialisation and employment policies, based on high levels of sustained public investment as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), and a necessary transition away from producing only raw primary commodities and extracting natural resources, towards building new manufacturing and services industries of increasing sophistication over time. But in recent decades almost all of that has been lost. In the modern official discourse of the foreign aid agencies, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between 'foreign aid', 'poverty reduction' and 'development assistance', for example, as these terms are often used interchangeably. People no longer seem to have a clear notion of 'development' for the poorer countries, and the far more vague notions in today's dominant discourse about 'poverty reduction' or 'poverty eradication' have seemingly replaced the earlier understanding about what all the foreign aid is supposed to be for in the first place.

If you ask those in the official bilateral and multilateral foreign aid agencies or the many non-governmental organisation (NGO) advocacy organisations what the foreign aid is supposed to be for in the first place, many may likely answer, 'to help countries develop'. But when one asks, 'What is development?' one is surprised at the lack of ready answers available. It is striking how many of the major development and aid agencies, institutions and think tanks neglect to even offer a clear definition. Perhaps the proliferation of aid contractors and the aid industry, with thousands of individual projects and programmes across dozens of countries, has narrowed the issue of development down to simply meaning the completion of particular projects – but has digging 10 wells in villages or administering 3000 vaccinations in a rural district become a stand-in for 'development'? Is meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) supposed to be tantamount to development? Is improving human development indicators or reducing poverty supposed to be the same thing as development, or is development something more?

The official discourse seems to have undergone a profound shift in the last few decades. By the early 1990s, the free trade and free-market-oriented economic reforms that had been strongly advocated by the Reagan and Thatcher governments in the 1980s were being heavily criticised for their seeming lack of concern for the poor and neglect of progress on human development indicators such as health, literacy, hunger, access to clean water, gender sensitivity, and so on. By the end

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of the 1990s, this type of 'poverty reduction' terminology being championed by NGOs was adopted by the United Nations (UN) bodies and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, which ramped up this discourse and led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. The MDGs are a list of key human development and poverty-reduction indicators to be achieved by the international aid community in developing countries by the target date of 2015. They have been used successfully by aid advocates to pressure donor countries to pledge to increase their levels of foreign aid, leading to the grandiose promise made by the rich countries at the 2005 G8 Summit in the United Kingdom to double their amounts of aid by 2010. While that has not happened, the MDGs have been used effectively to reframe the entire discussion around aid and development to create an explicit focus on getting poverty levels reduced. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank followed suit by changing the names of their controversial structural adjustment loan programmes by inserting the words 'poverty reduction' into their new titles.

Along the way, the new discourse has led to confusion and a loss of focus. Completely forgotten are earlier notions of what constitutes economic 'development' that included the idea of industrialisation, or that process by which countries shift over time from producing only primary commodities and extracting natural resources towards manufacturing and services industries with increasingly higher technological sophistication and value-added. The idea was to create increased levels of productive employment as a way out of poverty, and to diversify the economy to avoid dependence on just a few low-level commodities. The rich countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) are regularly referred to as the 'industrialised countries' for a reason, and yet these basic notions have been all but eliminated from the discussion today.

The idea of industrialisation, along with its corollary of Keynesian full employment goals and large public investments in agriculture and infrastructure, was jettisoned from the official aid agenda in the 1980s with the onset of the free market ideology that has since become dominant and established in the economic policy prescriptions of the so-called Washington Consensus, which call for minimal government intervention and maximum freedom for market forces. By the 1990s, the idea that states should play a proactive role in supporting the development of domestic industry had become decidedly unfashionable in the foreign aid community. Rather than focus on 'national' economic development, the new mantra became 'integration with the global economy' as the route to development. Micro-credit to enable individual villagers to become entrepreneurs had become acceptable, but full-blown industrial policy was off the radar. Terms such as 'trade protection', 'subsidies', 'capital controls' and other forms of 'industrial policies' came to be met with derision and disdain. Anyone from those in the aid agencies to the recipient African ministries interested in advancing their careers or getting more foreign aid for their governments learned to quickly dispense with such terminology.

Because of the belief that the unfettered market would solve everything automatically, the aid industry had only to concern itself with ameliorating the suffering and focusing on basic human needs, which led to the logic of the MDGs. By the 1990s, the Washington Consensus had replaced earlier pathways to development, with its overriding idea that if developing countries simply cut their budget deficits and keep them under control, raised interest rates if necessary to get inflation down and keep it down, privatised, deregulated and opened their trade and financial accounts to the global economy, they would be rewarded with higher economic growth and development. The supremacy of this set of ideas and the belief that, as UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said, 'there is no alternative', has imbued this approach to development with a singularity that excludes any possible alternatives, or the search for any. Thus, today these ideas have become so widely accepted they are ubiquitous, and not even considered in the conscious mind: they have become the backdrop in discussions of foreign aid and for understandings of development.

The only problem for African countries and others in the developing world is that such a policy approach has failed to lead to the successful economic development that was promised. Instead, the record has shown that by themselves markets cannot determine the direction of development, and cannot deliver growth and redistribution, job creation or social protection.

Countries such as China, to some extent, India, and regions such as East and South-East Asia, have experienced strong growth during the last few decades and have managed to significantly reduce poverty levels, particularly in urban areas. These successes have driven the aggregate global poverty levels down; but not every region or country has recorded such progress, and there has generally been less poverty reduction in many other countries which have experienced little or no growth. In fact, according to United Nations and World Bank data, the absolute number of poor people has gone up in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and northern Africa, as well as in central Asia (Mekay 2004, Chen and Ravallion 2008, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affaires 2009). Where some economic growth has occurred in developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, it has often been tied to price increases in global markets for their commodity exports, but this has rarely translated into poverty reduction or national economic diversification into manufacturing and services. This has been especially the case when higher growth has been concentrated in extractive industries, which has not resulted in much job growth and structural change. Additionally, high or rising inequality within countries has undermined the poverty-reducing effects of growth where it has occurred.

By 2003, such facts of the track record led Mark Malloch Brown, then administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to call for a reaffirmation of the role of the state in development policy: 'Market reforms are not enough. You can't just liberalise; you need an interventionist strategy' (Elliot 2003). But such insights fell on deaf ears in foreign aid agencies, where a near-religious belief in free trade and free markets still goes largely unchallenged.

If we ask ourselves what the basic indicators of economic 'development' had been a few decades earlier, common understandings would have looked to employment and production. The questions asked would have been: are there more jobs and domestic companies in the formal sector (contributing to the tax base) than there used to be? Is the level of public investment as a percentage of GDP by the government increasing or not? Is the level of workers' wages as a percentage of GDP increasing or not? Is the economy diversifying and moving from primary agriculture and extractives into new manufacturing and services industries or not? Yet, not only are these kinds of questions no longer being considered by the 'development' experts, but if asked, the track record of many countries in Africa and beyond shows that the answers in many cases would be 'no'. Here the dominant poverty reduction discourse presents a dilemma. Some countries have scored some improvements on their poverty indicators. But even for countries with improved Human Development Index (HDI) scores, can they be 'developing' successfully when they are not increasing their levels of formal sector employment, when workers are not earning higher wages, when there are not more domestic companies engaged in increasingly diverse productive activities and when the tax bases are not growing? Arguably not. But then again, in the foreign aid agencies, no one is asking.

The rise of the doctrine of free markets and free trade was partially enabled by the failures of previous attempts at industrialisation in developing countries from the 1950s through the 1970s. Many industrial policies used by African governments to support and protect infant industries failed because they were driven by political considerations, nepotism or corruption, and not by economic analyses or strict efficiency grounds (Robinson 2009). In contrast, the structures of the political economy in several East Asian countries included institutions that tended to enforce stricter rules for which industries got subsidies and trade protection, and which were cut off from them when they failed to meet performance targets. Yet, this history says more about 'how' industrial policies should be done, not 'if' they should be done.

The use of industrial policies, in which the government supports the emergence of new industries with publicly financed research and development (R&D), in acquiring new technologies, with subsidies, trade protection, subsidised credit, and other mechanisms, had long been part of mainstream development economics until they came under sustained attack from advocates of free trade and free markets in the late 1970s and 1980s. Critics argued that industrial policy had not worked and indeed could not work because government failures were always worse than market failure. They advocated that industrial policy or for that matter any other policy intervention to solve problems of development should be discarded and replaced with a focus on creating free markets and greatly reducing the role of the state to that of a light regulator, if at all.

As the Washington Consensus logic of hard-nosed efficiency gained acceptance, the subtext was that any industries which were not capable of competing in international open markets should not be protected with tariffs or subsidies but should be gotten rid of. The earlier long-standing notion of industrialisation as an evolutionary learning process was abandoned, along with the corollary idea that 'it is it better to have an inefficient industry than no industry at all' (Reinert 2007).

These critics were certainly correct in pointing to some very unsuccessful instances of industry policy in Africa and elsewhere, but they were selective in their criticisms and ignored successful cases. Furthermore, the critics did not account for why industrial policies had worked so well in the United States, Europe and East Asia but failed so badly in Africa and Latin America. Instead, they just tossed out the baby with the bathwater and took the whole discussion of industrialisation off the table. Future access to foreign aid and debt restructuring would be conditioned on rolling back the state and the satisfactory implementation of Washington Consensus reforms. And so the modern world we have come to be known over the last three decades was born.

The shift in the university curricula was equally dramatic, largely eliminating over time the history of the extensive use of industrial policies by the rich countries over the last few centuries, from the time of Henry VII in England in 1485 through the successful East Asian industrialisation of the last 50 years (Chang 2002, Reinert 2007). Instead, many students of economics and development in the last few decades have only been taught neoclassical free trade theory and the efficient market hypothesis. Increasingly, students of economics only get mathematical models and elegant equations that are entirely devoid of the messiness of real-world contexts or 'externalities' such as politics. Indeed, many of today's central bankers and finance ministry officials throughout Africa, who have gone to school at elite universities in the United States and Europe, have only learned neoclassical economic theory and returned home to try to implement it, even though it stands in stark contrast to what the rich countries actually did to industrialise successfully.

As the Norwegian historian of economic policies, Erik Reinert (2007), has lamented, there is no discipline called the History of Economic Policies; students learn quite well what Adam Smith said the UK should do, but they learn virtually nothing about what the UK actually did. Others, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Alice Amsden (2001) and Cambridge's Ha-Joon Chang (2002), have attempted to resurrect this forgotten historical record, but they are up against two or three generations who have only learned neoclassical theory. Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz is aware of this phenomenon, too, and has advised African officials: 'Don't do as the US tells you, do as the US *did*' (Stiglitz 2003). If students of economics and development actually learned the history of industrial policies used by the rich countries, perhaps efforts to industrialise the African continent would look different today.

There are, however, some interesting new cracks in the dominant mythology of the Washington Consensus policies, not least of which was offered by former Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, who in 2008 conceded, 'I was wrong' about the efficient market hypothesis, which suggests that banks and financial institutions would not engage in excessively risky over-leveraging out of a sense of self-interest, and thus there was no need for government regulation of the financial sector (Andrews 2008).

In the wake of the recent financial upheavals, research has shown that those countries which went against IMF admonitions and used some type of capital controls actually weathered the crisis much better than those which had adopted the Washington Consensus dogma of liberalised open capital accounts. Indeed, even the IMF has conceded such in recent staff papers that have found there may be some efficacy to such state intervention after all, something which would have been dismissed as pure heresy just a few years ago (Subramanian and Williamson 2009, IMF 2010).

Equally compelling was former President Bill Clinton's remorseful apology about having pushed premature trade liberalisation on Haiti. Decades of inexpensive imports, especially rice from the US, have destroyed local agriculture as domestic companies could not compete against the floods of cheaper imports. Such premature trade liberalisation policies have left impoverished countries such as Haiti unable to feed themselves and shifted many former food exporters into net food importers today. While those policies have been criticised for years in aid worker circles, world leaders focused on fixing Haiti are admitting for the first time that lowering trade barriers only exacerbated hunger in Haiti and elsewhere. In March of this year, Clinton, now UN special envoy to Haiti, publicly apologised for having championed the free trade policies that destroyed Haiti's rice production. In the mid 1990s, his administration along with the World Bank encouraged the impoverished country to dramatically cut tariffs on imported US rice. 'It may have been good for some of my farmers in Arkansas, but it has not worked. It was a mistake,' Clinton told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 10. 'I had to live every day with the consequences of the loss of capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people because of what I did; nobody else' (Katz 2010). While the lessons could easily apply to most countries in Africa as well, the idea that industrial policies such as trade protection may actually be useful for promoting jobs, domestic companies and economic development remains lost on those currently engaged in providing foreign aid, and seemingly on many of those willing to receive it.

As with the whole set of Washington Consensus policies, the idea of trade liberalisation has taken on a life of its own and become enthroned as an end in itself, and unqualified free trade theory has deeply influenced development policy. Yet such rapid, across-the-board, premature trade liberalisation in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere since the 1980s and 1990s has in fact led to the destruction of many existing industries, particularly of those that were at their early stages of development, entailing massive job losses without necessarily leading to the emergence of new ones. The nascent industries in Africa were especially hard hit. According to some estimates by the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), total income losses for sub-Saharan Africa from trade liberalisation amounted to US$270 billion over the past two decades – more than the total foreign aid received by the region (UNCTAD 2005). In striking contrast, the newly industrialising economies in China, India and East Asia have taken a much more gradual and selective path to trade liberalisation, much like Europe, Japan and the US did, as part of a long-term industrial policy, lowering trade protection only *after* they had reached a certain level of industrialisation and development when firms were in a position to compete internationally (Amsden 2001, Chang 2002, Stiglitz *et al.* 2006).

Despite the failure of the Washington Consensus policies to lead to substantive real economic development in Africa, such policies continue to move full speed ahead as policy reform conditions on most new IMF and World Bank loans. Such loans are regularly approved by the representatives of finance ministries of most rich countries, who approve such loans on the executive boards of the institutions in Washington. The flipside of this is that every six months or so the IMF missions visit African capitals where the finance ministries sign on the dotted line and pledge to continue to implement such policies in return for the official 'green light' IMF signal to aid agencies and capital markets of their creditworthiness.

Such polices also continue unhindered in the ongoing World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations and in the proliferation of new bilateral and regional free trade agreements and investment treaties being negotiated by the US, European Union (EU), China and others with willing African trade ministries, who believe they will one day gain greater access for their exports into northern markets. The current WTO negotiations include an agenda item that involves principally reductions in industrial tariffs. Referred to as non-agricultural market access (NAMA), these negotiations are problematic because they could lead to even further significant job losses, very significant tariff revenue losses not recouped from other sources of revenue, and they could narrow the remaining 'policy space' for many African countries to pursue industrialisation strategies by removing, or outlawing, the flexible future use of such tariffs in different industrial sectors and over time. Strategic use of tariffs can mean applying very low tariffs at one point in time on imported inputs but higher tariffs on other final products for which the local economic base is not yet ready to compete internationally. History shows that the industrialised countries and East Asian success stories made abundant strategic use of such tariffs as part of their development strategies. But because of years of having already implemented Washington Consensus policies, developing countries on average today have much lower tariffs than the rich countries had at a comparable stage of development. Despite this, many African countries still have some potential to use remaining tariffs flexibly because their current applied rates are much lower than the rate at which they already committed to in the WTO (the 'bound rates'). Yet, now the rich countries are demanding in the NAMA talks that such remaining flexibility should be removed entirely, both in terms of the actual level of tariffs and the ability to use different tariff levels for different sectors at different stages of development. However, removing all future flexibilities to raise tariffs in support of industrialisation would not only lead to further job losses, it could also lead to African economies becoming 'locked' into low-value-added production paths that would hinder their potential to create more productive employment, decent jobs, more advanced industries and move up the development ladder (Busser 2009).

A fatal flaw in the reasoning of the dominant Washington Consensus/MDGs approach is that development will be realised through external inputs, such as more foreign aid, allowing more foreign investment, remittances flows and debt relief. Yet this approach is wholly insufficient and the tax bases of many least-developed countries are not increasing (McKinley and Kyrili 2009), more domestic firms are not being created, and economies are not diversifying. In order for these aspects of meaningful economic development to be realised, African policy makers will have to pursue proactive use of various industrial policies.

These fundamental ideas were well exemplified in UNCTAD's annual LDC Report for 2006, which called for a 'paradigm shift' in national and international policies to promote development. The UNCTAD report seeks to move sharply away from the Washington Consensus approach and the dominant focus on external inputs and to restore an earlier emphasis on policies that can proactively build domestic productive capacities.

The report finds that productive capacities develop within a country through three closely interrelated processes: capital accumulation, technological progress and structural change. In almost all the least-developed countries (LDCs) there is an imbalance between the rate of growth of the labour force, which is very rapid owing to population growth, and the rates of capital accumulation and technological progress, which are generally very slow. It examines the working of these processes within the LDCs, and discusses three basic constraints on them: the deficient infrastructure systems; weak institutions, notably firms, domestic financial systems and domestic knowledge systems; and a lack of sufficient demand. It suggests how these constraints may be addressed, drawing on a range of policies that are today considered 'heterodox' or alternative, and which go against the Washington Consensus model of the last 30 years, but which were used extensively by all of the successfully industrialised countries, and are urgently in need of serious consideration today (UNCTAD 2006).

In Africa, the lack of national physical infrastructure systems, including transport, telecommunications, water and energy, is one of the most serious constraints for building domestic productive capacities. Although possibilities for private financing of physical infrastructure should not be neglected, the past record of the free-market approach shows that this source alone cannot meet infrastructure needs (Estache 2004, Bayliss 2009). There is thus a need for increased domestic public investment and a reversal of the downward trend in aid for economic infrastructure which a number of developing countries, particularly in Africa, have experienced in the period 1990–2003. Physical infrastructure provides strong complementarities between private and public investment which can serve as an important source of growth and influence on the composition and distribution of gains from growth. Public investment in such infrastructure can be a key factor in raising the levels of productivity and productive capacity in order to generate a net surplus as a key source of accumulation in all sectors of the economy (Roy 2006). However, according to UNCTAD, infrastructure investment should not only focus on investment in trade-related infrastructure for exports, but rather there is a significant need for more of a joined-up approach to infrastructure development which includes: rural infrastructure and district-level links between rural areas and small towns; large-scale national infrastructure (such as trunk roads, transmission lines and port facilities); and cross-border regional infrastructure (UNCTAD 2006).

Another major problem in many African countries is the so-called 'missing middle' in the domestic enterprise structure, with a multitude of informal sector micro-enterprises coexisting with a few large firms, and relatively few formal-sector small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly medium-sized firms, which are often weakly developed. In addition, these SMEs face numerous obstacles to expansion. SMEs are certainly important as they tend to use local inputs and thus are the agents that link local primary and manufacturing activities. They are also key providers of both formal and informal sector employment for the local population. But according to UNCTAD, an exclusive focus on SMEs (to the neglect of large domestic firms) is often based on a *static* view of the development process. From a longer-term and *dynamic* efficiency perspective, UNCTAD suggests large-size domestic firms are in a better position to generate the resources to realise higher rates of capital formation, technological innovation, economies of scale and the accompanying learning effects. Such firms are also in a far better position to diversify into higher value-added activities. Therefore, it is important to get better financing options available to domestic SMEs *and* large firms.

One major reason why SMEs do not grow is that there is an inadequate domestic demand for their products. Fostering improved linkages between large domestic firms and SMEs is an important demand-side measure to complement the supply-side measures for SME development. Moreover, such inter-firm linkages can also facilitate knowledge transfers, technology transfer and technological upgrading.

Although difficulties with firm entry are major problems, a more significant constraint for new entrants is acquiring the required technological capabilities and affordable financing to grow. Greater attention thus needs to be given to constraints on firm growth, not just market entry. Attention should also be given to dealing with the anti-competitive conduct of oligopolistic processors and exporters (some of which are vertically integrated with multinational corporations), which often prevents domestic diversification and the development of new processing industries.

The working of financial systems and knowledge systems is closely related to the issue of enterprise development. In many African countries and other LDCs, financial markets are weak and subject to major market failures. Increasingly, in a more liberalised policy environment, foreign financial institutions have come to dominate, but the narrow client base has not expanded and remains concentrated on either the government or few large domestic and foreign firms. Overcoming bottlenecks in affordable financing for domestic private sector firms should be a critical priority for policymakers in developing countries, yet strikingly little has been done on this front, often because IMF and central bank policy prefers to raise interest rates in order to keep consumer price inflation unnecessarily low.

Knowledge systems are as important as financial systems in the development of domestic productive capacities. Thus proactive public policies to improve domestic knowledge systems should complement efforts to improve domestic financial systems. Investing in all levels of education is particularly important given the currently low levels of schooling which are found in most African countries and LDCs. Low literacy and skill levels make technology absorption difficult and slows down the technological catch-up process. Countries need to develop well-designed and coherent national technology learning strategies to increase access to technology and to improve the effectiveness of imported technology, as well as to benefit from linking to global knowledge. Public policies, firms' needs, and educational investments must be carefully co-ordinated, because when schools train people with skills for which there are no jobs, such people emigrate, leading to a wasteful diminishing returns exercise.

Upgrading of the export structure is particularly important in Africa because it is difficult to generate sufficiently fast export growth to finance the imports needed in order to develop productive capacities, given its current pattern of trade integration with the global economy. The current LDC growth trajectories, based on export specialisation of raw, unprocessed commodities, have evolved in line with the theoretical principles of *static* comparative advantage. The neoliberal model's concentration on production and export of a few primary commodities and extractive industries largely oriented towards external markets has essentially failed in Africa to contribute effectively to the 'catching up' that was promised, and has not provided the road out of persistent poverty. Instead, too often, such growth trajectories have led to enclave economies, dualistic economic structures, a poor poverty reduction record, and an increase in macroeconomic instability (UNCTAD 2006). Kregel (2009) notes that the current model's approach of using the bulk of domestic productive forces (including labour) for producing primary exports and generating an external surplus (used for repaying foreign creditors) necessarily reduces the leftover resources that could otherwise be directed towards building domestic demand. Therefore, the neoliberal model blocks any effective use of classic Keynesian deficit spending to achieve full employment goals. Not only is favouring exports over enabling greater domestic demand at odds with the new post-2008 consensus in the rich countries, Kregel (2009) notes that it also exacts 'a double whammy', since devoting resources to exports also involves a sacrifice in foregone or lost output because of domestic labour resources that were not mobilised.

Consequently, policy measures to achieve export upgrading should not be limited to the trade regime but must also include new kinds of industrial policies and public–private partnerships. It may encompass measures to promote agriculture and services as well as manufacturing industries. Such policies need to seek out new areas of *dynamic* comparative advantage, or to 'acquire' comparative advantage, whereby goods with a high-income elasticity of demand in the world markets are produced. There is potentially a role for selective protection in Africa based on arguments linked to addressing market failures, capturing externalities or welfare-enhancing policies, and in the case of international distortions. This implies that, in countries which have not yet undertaken extensive trade liberalisation, there is a case for caution and a gradual approach. For those countries which have undertaken trade liberalisation, this is not a call for a blanket reversal of this policy; rather, it is a call for a pragmatic analysis of policy options. This could include utilising WTO provisions for 'special safeguard mechanisms' against food import surges, as the Group of 33 is currently working to protect in ongoing negotiations.

The first thing that becomes apparent when considering how developing countries might implement some parts of the 'paradigm shift' articulated above is the constraint countries face in their national 'policy space'. Whereas all of the policy tools, tactics and best practices in industrial policy used by all of the successfully industrialised countries used to be officially outlawed and prohibited in the colonies under colonialism, these freedoms are again being denied to developing countries today through IMF and World Bank loans and other donor aid agencies (as loan conditionalities), WTO agreements, and, increasingly, through the proliferation of bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) and bilateral investment treaties (BITs), particularly the agreements between the European Union (EU) and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group countries (Chang 2005, Shafaeddin 2008).

Along these same lines, UNCTAD's Economic Development in Africa Report 2007, *Reclaiming policy space: domestic resource mobilisation and developmental states*, advocates that countries must take steps to lessen dependence on donors and reconsider surrendering so much of their policy space in free trade and investment negotiations. Many countries have given away so much of the 'policy toolkits' in such negotiations in the belief that they will gain greater market access to northern markets, yet this alone is not a development strategy. Instead, just as industrialised countries have done, developing countries must guard their remaining policy space and use various context-specific financial, trade, fiscal and monetary policies to support domestic industry, achieve employment goals and increase the levels of public investment in accordance with long-term national development plans.

Fully using remaining policy space or even perhaps backtracking on recent trade negotiations is not tantamount to a return to statism or protectionist economic policies. Rather, it is a call to move away from misguided neoliberal preoccupations with policies based on the ideological dogma of 'laissez-faire' and towards a set of more refined and eclectic policy measures that combine features of both, but tailored to the specific development challenges or circumstances of each country. Such a policy toolkit must also be dynamic, in which different policies can used at different times depending on where countries are in their developmental trajectories. In other words, it is a move to a kind of 'à la carte development policy menu' (UNCTAD 2007).

According the 2007 UNCTAD Africa Report, some policy measures under this menu might violate existing commitments in the various WTO and bilateral trade and investment agreements, which define current global trade rules. Nevertheless, these agreements are not cast in stone, and several development economists and trade experts have been calling for their review to take into account the peculiar situations prevailing in poor countries (UNCTAD 1998, Das 2005). There is also some flexibility in these agreements, although highly restricted, that African countries could exploit to serve their development objectives (Mayer 2008). But whatever the case, it is clear that African countries need greater 'policy space' to be able to design and implement these and other alternative policies.

Countries must seek to develop strategies to more actively mobilise their own resources for investment in the medium term with a gradual reduction of dependence on external resources, namely overseas development assistance (ODA). Yet in most official aid agencies, there is a glaring neglect of any dynamic or catalytic 'domestic driver' to support self-sustaining growth and a transformational development process towards manufacturing and services. A renewed focus on greater domestic mobilisation would not only reduce excess reliance on ODA and foreign direct investment (FDI), but would also create a legitimate policy space in which 'ownership' is actualised by channelling both aid and investment into fast-growing domestic industrial sectors with multiple beneficial forward and backward linkages to domestic companies and massive long-term multiplier effects for the whole of the economy.

Following on the 2007 UNCTAD Africa Report on 'Reclaiming policy space', UNCTAD undertook a nine-country study with the objective of strengthening the capacity of African countries to identify and utilise efficiently non-debt-creating domestic resources. The result was a policy handbook, *Enhancing the role of domestic financial resources in Africa's development* (UNCTAD 2009).

The handbook highlights several largely neglected opportunities and policies for increasing the types and levels of financial resources for the continent's development through an improvement in domestic financial resource mobilisation and efficient use, though many of the suggestions contained in this document apply differently to different countries. Of the extensive list of policies explored, some include establishing a national financial charter to identify and get a national consensus on the role and future development of the financial sector, such as was done with some success in South Africa in 2004 as the result of negotiations between the government, business community, labour and community constituencies. Their main objective was to transform the financial sector into a leading force for the empowerment of black businesses that had traditionally been sidelined. Other policies include establishing a tiered, differentiated regulatory structure that could accommodate existing informal institutions; establishing a national credit information database to tap the extensive knowledge of the informal financial agents; expanding financial services to underserved areas; establishing business schools and training centres for building capacity for both private actors in the financial sector and the public sector regulatory bodies.

Also recommended are policies that encourage and strengthen non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) such as pension funds and insurance companies, whose resources are often better suited for mobilising for intermediation into productive investment than are bank deposits. The experiences of Mauritius and Namibia demonstrate the beneficial influence that insurance and pension funds can have on the financial sector and on the economy at large. For example, in Mauritius, NBFIs represent a very important segment of the financial sector. Assets held by the insurance companies alone were worth the equivalent of 19.2% of GDP in 2006. Mauritius also has a number of public and private–public joint venture institutions that add to the density of the financial sector. These include the State Insurance Company of Mauritius, the Mauritius Civil Service Mutual Aid Association and the National Housing Development Company. In Sierra Leone, a National Social Security and Investment Trust was created in 2002 to serve both as a pension fund and as a source of funding for priority projects such as housing development. It is already providing financial security to over 100,000 people (UNCTAD 2009).

Regarding the re-establishment of development banks, steps must be taken to avoid the previous poor track record due to mismanagement, poor project selection and insufficient monitoring. Past mistakes in their management do not diminish the relevance of development financing. These mistakes do, however, underline the importance of efficient management and of ensuring that development remains at the heart of their mission (UNCTAD 2009). Success of development banking initiations in Africa depends on integration of development finance institutions into the national development agenda, appropriate governance, minimising non-interest barriers to access to credit; and innovative strategies for the mobilisation of stable long-term funds (Ndikumana 2007 cited in Epstein 2009).

Finally, even without establishing explicit development banks, many countries can use their central banks to play similar roles, including expanding their official mandates to include monetary policy targets such as GDP growth goals and/or employment level goals in addition to price stability (low inflation) goals.

Indeed, Pollin *et al.* (2006) developed an elaborate alternative policy proposal for replacing the IMF's harmful low-inflation targeting policies with new central bank targets for employment in South Africa, and did the same for Kenya (Pollin *et al.* 2008). Pollin and others also offer several important innovative approaches that African policy makers ought to consider (Atieno 2001, Aryeetey 2003, Epstein and Grabel 2006, Epstein and Heintz 2006, Pollin *et al.* 2006, Heintz 2008 cited in Epstein 2009, Pollin, Githinji and Heintz 2008, Epstein 2009).

The reasons why earlier attempts to industrialise African economies failed must be examined and made clear. Today, however, there are reasons to believe industrialisation can be done differently and better. There are increased numbers of citizen groups undertaking regular budget analysis, budget tracking and budget advocacy work to increase public scrutiny of public funds. In the last decade, dozens of countries have enacted formal statutes guaranteeing their citizens' right of access to government information. Other efforts include local chapters of the international Publish What You Pay Coalition (PWYP), to better regulate the reporting of royalties paid to foreign investors in the extractive industries, and Publish What You Earn, to pressure foreign investors to disclose publicly the profits they are repatriating out of countries. There are efforts under way to get citizens more directly involved in economic policy making such as 'participatory budgeting' and economic policy 'audits' from a human rights-based approach (Balakrishnan and Elson 2008). And advocacy by the international Tax Justice Network has sought to take on issues such as tax evasion, illicit capital flight and the role of offshore tax havens in an effort to help authorities increase and improve tax collections. These important trends suggest that citizens are increasingly intending on holding their governments to account for budgets, policies and priorities. These trends suggest that industrial policies which may have been less successful in the past may be much more successful in a modern climate of increased transparency, public scrutiny and accountability.

For African policy makers who are interested in moving towards more ambitious industrialisation strategies for the continent, there must be a willingness to re-open long closed debates about development economics and challenge the dominant assumptions about the Washington Consensus model, understanding why and how it has failed to help countries industrialise. Also needed is a willingness to engage in the political pressure that will be required to change such policies at the bilateral and multilateral lending agencies, and in their own finance and trade ministries. These steps can begin by re-examining the definition of 'development' with a clearer understanding that poverty reduction is a result of successful economic development, not a replacement for it.

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DEBATE

Poverty in Uganda

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Introduction

In a recent book entitled *Uganda's economic reforms: insider accounts* (Kuteesa *et al.* 2010), Uganda's economic performance is portrayed as a role model in reducing poverty, to be emulated by other African countries because of its economic reforms. This paper is a critique of two chapters in the book, one by Whitworth and Williamson (pp. 1–34) focusing on economic performance and poverty reduction, and another by Kakande (pp. 226–245) dealing with poverty monitoring. From the perspective of peasants in rural areas and traders in informal sector operating in urban areas, particularly Kampala City and its suburbs, the critique focuses on the weaknesses of economic growth rates and poverty reduction levels in determining the good economic performance depicted in these chapters. It is intended to stimulate a debate on the success story of Uganda that is portrayed.

This critique does not claim impartiality, since the ideology of neoliberalism spearheading the economic reforms is not neutral either, as elaborated by Harriss-White (2003). Further, as correctly observed by Peet (2003, p. 15), 'economic policy analysis is a cultural, political and social endeavour, rather than a study of the application of proven, scientific truth ... In this sense any critical understanding of policy formation has to begin with the basic notion that policy serves economic and social interests.' Therefore, from the proceeding quoted arguments, it is necessary to take an unwavering stand in favour of the disadvantaged in Uganda. The critique is informed by the emerging paradigm of the political economy of institutions. From the history of the policies that the industrialised countries used when they were developing, the paradigm advocates the state's intervention in the management of economic activity to promote national goals (Chang 2004 [2002], 2003, Kiiza 2002, 2006).
Concerning the methodological approach, the critique analyses the articles under examination using available literature. However the arguments in the critique, to a great extent, are also derived from what the author has seen physically and heard while interacting with people as well as the close following of press reports on the country, over the period that the economic reforms have been implemented in Uganda.

What is the meaning of economic reforms, and what were they to achieve? The two articles under examination do not directly define economic reforms. However, according to Whitworth and Williamson (2010, p. 4), the economic reforms were to get prices right; establish macroeconomic stability; strengthen revenue and public expenditure management; and to

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promote the private sector. The critique does not contest the achievement of the objectives of the reforms but rather their end results.

Despite the claim that the economic reforms are home-grown and that because of their success, they have been adopted elsewhere (Kuteesa *et al.* 2010), actually they are a uniform set of policies imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) on most developing countries (De Rivero 2003 [2001], pp. 54–55). Green (2008, p. 109) describes them as 'simplistic solutions to complex economic problems' whereby most countries of the Third World are compelled to liberalise their economies and privatise their state enterprises while avoiding fiscal deficits at all costs.

The economic reforms guided by the ideology of neoliberalism assume, as pointed out by Peet (2003, pp. 4–5), that the private sector, under a free market, accumulates capital and employs it in the economy to bring about growth and eventually development that will benefit the majority of the people in a country. Therefore, Whitworth and Williamson (2010, p. 27) assert that as a result of implementing the economic reforms, Uganda has enjoyed two decades of sustained growth, consistently exceeding that of sub-Saharan Africa since 1986. The mentioned authors go further to controversially assert that the growth has been accompanied by significant poverty reduction in the country, declining from 56% in 1992 to 31% in 2006 (*ibid.*, p. 30). Kakande (2010, p. 237) claims that the economic growth has generally been pro-poor and the poverty reduction 'is one of the largest and fastest ... recorded anywhere in modern times.'

However, in contradiction, the findings from qualitative studies show that the peoples' 'well-being is declining and the poor are becoming poorer' (Kakande 2010, p. 238). If the victims of poverty, who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of economic growth, point out that they are becoming worse off, then there is something amiss with the statistics that indicate the economy is growing steadily and poverty is rapidly declining. It is because of the above anomaly that the rest of the article examines the weaknesses of economic growth rates and poverty reduction levels in determining the portrayed good economic performance in Uganda.

The weaknesses of judging economic performance on growth rates

The economic growth rates on Uganda are misleading because they do not show the capacity of the country to produce its own goods for consumption, and by whom. For instance, the claimed growth rates are taking place under persistent trade deficits as Table 1 on Uganda's selected trade data shows. The table shows that from 1991 to 2004, the country on average was importing merchandise worth twice the value of exports. The trend has not changed. For instance, in the financial year 2008/9, the value of total imports was US$4,526.9 million compared to exports of US$1,724.3 million (UBoS 2009, p. 69), an import figure more double that for exports. To make matters worse, as the World Bank observed, 'aid covers more than 80% of all investment and [a] substantial share of other public outlays, such [as] other recurrent expenditures and debt service' (quoted in Whitworth, 2010, p. 132). Therefore, under this arrangement, the majority of people in Uganda do not have an opportunity to earn income by themselves to improve their lives.

The economic growth that does not come from internal production mechanisms, the production processes that would create job opportunities for many people and therefore provide them with incomes to purchase goods and services, creates conditions for the existence of poverty in the country. It is not surprising that Uganda still has an undiversified economy

Table 1 Uganda, Selected Trade Data, 1991–2004.

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total merchandise export (FOB US$million)	175.4	172.1	157.1	253.9	595.3	590.3	670.9	458.4	549.1	459.9	462.9	479.0	507.9	647.2
Total merchandise imports (CIF US$million)	545.0	450.6	530.5	671.7	1,085.5	1,218.3	1,246.3	966.1	1,039.4	954.3	953.3	1,003.9	1,130.6	1,321.4
Industry (% GDP)	11.6	12.5	12.3	12.8	13.1	14.7	15.9	16.4	18.0	18.5	18.6	19.8	19.6	19.5
Manufacturing (% GDP)	5.4	5.8	5.6	6.0	6.2	7.1	7.8	8.3	9.0	8.9	8.8	9.1	8.6	8.4

Source: World Bank, African Indicators (2006) database. Quoted in (Cawley and Zake, 2010:125) with few employment opportunities in the formal sector, because it does not have large-scale industries, a fact admitted by Whitworth and Williamson (2010, p. 31).

Besides, for the economic growth rates to improve the lives of the people in the country in a sustainable and meaningful manner, the quality of growth should be considered. For instance, 'Uganda's domestic exports are still dominated by coffee, tea, cotton and tobacco (the traditional cash/ export crops), and fish, cut flowers, hides and skins, among the principal non-traditional exports' (UNDP 2007, p. 74). As a result, economically Uganda is affected because the prices of these primary commodities are prone to fluctuations; actually their prices have been declining in the international market (Oxfam 2002, p. 151). In particular, the decline in coffee prices since 1997 has had devastating effects on the lives of coffee-growing communities in the country (Oxfam 2002, p. 11). Surprisingly, Whitworth and Williamson (2010, p. 30) still maintain that the coffee-growing districts have contributed more to poverty reduction than non-growing ones.

Moreover, a country like Uganda largely dependent on primary commodities for export and importing manufactured goods usually finds it very difficult to build a national market and national industrial base, as well as the development of national-oriented capitalists, all of which are necessary for the development of technical skills to process local materials into finished consumer goods and in the process create employment opportunities (De Rivero 2003 [2001], pp. 4, 122). If Uganda continues to depend on the exportation of raw materials, which do not require sophisticated skills, it will most likely remain static at a primary level of production. No wonder, because Uganda is dependent on the exportation of raw materials, that there is a tendency for the percentage of the people earning a meagre living from agriculture to enlarge as other sectors like the service sector dominate the economy (Uganda National NGO Forum 2009, p. 15).

In addition, because of their poor terms of trade and their fluctuating prices already cited above, it is difficult for the country to earn enough income from the export of primary commodities to save for development let alone have a balance of trade. This explains why Uganda is largely dependent on aid as already cited. Further, as Uganda keeps on importing manufactured goods, it loses opportunities for future industrial development (Kiiza *et al.* 2006). Asea (2006, p. 8) claims that the promotion of service industry could be an alternative form of development for countries like Uganda. The assertion is wrong because services emerge to facilitate the production of goods, or to entertain people who produce and consume goods. Besides, is there any advanced nation known to have development in the service sector without any industrial base?

The weaknesses of statistics in depicting growth

Even after pointing out the flaws of judging the performance of an economy based mainly on economic growth rates and poverty reduction levels, it is also imperative to mention the weaknesses of statistics in painting a true picture of the economy. Figures speak loudest but at the same time can deceive. The economic growth rates, when expressed in percentages, do not show the real volume of goods and services. If the percentage increase is based on a small economic base, it may appear to be high while the corresponding increment in volume is meagre. Therefore, a high percentage increment in economic growth does not necessarily mean a substantial economic growth.

Further, in a country heavily dependent on imported manufactured goods rather than local production as already cited, it is possible to have double counting let alone recording growth where the tangible production of goods for consumption does not exist as illustrated further below. For instance, according to the 2008/9 and 2009/10 budgets, the highest growth was recorded in the service sector (MoFPED 2009), including wholesale and retail trade; transport and communications; and financial services. Logically it can be concluded that if goods and services are imported and sold in Uganda, then economic growth is recorded as a service provided; if goods are imported by neighbouring countries but transported by Ugandan imported vehicles to their destination, again economic growth is recorded as a service provided; when money is borrowed from foreign sources and lent to the people in Uganda, also economic growth is recorded; and absurdly, when the borrowed money is used to buy imported goods in Uganda, economic growth too is recorded. Above all, the averages in statistics hide the glaring inequalities in Uganda where the minority elite is doing well while the masses are poor and the gap between the categories is widening (MoFPED, 2004, p. 12).

The weaknesses of the current statistics in measuring poverty reduction

The social sciences' poverty reduction levels in Uganda are arrived at by quantifying responses to a questionnaire as revealed by Kakande (2010, p. 233). As correctly argued by Andreski (1972), such figures are not exactitudes and therefore cannot be taken for granted. In addition, even the concept of people living on less than one dollar a day is misleading and confusing. It is simplistically based on energy-giving food requirements of 3000 calories, valued by respondents, while the non-food requirements are arrived at indirectly as the equivalent of the mentioned food requirements (*ibid.*, pp. 233–235). As observed by Mwangi and Markelova:

> many poor people in rural areas of developing countries consume the goods they produce or barter them for other goods as they have little or no interaction with the market. This creates difficulties in determining the monetary value of their production. One can theoretically value self-consumption, but it is difficult to do so with precision. (2008, p. 6)

Moreover, because the theoretical formulations of social sciences are usually not neutral as a result of political, cultural and class influences (Andreski 1972, Cornforth 1984 [1962], Peet 2003), the method of determining poverty reduction in Uganda under economic reforms is suspicious, especially when it is known that 'money buys influence' under the ideology of neoliberalism (Peet 2003, p. 15). For instance, 'the quantitative poverty measure that is most prevalent in Uganda is based on household consumption expenditure' as revealed by Kakande (2010, p. 232), which measure has many loopholes discussed below.

The measure does not show the source of income. Without showing the source of income, there is an anomaly of figures showing that poverty is reducing while agriculture, the source of livelihood for the majority people in Uganda, whose contribution to the economy is declining and stood at just 23.7% in 2008 (UBoS 2009, p. 63). While the agricultural contribution to the economy has declined by about 50% since the 1980s (UNDP 2007, p. 48, Whitworth and Williamson 2010, p. 27), more than 72% of the people in Uganda still eke their living from it. If the source of livelihoods for the majority in the country is declining, then what is causing poverty reduction in Uganda? Is the poverty reduction manna from heaven?

Above all, and most importantly, the household consumption expenditure method of measuring poverty reduction is not a good proxy for welfare improvement. Expenditure on consumption can in fact affect the welfare of the people negatively. As Kakande admits:

> The use of private consumption as a household welfare measure implicitly assumes that the higher the consumption the higher the welfare. However, this has been questioned. It has been observed that some private consumption actually reduces household welfare. (2010, p. 235)

To make matters worse, in some cases 'consumption may be financed from the sale of assets, particularly land and livestock' (*ibid.*). The practice of selling assets to finance consumption surely undermines the future incomes of the affected households, thereby making them vulnerable to poverty.

As has been also observed in the past in a newspaper article, modernisation is eroding the welfare of farming communities. 'For long, it has not been uncommon to find families selling all the produce they harvest in a season to buy mattresses or selling land on which they grow food to build iron-sheet roofed houses, calling it development or modernisation. Thereafter, they are faced with food shortages, starvation and lack of source of income' (Byekwaso 2002, p. 14). Expenditure on other aspects of modernisation, like the ownership of mobile phones and paying school fees using the insufficient money earned from the declining agricultural production already cited, is also causing hardship to the people.

Actually, the broad-based growth on consumption expenditure deemed to reduce poverty (Whitworth and Williamson 2010, p. 30) is sucking money from the rural population. Whatever is earned from agriculture by hard labour is siphoned out to buy articles of modernisation and not reinvested in the sector, consequently impoverishing peasants (Mamdani 1999 [1976]). As a result, land, the natural resource base, is deteriorating, thus leading to increasingly frequent food insecurity even acknowledged by Kakande (2010, p. 238). This is explained by the fact that the money earned from the land is not reinvested on it in the form of fertilisers. As observed by the National Environment Management Agency (NEMA 2007, p. 60) again, because the peasants no longer practise the traditional shifting and fallow farming, now as the land is continuously used to grow crops, it has lost fertility further leading to poor yields and consequently to increased poverty.

On the other hand, consumption expenditure is from borrowed money that is on the increase in Uganda (Muhumuza 2007, p. 100), but causing uneasiness to the borrowers as elaborated below. Politically, the government has been using micro-credit schemes as a tool of poverty reduction (Muhumuza 2007, p. 133, Mugambe 2010, p. 158). Subsequently this has been emulated by other institutions, especially non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and social credit networks (Muhumuza 2007, pp. 167–263), as well as profit-oriented financial institutions and private individuals, all of which operate in every corner of the country as a micro-finance movement. Consequently, most people borrow money for consumption but usually find it difficult to pay back, while some fail completely and eventually are forced to sell their assets (Muhumuza 2007, p. 190). To express the widespread indebtedness, Ronald Mayinja, a local artiste, composed a Luganda song, *Ffenna Tulikubukenke*, meaning 'we are all on our toes because of debt', which became and is still a popular hit in Uganda (Mayinja 2006).

If Uganda accumulated debts to unsustainable levels to the extent that the country was given relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Debt Relief Initiative in 1998 (Kitabire 2010, p. 271), that indebtedness is now slowly being replicated at an individual or household level. Without a possibility of debt relief, the individuals or households are compelled to sell their assets, and consequently are pushed deeper into poverty. As observed by NEMA (2008, p. 32), though not attributing it to debt, a significant number of peasants do not have access to land for farming. Without a reduction in the number of such landless people, it is difficult to imagine that poverty is reducing. Under the Poverty Eradication Plan (PEAP) (MoFPED 2004), there has been a rapid expansion of spending on the public sector, dubbed 'poverty reduction'. The increased expenditure has been on services like health, education, access to safe drinking water, good sanitation and as well as road construction, without considering the quality of the services provided coupled with their increased costs of administration (Whitworth and Williamson 2010, p. 30). However,

> What are termed as poverty reduction areas like primary education, primary healthcare, water, rural roads, gender mainstreaming and fighting HIV AIDS, do not directly increase the income of the poor and put in place inbuilt mechanisms for economic growth of the country, though necessary. People do not eat education or primary healthcare. These are services, which in any case could be afforded by individuals if the people are earning enough from the products of their labour, like a better price from the crops they grow and high wages from industrial employment. Even feeder roads, which are assumed to aid peasants sell their products at a better price, do not necessarily increase the incomes of the poor. Due to high transport costs engendered by high fuel prices and operating under conditions of tight monetary squeeze and liberalisation, peasants continue to earn peanuts from their produce … Even if education creates room for one to be employed or create self-employment, it is of no use if its graduates fail to get employment or have no opportunity of creating employment because of the limitations of the economy even if their thinking capacity has grown. (Byekwaso 2005, p. 7, 2008, p. 12).

Even the logic of the government's increased expenditure on social services like education to reduce the pressure on the pockets of the poor is contradicted by the findings from the qualitative studies, which revealed that: 'Disposable household incomes were increasingly outstripped by needs. The main concern was user fees for public services that were limiting access by [sic] the poor' (Kakande 2010, p. 239).

Conclusion

In monetary terms, the Ugandan economy has grown from 'US$4 billion in 1993 to US$15 billion in 2008' while inflation was under control (Byaruhanga *et al.* 2010, p. 71). However, considering the huge trade deficits the country is experiencing already cited, the growth is mainly not from internal production mechanisms. Therefore, it has failed to diversify the economy, create employment in the formal sector and invest in large-scale industries (Whitworth and Williamson 2010, p. 31). This is because the growth rates give a false impression of economic performance. On poverty, it is an undeniable fact that there is an increase in the consumption of foreign imported goods and modern services like the use of mobile phones, making time talking on mobile phones 'a major expenditure item for many households since 2003' (Kakande 2010, p. 233). However, the growth in consumption is taking place at the expense of the usually basic needs of the people like food while their source of livelihoods is being undermined. The method of measuring poverty reduction in Uganda on the basis of consumption expenditure has numerous shortfalls. The figures given are not exactitudes. Otherwise, why is there a contradiction between the findings of quantitative and qualitative studies when all of them are attempting to determine the magnitude of poverty in the same country?

Therefore, one wonders how the consumption expenditure method was arrived at as the best option. For instance, why not measure the physical consumption of goods and services as well as the ownership of assets, making the list comprehensive and scaling it up according to the hierarchy of needs, to show a proportion of people enjoying a certain standard of living and from where their income derived? For example, it is possible to indicate the proportion of the people eating a number of meals and of what quantity and quality a day, as well as their source of income in the form of sale of assets or employment and of what kind.

Otherwise the poverty reduction figures in Uganda appear to be fiction. It is unbelievable that the number of people who are able to access and eat food of 3000 calories has increased, when half of Uganda's population does not have access to sufficient food (Opolot and Kuteesa 2006, p. 23); when there are high incidences of malnutrition, famine and hunger, with 40% of children under the age of five years dying (MoFPED 2005); when the number of children with stunted growth is on the increase (Kakande 2010, p. 240).

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BRIEFING

What the Nigerien *coup d'état* means to the world

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Mohammedou Tandia is considered Niger's first two-term democratically elected leader (1999–2009), though some Nigeriens are ready to place him on trial for treason (Clottey 2010). The reasons for this are numerous, although roots of the complexity are evident in the voting record and political events leading up to February 2010. The first election in 1999 reported him receiving 66.5% of the vote, with 99.4% eligible voter turnout (Kuenzi and Lambright 2007). The Independent National Electoral Commission oversaw the next election, given the vocal criticism of the 1999 election. President Tandia won the 2004 election with 65.5% of the votes, but voter turnout was only 45% (IRIN 2004). By December 2009, Tandia was expected to step down from power, but six months earlier he dissolved parliament and dismissed the courts while creating a referendum that allowed his tenure to continue until 2012 (Author correspondence, 2009, Massalatchi 2009). United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-moon condemned Tandia's abuse of executive power, but he proceeded with a rushed and heavily boycotted December election, which he won (Bailey 2010). On 18 February 2010 a group of soldiers, under the leadership of Salou Djibo and calling themselves the Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy, seized power from Tandia (RFI 2010). Ban Ki-moon also came out against the recent *coup d'état* (Bailey 2010), which leaves those interested to contemplate Niger's political future.

Niger has a tumultuous political record since gaining independence from France 50 years ago. On the surface it appears that problems stem from self-contained rivalries between different ethnic groups. Since 3 August 1960, the one-third Sahelian and two-thirds Saharan nation has experienced dictatorship, human rights abuses, corruption, violence and nepotism. The central government fought off two rebellions in its northern territory, various protests and strikes from youth organisations in the major cities, and two large famines in the 1970s and 1980s along with recent food crises in 2005 and 2010. It has witnessed four successful *coups d'état* during 1974, 1996, 1999 and 2010; one failed attempt in 1983; one aborted plot in 1998; and two alleged plots in 1975 and 1976 (Marshall 2004, RFI 2010). A focus only on national-level politics, however, omits the larger geopolitical view of Niger in the global arena.

As people who are cognisant of Niger's political situation debate the direction the country will take, one fact remains clear: Niger remains an unknown to many people. Most would be hard pressed to find it on a map. Some confuse Niger for Nigeria, the more populous neighbour on its southern border. Few multinational institutions are on the ground, with the

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exception of UN and aid organisations. Panels for multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental agencies are common sights at round points and street corners of Niamey's Plateau and Issabery neighbourhoods. On average, 10% of Niger's annual revenue is aid assistance and this figure has been increasing in recent years (Altwegg-Boussac 2006, Moreira and Bayraktar 2008). Regionally its biggest trading partner is Nigeria, with grains and livestock flowing out and electricity and consumable goods flowing in (Tall 2004).

On the other hand, Niger is well known in the geopolitical community for its main natural resource – uranium. It accounts for 70% of Niger's revenues and is mined in the North near the twin towns of Arlit and Akokan (Chamaret *et al.* 2007). It is the world's fifth largest uranium producer, and is likely to rise in position when a new mine in Imouraren opens in 2013 (Capus *et al.* 2004). In 2003, President George Bush, Jr. and Prime Minister Tony Blair used Niger's uranium and obscurity as a political chip to convince the world that Saddam Hussein was purchasing uranium ore to develop weapons of mass destruction (Duffy and Carney 2003) – a completely disingenuous charge, to say the least. Still, Niger was in 2003 – and is today – unknown territory.

French scientists found Niger's rich uranium reserves in the 1950s, between the Aïr Mountains and Tamesna pastures that are customarily occupied and used by Tuareg, Arab and Peulh herders (Poitou 1982, Bernus 1999). These communities were never approached regarding mining development but their land was seized through eminent domain (Bourgeot 1989). During decolonisation, France influenced the election of a pro-French leader named Hamani Diori and secured for their Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) 83% control and shares of the uranium mine, leaving 17% to the Nigerien government. Production started in 1971, though Hamani was deposed shortly after for a variety of reasons, including the poor returns from uranium (Salifou 2008). Under Seyni Kountché, the second Nigerien president, uranium revenues for the state were renegotiated to 35%, France's CEA transferred its 65% share to *Compagnie générale des matières nucléaires*, or COGEMA, which by 2001 became part of Areva, a larger multinational energy corporation (Capus *et al.* 2004). COGEMA and Areva hold a two-thirds monopoly over the production, transport, and processing of Niger's uranium for over 30 years (Chamaret *et al.* 2007).

Thirty-plus years of uranium exploitation has its consequences on the physical and human environment. Local groups were the first to notice the disappearance of flora and fauna (Poitou 1982). Explosions, drilling and the constant disturbance of earth materials in open-pit mines diffuse radioactive dust contaminating neighbouring areas (Dixon 2010). The *Commission de recherche et d'information indépendantes sur la radioactivité* (CRIIRAD), a French watchdog group, has monitored mining practices over the past several years (Chareyron 2005, CRIIRAD 2005). Recently in partnership with Greenpeace International, CRIIRAD collected soil samples and scrap metal from Arlit and Akokan, and found radioactive contamination exceeding 100 times the accepted limit set by the World Health Organization. Groundwater samples also tested by CRIIRAD revealed dangerous levels of radon, nitrates, ammonia and molybdenum (Dixon 2010). The contaminated soil and groundwater use are likely to create larger health problems for the inhabitants of the twin mining towns: a social cost that local communities will shoulder the brunt of, but the Nigerien government and Areva in all likelihood will not.

Areva has secured majority control and revenues of the future Imouraren site (Michelson and Massalatchi 2009), but in the last six years other corporations have moved into the Tamesna and Aïr Regions.

The Tandia regime parcelled out large new concessions to Chinese, American, Australian, Canadian and Indian energy companies for mineral exploration (Bouhlel-Hardy *et al.* 2008). Once again these actions were done without the consent of, participation in, or compensation to the various pastoral groups living and dependent on the natural resources in the North (Guichaoua 2009). If these concessions bear fruit as these various multinationals expect, further development will impinge, block and further dispossess Nigerien pastoral groups, in addition to Malian and Algerian herders who seasonally visit to utilise pasture and wells in the Tamesna.

The situation of remote communities in northern Niger affected by outside interference does not end here. Niger's anonymity is not a one-way tactic played only by Western foreign policy makers when convenient. Niamey touts the difficulties in monitoring its vast and porous northern and eastern borders and the threat of Al-Qaeda Maghreb's presence in the Sahara. It does this to attract money and military aid from the United States and European Union in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) (Glickman 2003, Keenan 2004, 2007, Lecocq and Schrijver 2007). With the 3300 km of borders Niger shares with Mali, Algeria, Libya and Chad, coupled with extremist groups just across the border in Nigeria, American and European tacticians see cause for alarm (Ellis 2004, Ousmane 2004). The Nigerien government joined the GWOT in 2003 and continues to receive training and assistance from Western militaries.

The government of Niger, like many of its contemporaries in the third world, uses the military training, equipment and funding to subjugate their own minority groups and political rivals. The Tandia regime suppressed an uprising in the Aïr Region in 2004/5 and fought a dirty little war against a larger collective resistance called the *Mouvement des nigériens pour la justice* (MNJ) from 2007 to 2009 (Keenan 2008, Guichaoua 2009). The MNJ consists primarily of the Tuareg, the major ethnic group displaced and dispossessed through uranium mining over the past 40 years. Tandia needed GWOT assistance to protect the mining operations and uranium convoys coming from Arlit and Akokan. Infuriated with the lack of local development and denial of local participation in the management of this resource, the MNJ attacked military installations and mining operations in 2007 and 2008, (Guichaoua 2009). Propaganda coming from Niamey labels the rebels as bandits, thugs and illicit drug traders with close ties to terrorist organisations in the Sahara (Lecocq and Schrijver 2007).

The threat of Al Qaeda Maghreb, a small group of Algerian extremists who seek out Western targets in the Sahara, gives Niger the needed political leverage to appropriate GWOT assistance, although people who work and live in the Sahara are aware this group is more hype than a threat (Keenan 2007, Lecocq and Schrijver 2007). Nevertheless Niger ascended to greater geopolitical scrutiny when a UN envoy was abducted in late 2008. The Fowler mission originally stated that it came to survey a gold mine 45 km from Niamey. Later it was revealed that they came for peace talks between the NMJ and Tandia regime, but were kidnapped after visiting the mine (Sahara Focus 2009a). Initially the Tandia government blamed the MNJ for the abduction but, two months after the abduction, Al Qaeda Maghreb claimed responsibility and forwarded its demand: the release of a radical cleric imprisoned in the United Kingdom by the name of Abu Qatada. Fowler, his driver, and three tourists seized at a music festival on the Mali–Niger border were released in late April 2009 (Sahara Focus 2009b). Tragically, a fourth named Edwin Dyer, from England, was killed for non-compliance with this demand. Unfortunate incidents like these are often used to legitimise counterterrorism operations in the Sahara and Sahel. The success rate of such operations are highly speculative however and the coercion of local populations in the name of 'suppressing terrorists' a growing concern.

So far, the Tuareg and neighbouring Arab populations in northern Niger have little allegiance to Al Qaeda Maghreb. At worst, a few desperate or unscrupulous individuals on rare occasions abduct foreign workers and tourists to sell to extremist groups. Overall the Tuareg and Arab groups that inhabit the Sahara want as little negative press as possible. They are the tour guides, the clandestine traders, and the everyday people driving trucks and their animals from one oasis or well to another (Lecocq and Schrijver 2007). Though not exclusively of Tandia's making, his policies exacerbated the tensions in the North. His administration neglected development in the Aïr Region and has expanded mineral exploration in the Tamesna. When protest was articulated his administration used GWOT resources to suppress all forms of resistance, a tactic Mali took with its pastoral groups around Tin Zaouaten, and that the Algerian government used against its political rivals (Keenan 2008). How long will it take before the MNJ and other pastoral groups connect the geopolitical dots and resent the West for providing military support to the central government? They already know, but for some reason have kept their grievances internal. Tandia brought the Tuareg rebels to a stalemate by late 2008 but squandered GWOT assistance and uranium revenues on the war in the North (Guichaoua 2009). This created a large atmosphere of criticism by other groups in the South for neglecting development (Massalatchi 2009). Tandia overplayed his 'strongman' approach with the MNJ Rebellion and needed more time than was left in his second term to implement projects. He dissolved legislative and judicial branches of government and conducted a contentious referendum that many viewed as rigged (RFI 2010). Protests against Tandia's extension of power were large in the cities of Niamey, Dosso, Maradi and Zinder during the summer of 2009. The coup that came eight months later was not democratic. Disenchanted with Mohammedou Tandia's rule, it was a plot of junior military officers (RFI 2010). The coup was, however, expected and welcomed by a fair number of Nigeriens.

The new leadership has made a few promising steps since seizing power in February. First, they are moving toward constitutional reforms and a national election by the end of 2010 (Vidjingninou 2010). They sacked the ministers of the gold and uranium mines and will audit all concessions granted during the Tandia presidency (Reuters 2010). Their approach to the latest food crisis also shows promise in the Djibo government by reporting food vulnerability more accurately than the Tandia regime ever did (IRIN 2010). But whether these short-term political actions bear fruit or become empty rhetoric manipulated by a new government remains to be seen. Given the international reaction to the coup the path will likely be difficult if the junta consolidates power. Yet even a democracy will have its challenges in avoiding the geopolitical trap that Mohammedou Tandia fell into.

Niger's exploitation of natural resources will be crucial, but to do so at the expense of local peoples' participation, compensation and integration into national development is counterproductive. GWOT has the potential to extinguish terrorism, curb clandestine activities and human trafficking but has also been used inappropriately in the past five years to suppress local communities and political criticism. A new Nigerien government has the opportunity to reconcile long-standing grievances with its minorities like the Tuareg but could also neglect through ignorance or callousness their remote constituents, small in number. The actions multinational corporations, international organisations, and other international players take with Niger have in the past and will in the future influence its policies and programmes. Niamey is not a puppet of the West, but to ignore the constraints and challenges that powerful agents place on the Sahelian nation in the geopolitical arena ignores the difficulties that its leadership has navigated through in the past 50 years. Niger is not alone in this quagmire. So are other resource-rich, chronically impoverished nations.

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BRIEFING

What drives Turkey's involvement in Africa?

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Until recently, it was inconceivable that Turkey might show a deep interest in Africa. Nor was it thinkable that a Turkish foreign minister would 'attach particular importance to Africa' within the context of new foreign policy, nor decide to open 15 new embassies in Africa in the next few years (Babacan 2008a). In 2008, Turkish President Abdullah Gul hosted the first ever Turkey–Africa Cooperation Summit from 18–21 August in Istanbul, with the participation of representatives from 50 African countries. Turkey currently has 20 embassies (eight of them opened in 2009) and 23 honorary consulates throughout Africa. On the other hand, only 13 African countries have resident embassies in Ankara, three of which have been opened recently. What has changed in less than a decade for Turkey to have decided to open new embassies in more countries than it already has over the whole continent? Is this a sign of a deep policy change toward Africa in Turkish foreign policy, or it is rather change in Africa that has influenced Turkey to take such an active stand in its relations with Africa? This brief article seeks to portray Turkey's involvement in Africa in economic and political terms. While Turkey has a relatively long history of relations with Africa, the new attempt to develop relations with Africa is one that has borne fruit in a very short time, in terms of economic indicators. First, an historical background of the relations is outlined below. Second, underlying motives of Turkey's interest are explained, along with the benefits for Africa. Some remarks about how to further develop relations follow.

Historical background: past as future?

Turkey's relations with Africa can be divided into three periods. The first period covers the Ottoman state's relations with Africa until the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923, during which the Ottomans had considerable relations with Africa. The period from 1923 to 1998 can be seen as one where Turkish–Africa relations were at their lowest level, if they even existed. Since 1998, with the acceptance of the Africa Action plan, there has been a revival in Turkey's interest in Africa. Although initially this was a passive approach, after 2005 it turned into an active interest in developing relations with Africa.

Historically, Turkish relations with Africa go back several centuries. Some African countries, such as Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and even Niger and Chad, were to a greater or lesser extent a part of the Ottoman state. During the wave of colonialism, the Ottoman Empire

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was in eastern Africa to check Portuguese colonialism. In North Africa, the Ottomans played an important role in preventing Spanish penetration. In the northern part of sub-Saharan Africa, the Ottomans were a part of the balance of power, with friendship and an alliance with the Kanem-Bornu Empire that prevailed in modern-day northern Nigeria, Niger and Chad. The Kanem-Bornu Empire even signed a defence pact with the Ottoman Empire in 1575, during the time of Murad III. The Ottoman Empire sent military equipment and trainers to Kanem-Bornu (Kavas 2005, 2006).

Regarding southern Africa, the Ottoman Empire sent an imam to the Muslims of the Cape of Good Hope (now in South Africa) in 1863 upon the request of the Muslim community through Britain, as the area was ruled by Britain. With the arrival of Abu Bakr Effendi, strong links were built between the Muslims of the Cape of Good Hope and Turkey as a result of his contribution to South Africa. The Muslims of South Africa had actively participated in the Hejaz railway construction campaigns, raised funds and collected at least £366,551 between 1900 and 1907 (Kologlu 1995, pp. 220–222). The Ottoman state distributed more than 200 medals in gold, silver and nickel to those who contributed to the funds (Argun 2005).

After the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkey–Africa relations became much less active. However, during the cold-war era, Turkey slowly started to attach importance to Africa. In 1956, Turkey opened its first official mission, the Turkish General Consulate in Lagos, and recognised all newly independent countries (Karaca 2000, p. 116). During the cold war, when decolonisation took place in Africa, Turkey missed the opportunity to develop relations with Africa, even though it had designed a plan in the 1970s as part of an attempt to diversify its foreign policy.

Until recently, modern Turkey paid little attention to African affairs, and this remained the general picture until about 1998. In 1998, Turkey adopted a new document entitled the ‘Opening up to Africa Policy’. In this framework, Turkey hoped to further develop its political, economic and cultural ties with African countries in the subsequent period. The Africa Policy was made up of several areas, such as developing diplomatic relations, and political, economic, and cultural co-operation. In the diplomatic area, it was suggested that the level of diplomatic representation in Africa be upgraded. Under economic measures, it was proposed that Turkey should conclude trade agreements with African countries and encourage exchange visits by businesspeople between Turkey and African countries. This was the accepted plan for relations with Africa. However, lack of logistics and domestic instability, followed by the severe economic crisis in Turkey in 2000 to 2001, prevented Turkey from implementing its Africa action plan until the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*, AKP) assumed power in 2002.

In a real sense, Turkey’s opening up to Africa took effect only in 2005, when Turkey announced its ‘year of Africa’, and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Ethiopia and South Africa in March 2005 as the first Turkish prime minister officially visiting a country south of the equator. At the same time, Turkey enhanced its relations at the institutional level with Africa. Turkey obtained observer status with the African Union on 12 April 2005, and had its embassy in Ethiopia accredited with the African Union on 5 May 2005. The African Union Summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2008 declared Turkey a ‘strategic partner’. Currently the African Union has strategic partnerships with Japan, India, Iran, South Korea, South America, the European Union (EU) and China. Requests from

Canada and the United States are still under discussion.

Turkey's interest in Africa: why now?

The basic reason for Turkey's interest in Africa lies in the reorientation of Turkish foreign policy within global politics. The main architect behind such a reorientation is the current foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu (Aras 2009). Since his participation in foreign-policy formulation, first as chief advisor to the prime minister (2002–2009) and then as foreign minister (since May 2009), Turkey has diversified its foreign relations by developing economic and political ties with the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Africa as well as pushing for entry to the EU. According to Davutoglu, one of the basic principles of the new Turkish foreign policy is to have 'compatible global relations' in foreign policy (Davutoglu 2009, p. 12). As the international system is no longer bipolar, Davutoglu considers that good relations with any other region as distinct from the EU are beneficial. Rather than Turkey changing its direction away from the Western world, this is where Turkey's opening up to Africa finds its place in the new foreign-policy formulation. From this perspective, Turkey sees its relations with Africa not as a short-term move, but rather as a part of its reorientation in the changing global political economy.

As mentioned above, Turkey's opening to Africa dates back to 1998. However its push to open the door to Africa was crowned with a historical meeting in Istanbul hosted under the auspices of Turkish President Abdullah Gul. The first Turkey–Africa Summit under the theme of 'Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future' was organised between 18 and 21 August 2008 and attended by representatives from 50 countries. Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique were absent, but Morocco was also represented, although not a member of the African Union due to a dispute on the recognition of Western Sahara.

Turkey under the AKP administration brought a new vision to its Africa initiative (Safak 2008), and certainly aims to fill the gap which emerged after nearly a century of neglect. To make up for lost time and accelerate relations between Turkey and Africa, the summit provided the venue to increase bilateral contacts and search for new ways of developing relations (Idiz 2008). In that sense, the Turkish president said in a press conference that he 'had bilateral talks with heads of delegations of 42 countries within the scope of the summit' (Worldbulletin.net, 20 August 2008). Similarly, the bilateral meetings of Prime Minister Erdogan would give an impetus in developing relations with Africa in the years to come. The importance of those bilateral meeting cannot be overestimated, in the sense that a Turkish president and prime minister had met delegations from some African countries perhaps for the first time, and no high-level meeting of such a nature had previously taken place between Turkey and those countries. Given the fact that neither Turkey nor many African countries know each other well, these meetings and the summit itself were expected to help both sides to get acquainted and improve problems such as visa requirements for Turkish citizens when visiting many African countries.

In terms of high-level participation at the Summit, among those present were six African presidents, some from small African countries such as Comoros and Equatorial Guinea, and the controversial Sudanese leader Omer Al-Bashir, five vice-presidents, six prime ministers and a deputy prime minister. The other countries were represented either by their foreign ministers or by senior-level representatives. The lack of high-level representation and interest from South Africa, influential as it is in African affairs, is a clear indication that Turkey's African opening is not clear in Africans' minds in terms of its benefits to Africa. Turkey's overemphasis on trade in relations with Africa is an issue, but what Africa really gets from this partnership is open to question, at least in the minds of many African people.[1] Turkey needs to explain and find new ways of achieving a 'win–win' situation to get serious and influential African players to develop relations with it. Unless this is achieved, the future Turkey–Africa Summits might only be an arena where Turkish and African leaders come together for different purposes rather than creating a serious, long-term partnership benefiting both parties.

Driving motives: more economy and less politics

Turkey's trade volume with African countries was only US$5.4 billion in 2003, and it increased more than twofold, exceeding US$16 billion in 2008 (see Table 1). Yet, considering that Turkey's total trade volume with the world is almost US$300 billion, the current trade volume with Africa is not significant. Turkey's target is to reach a trade volume of US$30 billion with Africa by the end of 2010 (Babacan 2008b).

Currently, there are hundreds of Turkish firms operating in various African countries. The contracting services provided by Turkish firms in those countries alone have reached a total of US$18 billion. In addition, the amount of Turkish direct investments in African countries exceeded US$500 million and is expected to increase in future (Babacan 2008b). Turkey became the twenty-fifth non-regional member of the African Development Bank in May 2008. This membership is expected to open new areas of co-operation. Turkey's membership of the African Development Bank could enable contracting firms from Turkey to undertake large infrastructure projects in the continent.

Besides developing economic relations, Turkey has also political expectations from the Turkey–Africa Summit in the short and long run. In the short run, Turkey needed the support of African countries, as it was one of the three candidates for the non-permanent seat on the United Nations (UN) Security Council in October 2008. Apparently, Turkey appears to have obtained its immediate goal, as Turkish President Gul confidently spoke that African countries fully supported Turkey's candidacy, and the result of the election in September 2008 held by the UN General Assembly indicated that Turkey received 151 votes (Kirecci 2009). In the long run, Turkey hopes to co-operate with African countries in international forums such as at the UN and exchange views on regional and global issues. To lay the ground for the co-operation in the long run, it was decided that a Turkey–Africa Summit should be organised every five years and that an African country would host the second Turkey–Africa Summit in 2013 (worldbulletin.net, 20 August 2008). It has also been decided that the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) and the Union of African Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Professions (UACCIAP) will co-operate to establish the Turkish–African Chamber for furthering commercial relations (*Zaman*, 21 August 2008).

What benefit for Africa?

Apart from increasing trade between Turkey and Africa as both sides benefit, Africa has been the continent where Turkish international aid and development projects have steadily increased over the last several years. The Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) has been transformed into a more global aid agency and expanded its area of operations since 2003. The most notable aspect has been the expansion of its activities in Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (Fidan

Table 1. Turkey's overall trade with Africa (1997–2008) (in US$ millions).

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Exports												
North Africa	980	1.502	1.344	1.087	1.150	1.267	1.577	2.203	2.544	3.097	4.030	5.850
Sub-Saharan Africa	253	316	311	285	371	430	554	765	1.087	1.469	1.947	3.212
Total	1.234	1.818	1.655	1.373	1.521	1.697	2.131	2.968	3.631	4.566	5.976	9.062
Imports												
North Africa	1.813	1.493	1.404	2.257	2.115	2.138	2.519	3.231	4.212	4.878	3.616	5.267
Sub-Saharan Africa	385	265	283	457	704	558	820	1.589	1.835	2.526	3.168	2.503
Total	2.197	1.758	1.687	2.714	2.819	2.696	3.338	4.820	6.047	7.405	6.784	7.770

Source: Turkish PM, website of the Undersecretary of Foreign Trade: http://www.dtm.gov.tr (Accessed 20 January 2009).

and Nurdun 2008, p. 100). TIKA currently has three offices in Africa, namely in Ethiopia, Sudan and Senegal. TIKA supports development projects, and from these three offices is operating in 37 countries in Africa.

In 2005, TIKA had 45 development projects or other activities in the Middle East and Africa. However, in 2006 this increased to 150, an increase of 333% (Sahin 2007, p. 27).[2] More specifically TIKA implemented 24 projects and activities in Africa in 2006. Of these projects, 19 were in Ethiopia, four in Sudan, and one in Nigeria (TIKA 2008). TIKA's projects and activities in Africa are designed to serve long-term objectives, such as the development of social infrastructure, cultural co-operation and communication, production sectors, economic infrastructure, and to a lesser extent provide support in urgent and humanitarian situations (Sahin 2007, p. 27). As part of this long-term policy orientation, in 2008 TIKE initiated an African Agricultural Development Programme in order to help develop agriculture in Africa. According to TIKA's president, Musa Kulaklikaya, this project was for the period 2008–10, and for implementation in 13 African countries: Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Comoros, Madagascar, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda (TIKA 2008).

In general, TIKA's development strategy in Africa is based on technical assistance, sharing experience in areas such as agriculture and technology transfer in order to bridge the gap between the developed and underdeveloped countries. Such efforts are also supported by health, education and infrastructure projects.[3] In the long run, with the opening of new Turkish embassies all over the continent, an increase can be expected in the number of TIKA offices and activities in Africa. There are signs that African nations are interested especially in Turkey's agricultural expertise. For example, during the Istanbul summit of the Union of African Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Professions (UACCIAP), President Mohamed El Masry noted that the causes of Africa's current food crisis were not well understood in many Western nations; but as Turkey's agriculture sector had experience in raising food under adverse conditions, co-operation utilising Turkish agricultural expertise could prove invaluable (quoted in Daly 2008).

Turkey has allocated US$50 million to development projects in African countries over the next five years. It has also donated US$7.5 million to various African countries via international organisations such as the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Red Crescent to assist them in coping with the negative effects of drought and other natural disasters. In 2008, Turkey donated US$3.5 million in humanitarian aid through the WFP (allafrica.com 2008), while in 2009 it made a modest donation of US$0.5 million to the African Union budget (AUC News 2009). In a similar vein, in 2007 Turkey for the first time hosted a summit of the least-developed countries (LDCs) in Istanbul, 33 of which are in Africa, out of the total 49. In this summit, Turkey committed US$20 million in development aid for their use. Turkey will also host the fourth conference on LDCs in the first half of 2011 (worldbulletin.net 2010).

Active participation in the fight against poverty, and increasing development and humanitarian aid are both part of Turkey's new foreign policy and international image. The more actively Turkey engages in regional and global affairs, the more often Turkey's involvement can be seen in deep-seated problems such as poverty alleviation. TIKA and Turkish civil society organisations have been active for a long time in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans. Turkish aid to Africa is an extension of such activities. However, it should be noted here that some Turkish NGOs already have a long history of involvement in Africa. One example is Istanbul-based IHH (the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief) through its projects and activities since 1996.[4] What we see today is an official state involvement in terms of sending developmental aid to Africa as part of Turkey's developing relations with the continent.

Politically, Africa may expect Turkey's support through several international organisations. For example, Turkey is interested in bringing Africa to international attention and indicated its help for this purpose.[5] When Turkish President Gul visited Kenya and Tanzania in February 2009, he pointed out that all but two African countries[6] had supported Turkey's candidacy in 2008 for a two-year, non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Thus 'the Turkish Republic will be the spokesman for Africa at the UN. It will support Africa on all of its issues' (*Today's Zaman*, 24 February 2009). This type of expression of solidarity has been frequent since the 2008 Turkey–Africa Summit in the speeches of Turkish leaders. For example, in a recent statement President Gul once again made clear that 'everyone should show an undivided interest in Africa without losing time. [In that sense] Turkey indicates its responsibility towards Africa' (Gul 2009). As the Organisation of the Islamic Conference is headed by a Turkish citizen, African countries may also expect this forum to pay special attention to African issues and see this as an advantage for them.[7]

Challenges for the future

Turkey has no colonial background in Africa, but has cultural and religious ties dating back to the Ottoman period. This is an advantage for Turkey. However, a coherent and serious Turkish opening-up of strategy and a receptive African response should consider following points, which may define the nature and speed of future relations between the two. First of all, the most persistent issue between Turkey and Africa is the lack of information on both sides about each other. Three strategies could be implemented: (1) promoting student exchanges for study in and about each other's countries to bridge the societal and informational gap; (2) exchanging academics between universities as especially in southern Africa there is a lack of expertise on the Middle East and Turkey, while same is true for Turkey about Africa. Creating an African chair for African professors in one (or more) of the Turkish universities that teach in English might be a good start, and might in the long run lead to an institute; (3) co-operation between African and Turkish think thanks to organise joint conferences and publications on Turkish and

African issues, to create the awareness that is needed on both sides.

It is well known that until recently, modern Turkey paid no attention to African affairs (Kavas 2005, p. 17), and Africa is known in Turkey through televised images of hunger, poverty, AIDS and other negative elements. Partly because of this, there is little credible information about Africa not only in academia but also in government circles. As an academic subject, African issues have long been taught only within the larger context of world political history, and it was almost impossible to find an expert on the continent or a basic textbook or article. However, over the past decade and a half, Turkish policy makers have carefully shaped an African dimension to Turkey's foreign policy that is increasingly involved in a dizzying range of sectors from trade to transport, health to humanitarian aid.

Turkey's opening to Africa is a result of both Turkey's domestic transformation, and of the change in the global political economy. Turkey's domestic transformation has challenged the traditional Turkish partners in the economy and aimed at diversifying its trade alternatives in line with change in the global political-economy power configuration. Change in the international system has led countries to define their own interest in a newly emerging system. Turkey's response to such changes has been to define a multidimensional foreign policy and developing economic and political relations, with not only immediate neighbours but also other regions and continents: Turkey's Africa opening is part and parcel of this new redefinition of Turkish foreign policy.

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Notes

1. Just before the Turkey–Africa Summit, TASAM, the Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies, organised a Turkish–Africa civil society organisation (CSO) forum from 14 to 16 August 2008 in Istanbul, attended by 90 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from 45 African countries. When the future of Turkey–Africa relations was discussed on the first day, three participants from different African countries asked the same question: what Africa would gain from this partnership? This question should be taken seriously. (Author's notes from the Forum, 14 August 2008, Istanbul.)
2. In the original text, the increase was calculated and written as 233%. This is certainly a miscalculation.
3. For details of the projects in Africa, see *TIKA Faaliyet Raporu 2008*, Ankara: TIKA, 2009.
4. Personal communication with Durmus Aydin, IHH Head of Foreign Relations, 15 April 2010. For its activities in Africa see its official website, www.ihh.org.tr/154/en/
5. In this context, a francophone perspective on the issue is worth noting: 'Old Ottoman friends, new¨ Voice of Africä?', 16 April 2009. Available from: http://www.lesafriques.net/international/old-ottoman-friend-new-voice-of-africa.html?Itemid=35?articleid=0240 (Accessed 6 January 2009).
6. Reportedly South Africa and Mozambique.
7. See comments of the African Union Commission Chairperson Alfa Omer Konare, *Zaman*, 23 November 2005.

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BOOK REVIEW

The threat of race: reflections on racial neoliberalism, by Theo David Goldberg, Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 408 pp., £20.99 (paperback), ISBN 9780631219682

In *The threat of race*, Goldberg discusses the historical and socio-political implications of modernity and neoliberalism for relations 'between race and death, racial security and threat, civility and power, horror and heterogeneity' (p. 63). Attention is especially given to the regional variations of how race evaporates on behalf of neoliberal principles, whereas whiteness and racisms continue to structure the social ordering. The book contains eight essays sketching the historical and political development of racialisation, racisms, modernity and neoliberalism in five regions of the world.

The opening argument states that as Europe during the colonial era intertwined essentially with the colonised world, race became the foundation of the ordering mechanisms of modern social arrangements. Today, although race tends to be undone in post-colonial societies, its productivity has shifted from the micro to the macro level and has become a generalised threat to geo-global interests. Race is conceived as a threat to the achievements of the enlightened European Civil Society, as race embodies the incivility of those being excluded from the web of worldly connections (p. 52). Goldberg claims that in the shadows of *raceless states* racisms continue to circulate in an untouchable manner because of racialised private preferences, which extend to the global scale. Processes of racialisation as descriptions of social arrangements and racisms as normative insinuations are examined according to specific spatial-historical conditions and expressions.

Concerning *racial americanisation*, Goldberg states that it reveals 'the historical play between segregation and its privatizing born again expression at home and in its neo-imperializing reach' (p. 370). On the basis of this historical development, Goldberg demonstrates impressively how the racialised preference system is privatised (for example in education) and how this effectively locates racism beyond the reach of state intervention. *Racial palestinianisation* is developed as a set of processes of iterative land clearance, stable settlements, moral evictions, permanent infantilisation and destruction of the 'uncivilised Arab'. Palestinian existence is denied in form of a *born-again racism* in the name of biblical rights and generalised security. Goldberg also deals with *racial europeanisation* as the evaporation of race, stating: 'race was buried in the rubble of Auschwitz' (p. 156). Therefore, through this categorical erasure boundaries delimiting cultural differences and against immigration are fixed, rendering racisms invisible while cultivating European whiteness. In *Latin America*, despite the fact that racial mixture is promoted, this continent is marked by processes of racialisation such as *raceless racism* and euro-mimesis aligning whiteness to social welfare privileges. Blackness is thus excluded from neoliberal achievements.

In contrast to the previous chapters in *racial southafricanisation*, Goldberg focuses more on the historical and empirical

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development of this specific racial regime. He shows convincingly how through colonialism, missionary activities, segregation and apartheid, race became sacral in the conviction of a political theology of race. Under apartheid the social construction of race in absolute terms peaks, forging universal definitions through race. Goldberg sheds light on the consequences of these processes in the present. Today racism is negated and race is 'neoliberalized' as sovereignty is displaced from the state to the realm of the economic.

In the last chapter Goldberg develops the idea of *racial neoliberalism* defining neoliberalism as 'the intensification of privatized preference and experience [. . .] the hyper-extenuation of the neo-liberal [as] its decoupling from any conscious modesty of humility, from any finitude' (p. 362). Under such a regime, varying according to the five regions discussed, racial neoliberalism entails the privatising of institutionalised racisms through the protection of the private sphere from any state incursions. Therefore, following Goldberg's argument, the state no longer intervenes against racisms since such intervention is perceived as limiting the freedom and equality of individuals in the private sphere. The author succeeds in convincing the reader that the privatising of race entails also that racisms are privatised and that they circulate freely in privacy in the form of racist informalisms and individualisation. Affirmative actions and other anti-discriminatory public interventions become obsolete.

This book meticulously overviews the different historical and current processes of racialisation and its interdependence with modernity, the rise of neoliberalism and the war on terror. In the chapters about *racial americanisation* and *southafricanisation*, Goldberg impressively locates these different processes within crucial historical moments and follows through their continuity in the present. With this book he contributes to further our understanding of how race operates as a threat to neoliberal interests on a global scale during the history of modernity and in the context of raceless states today.

However, due to its essayist writing style, in the analysis of local examples from South America, Europe and Palestine, the reader is often required to believe certain of Goldberg's empirical developments in the absence of sufficient evidence. For instance, he analyses the results of a Swiss poll in 2008, framing its outcome as the denial of the existence of 20% of coloured people. However there is no mention of the fact that this percentage represents the category of non-nationals (foreigners), not all of whom are people 'of colour'. While Goldberg contributes greatly to addressing the normative and philosophical debate about race in our times, some empirical examples nonetheless tend to remain anecdotal. Some of the contextual developments should therefore be considered more as explorations of specific themes rather than established analyses derived from empirical evidence.

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BOOK REVIEW

Snakes in paradise: NGOs and the aid industry in Africa, by Hans Holmén, Sterling, VA, Kumarian Press, 2010, xxiii + 294 pp., £22.50 (paperback), ISBN 9781565493018

This book examines the 'NGO scramble for Africa' which has taken place since the 1980s, and seeks to understand its developmental impact. The author is deeply informed about civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Africa and the book has a distinctive structure, covering both eastern and southern Africa, and West Africa. The book is generally well written and accessible for an undergraduate audience in particular. This is perhaps its intended market and it will serve as a good introduction to these issues at that level.

The strength of this book is its innovative structure and coverage and the insight of the author. Its weaknesses are the relative lack of engagement with theories of civil society and a sometimes excessive reliance on secondary material and quotations, perhaps reflecting its target market as a more introductory text.

Holmén makes reasoned and well-judged arguments after assessing the literature on civil society. He is a geographer by training and the explicitly geographical focus is perhaps another novel feature of the book. He finds that NGOs are more likely to succeed in higher-income regions that are more highly developed, and are better connected to external markets. This is generally well known. However, he also undertakes some macro-regional analysis to examine why NGOs have been more successful in general in western than in eastern and southern Africa. He traces this back to the 1970s drought in the Sahel and West Africa and the fact that they consequently have a longer history and have become more embedded there. He includes case studies of a variety of NGOs to illustrate this point, some of which are fascinating, such as the 'Six S' group, the acronym for the French for 'using the dry season in the Sahel'. This is a group started by a French aid worker and local activist to develop infrastructure and other initiatives during the dry season and has been very successful. He notes however that success may also sow the seeds of failure as people increasingly focus on securing external funding, rather than local empowerment. This dialectical tension between the local and 'the global' is an implicit theme which runs throughout the book. Holmén also finds, based on other studies, that there is a '"middle class" effect of participation' as the truly poor are often too time-constrained to effectively participate.

The overall impression from the book is that NGOs are often donor-sponsored and driven and that they should best be viewed as elements of people's livelihood strategies rather than necessarily driven by solidaristic impulses in the first instance. This leads the author to some keen insights. For example, while laws governing the behaviour of NGOs have been adopted by many African states in the face of opposition from 'donors', as this is often seen as an attempt to restrict political space, Holmén argues that given corruption and nepotism in many NGOs this could

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equally be seen as an example of good governance.

The one area in the book where there is more substantive engagement with theories of civil society is around the critique of work done on social movements in Africa. The author argues that in the post-Soviet era there has been a tendency on the part of leftists to romanticise certain organisations, such as the West Africa Network of Peasants' and Producers' Organisations, as class-based sites of resistance to neoliberal globalisation, whereas in reality they do not seek to overturn globalisation but to alter it to their advantage. Consequently Holmén classifies them as NGOs rather than social movements. The focus on alter-globalisation is an interesting one, but arguably does downplay the class-based nature of some of these movements. The author is at pains during the course of the book to highlight the liminal and discursively constructed nature of civil society and his overly dismissive conclusions consequently jar somewhat. This is also reflected in the discourse of the book in other places. At times for example the author speaks of the 'evil eye of the [African] state' (p. 36) rather uncritically, as an accepted fact. Also, while the author is deeply immersed in the NGO and civil society literature there are some seemingly strange comments about other aspects of African development. For example, Holmén argues that 'Nigeria is unique among sub-Saharan countries in that it has enjoyed large incomes from oil exports' (p. 128). This might be news to Gabon, which has produced oil for decades, or Angola, which now rivals Nigeria as potentially Africa's largest oil producer. These small criticisms notwithstanding, this is a worthwhile and deeply insightful book. It is particularly suitable for undergraduates as an accessible introduction to the role of NGOs in Africa today.

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BOOK REVIEW

Dispossession and access to land in South Africa: an African perspective, by Michael A. Yanou, Bamenda, Cameroon, Langaa Publishers, 2009, 144 pp., £19.95 (paperback), ISBN 9789956558766

From a specifically juridical analytical perspective, Michael Yanou's book represents an important contribution to the debate over struggles to access land by communities in South Africa previously dispossessed during the centuries of colonialism and apartheid. The work begins by exploring the origins of the Western concept of private property encapsulated in the Lockean dictum 'I own, thus I am', a philosophical interpretation of being and identity as inextricably linked to forms of property which represents one of the core themes of political liberalism. Then, focusing on the Cape region, Yanou traces the historical trajectories of land dispossession by means of military conquest, fraud, bribery and legal measures. Although without parallel on the continent, it would be an analytical mistake to understand the process of dispossession experienced in South Africa in terms of a homogeneous and definitive, 'once and for all' process. It had a complex character displaying uneven features in geographical and historical terms, and producing different forms of struggle and resistance.

One of the distinctive features of this book is the way it explores the character of the different perceptions and visions of tenure in Africa. Africans did not conceive land as a tradable commodity. With regard to land concessions made by Nguni chiefs in the face of Boer demands, Yanou argues that what was given was only a concession of *usufruct* rights and never the complete sale of land. He thus makes the case that land in these contexts was taken by fraud. The establishment and codification of the principle of *terra nullius* pushed further the increasing and incessant demand for land by migrant settler communities. This assumption, based on the idea of emptiness manufactured as a precondition of European expansion and colonial conquest, denied the existence of any indigenous claim or entitlement to land. After a synthetic sketch of the forms of dispossession, the author focuses on the laws and norms used to entrench and legitimise previous acts of dispossession. The Native Land Act of 1913, the Group Areas Act of the 1950s and the Bantustan Regional Act, Yanou argues, translate into law the European pretension of an absolute claim to African lands which denies the existence of any legitimate indigenous pretension to that land. These acts, which represented the fulcrum of state intervention, sanctioned spatial segregation through the creation of specific racial institutions, aimed at alienating African rights to own land.

While the systematic negation of legal rights to land characterised colonial and apartheid epochs, the recent democratic dispensation, encapsulated in the South African constitution, opens up the legal and political space to alter this legacy. This is the legal and political context within which Yanou deploys his thesis, specifically, that South Africa's constitution has a marked progressive and rehabilitative role given its concern with redistribution and restitution of land to racially dispossessed South African people. However, he takes

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issue with two sets of questions regarding the implementation of the restitution process: the monetary compensation or market price paid to white landowners to return land to South African communities; and the timeline of 1913 used to trace entitlements to land. Yanou is openly critical of any compensation in the form of payment for what he regards as land taken away from Africans. This attitude, inscribed in the Land Reform and Restitution Acts and articulated in the practice of land reform policies, is in compliance with reassessing white claims to African lands rather than affirming the priority of African title on that land. Second, stipulating a timeframe within which to assess the extent of dispossession represents in his view a way of silencing the much longer history of colonial land dispossession which started in 1652. Government officials speak of the difficulties of retracing the exact lines of demarcations and borders within and between different communities. The author argues for the feasibility of such an option, as some court orders have in fact established, identifying claims to pieces of land through reconstituting written and oral memories, archival records and testimonies. The fact that this procedure is not implemented reflects the lack of political will in recognising African indigenous land titles. Taking as instructive examples some courts' deliberations in juridical cases between landowners and African communities, on an individual and collective stance, Yanou argues that the success obtained by some communities in reaffirming land entitlements through juridical means deserves consideration. Indeed the advancement of struggles within the sphere of the juridical is a concrete sign of the articulation of the struggles at different levels for present and future land rights. The failure to systematically adopt this approach is, in the opinion of the author, a consequence of the prevalence of conservative interpretations of the constitution by white judges who are consciously reluctant to implement such a course.

The book effectively underlines the conflictual nature of the articulation of different pieces of legislation and norms into practice. However Yanou fails to expand beyond his juridical and institutional understanding of conflict. It seems that the book misses the linkages between the juridical transition and the overall contradictory nature of the political, social and economic transition. In this sense the constitution is taken for granted and not problematised in terms of the complexities of the social and political forces which shaped its principles and meanings, nor in terms of historical conjunctures and politico-economic compromises. The South African sociologist Lungile Ntsebeza argues that the recognition and protection of property rights, through the property clause within the constitution, are the main factors undermining the redistribution and restitution process in land reform and consolidating privileged interests. However this understanding, in turn, confounds causes with consequences. Protecting property rights in the name of democracy and reconciliation is not a cause *per se* but rather a consequence of the establishment of an elite pact which drove the transition towards a neoliberal capitalist framework where class interests, both black and white, could be promoted, in disregard of the interests of the majority of landless and smallholders, men and women, as can be seen from the evident failure of land reform objectives in the country.

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BOOK REVIEW

Mining in Africa: regulation and development, edited by Bonnie Campbell, London, Pluto Books; Ottawa, International Development Research Centre; and Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2009, 288 pp., £25.00 (paperback), ISBN 9780745329390

This is a timely and important collection of essays edited by a foremost commentator on mining and its consequences in Africa. Bonnie Campbell has assembled a radical critique of the strategy of the international financial institutions regarding the extractives sector, with case studies of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Madagascar and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), providing for an English audience exceptionally rigorous analysis of some important Francophone states. The analysis goes beyond the usually dominant and rather fatuous characterisations of the 'resource curse' – the catchphrase used to summarise economic underachievement of mineral-rich economies. Instead, the case studies in this collection highlight the importance of historical detail, the necessity of characterising relations of power between states, companies and donors without losing sight of miners, mining communities and the failures of resource availability to promote sustainable and equitable growth.

The essays come at what Campbell calls a 'turning point' regarding African mining regimes. She and her contributors have painstakingly and with forensic analysis, explored the transformations that have taken place, and the gaps that exist between mining codes and actual outcomes of mining, the lack of benefits that accrue to African states and the challenges to state authority that emerge from unrealised expectations and promises made by international financial institutions (IFIs) and companies. The book explores the consequences of the ways in which mining companies and the World Bank have used codes, regulatory frameworks, chidings over corruption, the absence of transparency and 'weak governance' to challenge the fundamental legitimacy of African states. Campbell and her contributors argue that the African state has effectively had its role redefined and its institutional capacity reduced. Probably most important of all, the book demonstrates how any notion that mining promotes development has disappeared. These essays highlight that donor and mining company infatuation with good governance and accountability 'run the danger of treating the symptoms of a particular "politics of mining" and not the relations of influence and power which makes such dysfunctional processes possible' (p. 3).

Mining in Africa uses as its benchmarks the recommendations of the World Bank Group's Extractive Industries Review (EIR). The book notes scathingly that the recommendations of that review, not least that the World Bank should effectively improve conditions of the poor, protect human rights and defend indigenous peoples and the environment in mining areas, have been ignored by the World Bank Group (WBG). Campbell is diplomatic at times, indicating that the World Bank's response to the EIR 'was a pale rejoinder to what had been proposed' (p. 4) but she and her collaborators also overwhelmingly document that the mining regimes adopted and promoted by the WBG condition ways in which (under)development is sustained and

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reproduced by the extractives sector as it is currently organised.

The case studies of Ghana (Akabzaa), Mali (Belem), Madagascar (Sarrasin) and Democratic Republic of Congo (Mazalto) highlight the detail of mining sector reforms, promoted and often directed by the WBG, with the rhetoric of improving living conditions, promoting development and transparency, yet the outcomes entrench a development model intended to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). And it is FDI which disables development, undermining state authority and policy space.

In exploring the detail of country extractive sector reforms in the diverse mix of cases, this book is a powerful document of the need for a radical and dramatic reform of the extractives sector. It disproves the idea that companies have embraced meaningful corporate responsibility, and demonstrates that the development model of externalisation of African economies merely serves the interests of foreign capital and some local elites, while exacerbating poverty and inequality. The book argues the need for African states and mining communities to create and empower reform of the extractives sector and there was certainly an opportunity in this collection, not always used, to highlight the importance of local community struggles against companies and states as local livelihoods became transformed and people dispossessed of land and opportunity.

The African Union (AU) is in the process of embracing its own vision for African mining (AU 2008) but unfortunately African governments remain, it seems, too wedded to donor-driven governance agendas as the panacea for mining sector reform. There seems little energy for active reformulation of strategies for control and regulation of mining companies but the vision document, AU debate and the international study group established to explore policy in the extractives sector may promote a more radical policy initiative. This is certainly needed.

Mining transnational corporations (TNCs) are in many respects 'outriders' for capitalism. There may only be five mining and quarrying TNCs in the top 100 companies listed in the 2009 World Investment Report, but they held more than US$250 billion in assets and more than US$126 billion in sales in 2008. As a proportion of global FDI flows, investment in extractive industries may also be relatively small but mining TNC influence is disproportionate to their size. The profitability of extraction and sales of processed metals and precious stones is extremely high. One estimate was that for 80% of the world metal mining industry, by capitalisation, net profits rose from US$4.4 billion in 2002 to US$67 billion in 2006 – the increase in profit between 2005 and 2006, following the spike in commodity prices was an extraordinary 64% – this translated into an increase of 1423% compared with 2002 levels with a return on equity of 33% compared with 26% in 2005 (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2007, pp. 3, 5). Mining in Africa provides important building blocks to confront the rhetoric of the WBG, mining TNCs and donors that promote FDI as the only promoter of capital accumulation in Africa. African resource-dependent states need now to embrace the importance of the critical analysis to help deepen a vision for mining that is a real alternative to the hegemony of the IFI and TNCs.

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BOOK REVIEW

Critical reflections on the Eritrean war of independence: social capital, associational life, religion, ethnicity and sowing seeds of dictatorship, by Gaim Kibreab, Trenton, N.J., Red Sea Press, 2008, xviii + 450 pp., £24.99 (paperback), ISBN 1569022828

Eritrea: a dream deferred, by Gaim Kibreab, Oxford, James Currey, 2009, xxvi + 420 pp., £50.00 (hardback), ISBN 9781847010087

The 1991 victory of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPFL) over Ethiopia, ending a gruelling 30-year independence war, was touted by many on the democratic left as proof positive that a mass mobilisation rooted in efforts to transform a society as it was being liberated could so alter the balance of forces that a small, impoverished nation with little external support could vanquish a far larger foe despite the backing of a superpower. Truly, it seemed, this was a 'Yes, we can!' moment.

Much of the literature on the liberation struggle and the early post-independence years that appeared in English reflected this optimism. David Pool's monograph, *Africa's longest war* (1980) and Richard Sherman's *Eritrea: the unfinished revolution* (1980) were among the best early accounts, though Pool's more nuanced 2001 exploration of Eritrean nationalism was more revealing of its contradictions. EPLF fighter/historian Alemseged's *Two weeks in the trenches: reminiscences of childhood and war in Eritrea* (2004) told a ground-level tale of the armed struggle, as did my 1997 chronicle, *Against all odds*, while Ruth Iyob's *The Eritrean struggle for independence: domination, resistance, nationalism: 1941–93* (1995) offered a more critical account.

Two anthologies captured the immediate post-independence period: Martin Doornbos and Alemseged Tesfai's *Post-conflict Eritrea: prospects for reconstruction and development in Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan* (1992) and Gebre Hiwet Tesfagiorgis's *Emergent Eritrea: challenges of economic development* (1993). On the crucial issue of land and land reform, the most comprehensive treatment was Linda Favali and Roy Pateman's *Blood, land, and sex: legal and political pluralism in Eritrea* (2003). But all took as their primary reference the narrative of the EPLF, and, despite acknowledging worrisome signs (especially Iyob), most were strongly positive, as were members of the international press who discovered Eritrea as if for the first time, the aid agencies that flocked to offer assistance, and even some states and movements that had opposed the Eritreans until then. Many Eritreans – though not all – agreed. Gaim Kibreab says he began his research for the books under review here 'when the country was in a state of euphoria and boundless ecstasy' (*Critical Reflections*, p. xii).

But suddenly the screen went dark.

Eritrea went back to war with Ethiopia in May 1998, ostensibly over unresolved border issues but in truth as the culmination of an ongoing and often bitter regional, organisational and, at times, personal rivalry. By the time the shooting stopped,

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some 90,000–100,000 people were dead. In the aftermath, Eritrean critics of President Isaias Afwerki's leadership, including founders of the liberation front, were rounded up and sent to secret prisons. They were joined by the entire independent press corps, as all non-state media were shut down and all debate over the war and just about everything else of political substance was suppressed. Over subsequent months, hundreds more who ran afoul of the regime also disappeared as what had once seemed a bold experiment in participatory nation building morphed into a cruelly efficient tyranny.

What had happened? And why?

Several post-Border-War studies sought to address this. Two explored the war itself, a key turning point if not in itself causal: *Unfinished business: Ethiopia and Eritrea at war*, edited by Dominique Jacquin-Berdal and Martin Plaut (2005), and *Brothers at war: making sense of the Eritrean-Ethiopian war*, edited by Tekeste Negash and Kjetil Tronvoll (2001). Among the critiques of Eritrea's human rights record, two of the most comprehensive, both published in 2009, were Tronvoll's *The lasting struggle for freedom in Eritrea: human rights and political development, 1991–2009* and an unsigned Human Rights Watch report, *Service for life: state repression and indefinite conscription in Eritrea*. But they were more descriptive than illuminating.

It is Gaim Kibreab who offers the most comprehensive account of the origins of the EPLF's authoritarian tendencies in *Critical reflections on the Eritrean war of independence* and who best helps us to understand what happened to the movement's early promise in *Eritrea: the dream deferred*. The first explores the toxic culture lurking within the movement from its earliest years; the second analyses the despotism it produced. Taken together, they render the present autocracy comprehensible — the product of a 'perfect storm' of cultural, historical and personal factors, not least of which was the character of the man who has led Eritrea to this point, Isaias Afwerki.

Kibreab zeroes in on the poisonous obsessions with control that plagued both the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, each of which sought to monopolise the national movement. In the ELF's case, this included the eradication of the rival Eritrean Liberation Movement in the 1960s and an unsuccessful three-year effort to crush the breakaway factions that evolved into the EPLF in the 1970s, all the while insisting that 'there can be no more than one struggle, one organisation and one leadership in our country' (*Reflections*, p. 173). A decade later, the EPLF turned the tables and – with the help of its Tigrayan allies – drove the ELF out of Eritrea; it has steadfastly refused to allow the ELF – or any other organised political force – to return ever since, leaving the victors, now calling themselves the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), the only show in town. Kibreab's point– one too often overlooked – is that the drive for a political monopoly was not exclusive to the EPLF, even if the EPLF perfected it.

That front's defining moment came early on, according to Kibreab, with the brutal suppression of a dissident political trend known pejoratively as *menqae* ('those who move about at night': bats) in 1973–74, at the close of which Isaias coolly ordered the execution of its leaders. Among them was one of his childhood friends, Mussie Teklemichael, who bore a capital 'E' on his upper arm where in 1965 he had taken a blood oath with Isaias and another comrade to commit their lives to Eritrea. (The third, Haile Woldetensae, was imprisoned in 2001 on trumped-up charges of treason, after publicly criticising the president.) Kibreab takes us through this emblematic event in meticulous detail, after which Isaias's machinations seem almost anticlimactic – which leads one to wonder how his comrades in arms could have been surprised when he turned on them.

Kibreab calls this a seminal event 'that has left a lasting impact on the psychology and subsequent behaviour of the EPLF/PFDJ leadership, particularly on Isaias's attitude toward any form of dissent or opposition to his method of leading the Front, and now the country' (*Critical Reflections*, p. 278). The lingering question is how he amassed the power he did with virtually no accountability from within either his movement or his captive society. To probe this, Kibreab walks us through the EPLF's growth and consolidation, highlighting its efforts to control not only its fighters but also its diaspora supporters and satellite organisations. This included an association in Sweden to which Kibreab belonged that was vilified when it called for more transparency and less centralisation in the EPLF-controlled student movement.

There is much more here that deserves the scrutiny of anyone concerned with Eritrea's future – the EPLF's mistreatment of Muslims and ethnic minorities, the rise of Islamist extremism, the continuing sectarianism within the ELF and its many progeny, and ultimately, for Kibreab, the ways in which Eritrea's chronically weak civil society – its lack of 'social capital' – produces an environment where it is extremely difficult to counter the anti-democratic tendencies in both the government and the opposition.

His argument throughout the second volume is that 'in post-conflict, multi-ethnic and multi-faith societies such as Eritrea, the development of a viable and democratic political system is to a very large extent a function of freedom of association and freedom of engagement in diverse economic activities' (*Dream Deferred*, p. 2). After a quick scan of the post-independence state, he looks at the Border War's impact on the contested democratic process. He then recounts the crushing of independent initiatives prior to that war, many of which had been generated by EPLF veterans, through a series of eight exhaustive case studies. These echo the narratives in the earlier volume, and it is their consistency that is most revealing, not only of the Front's addiction to control but also its obsession with secrecy, which Kibreab characterises as 'the worst enemy of civic culture and open debates' and the *sine qua non* for tyranny.

What is particularly valuable about this volume is his elucidation of the PFDJ's role in Eritrea's command economy and its stultifying impact on economic initiative, even as the regime appears to be sustaining itself on the basis of declining diaspora remittances and rogue business deals. Here, however, is one place when Kibreab misses a crucial aspect of the PFDJ's survival strategy when he describes the government's 'capricious treatment' of international mining companies and assumes the worst in future outcomes. As it happens, Eritrea is today poised on the brink of a gold rush that the government clearly views as its lifeline and that has caused it to moderate (or at least disguise) its capricious tendencies. The Canadian firm Nevsun Resources forecasts the start of production for late 2010, with the Australia-based Chalice Gold Mines predicting the start of production in 2011 and others lined up to join them. With the government due to break even on its investment by 2012, the future could hold some unsettling surprises—for Eritreans, for Eritrea's neighbours, and, if Kibreab is correct in the pattern he perceives at work here, for the very mining companies that have hung tight to this point.

After exploring the many instances where the fetish with control has worked against Eritrea's interests, Kibreab comes back to the man at the centre of it all – Isaias Afwerki – whose character and personality continue to play such an outsized role in the country, whatever its cultural heritage and historical circumstances. But in doing so, he also holds those who allowed this to happen and who defend it even now just as responsible as Isaias for where it has led:

> During the war of liberation, whoever stood or was perceived to be standing in the way was condemned or eliminated as being the enemy of the revolution. When these things happened, it was normal either to keep quiet or to celebrate the brutality as a revolutionary act. Such a situation provided fertile ground for the gradual development and consolidation of unaccountable leadership . . . Over time, [Isaias] became habituated to the exercise of absolute power without constraint. (*Dream Deferred*, p. 391)

These are important books not only for Eritrea scholars and activists but for all who struggle to understand the challenges armed revolutionary movements and their leaders face in the transition from resistance to governance. They are especially valuable for placing otherwise disparate and discouraging events within a coherent historical and analytical framework through which readers can not only grasp where they came from but where the levers are to change the result—and, one hopes, to avoid a repeat performance.

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EDITORIAL

It is (always) the *political* economy, stupid!

Introduction

In the midst of a continuing economic crisis, the centres of global capitalism remain preoccupied with much that is predictable, if somewhat depressingly familiar: economies in crisis; unsustainable levels of national indebtedness; high and/or growing levels of unemployment; failures of the state; dangers of big government; austerity measures and programmes; popular protests, and so on. Readers of the *Review of African Political Economy* (*ROAPE*) would be forgiven for thinking that this was Africa in the 1980s and 1990s, rather than Europe in 2010. Reflecting on the spread of neoliberalism, Susan George has observed how:

> In 1945 or 1950, if you had seriously proposed any of the ideas and policies in today's standard neoliberal toolkit, you would have been laughed off the stage at or sent off to the insane asylum. At least in the Western countries, at that time, everyone was a Keynesian, a social democrat or a social-Christian democrat or some shade of Marxist. The idea that the market should be allowed to make major social and political decisions; the idea that the State should voluntarily reduce its role in the economy, or that corporations should be given total freedom, that trade unions should be curbed and citizens given much less rather than more social protection – such ideas were utterly foreign to the spirit of the time. Even if someone actually agreed with these ideas, he or she would have hesitated to take such a position in public and would have had a hard time finding an audience. (George 1999)

However, George notes further, by the late 1990s this situation had been transformed beyond all recognition, due in no small measure to:

> the ideological and promotional work of the right [which] has been absolutely brilliant. They have spent hundreds of millions of dollars, but the result has been worth every penny to them because they have made neoliberalism seem as if it were the natural and normal condition of humankind. No matter how many disasters of all kinds the neoliberal system has visibly created, no matter what financial crises it may engender, no matter how many losers and outcasts it may create, it is still made to seem inevitable, like an act of God, the only possible economic and social order available to us. (George 1999)

TINA – the 1980s political slogan and shorthand for 'There Is No Alternative' – appears to be alive and well, and still stalking the corridors and other spaces of political–economic power and influence, both inside and outside the Bretton Woods community. Here, too, there is much that is reminiscent of Africa's experience with structural adjustment during an earlier crisis of global capitalism, and which would be familiar to a *ROAPE* audience already engaged in unravelling the various manifestations of the current crisis, as well as the full range of its shorter- and longer-term political–economic and environmental impacts.

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Thus the leaders of Britain's new coalition government, among several others, are resorting to the now-familiar trope of an absence of political and economic alternatives, potentially viable or otherwise, to neoliberal austerity. Indeed, the widely reported denunciation of laissez-faire capitalism and unfettered markets by Vince Cable, UK Secretary of State for Business, also contained unambiguous support for a pro-market, pro-business agenda (*The Guardian* 2010), despite the sharp criticism it elicited from 'The City, business leaders and economists' (Treanor 2010). As Alex Callinicos (2010a) among others has observed, however, far from being anti-capitalist, Cable favours an alternative, regulated and more ethical form of capitalism, itself an aspiration which, according to Harvey (2010), would be to misunderstand the true nature and workings of capitalism.

Neoliberalism's African legacy

Some elements of the earlier experience in the world's most 'adjusted' continent are worth recalling, notably the zealotry which attended the promotion of the supremacy of a largely unbridled market, 'free' from the interventionist hand of the state and open to the forces of neoliberal globalisation. The state, divested of its welfare function and developmentalist role, was undermined, subdued and 'rolled back', even as production and exchange relations were increasingly informalised and public assets privatised. The question, it quickly became clear, was not whether economies needed 'adjusting', but how quickly reform could get under way and how completely economies could be made market friendly. Little wonder that Stoneman (2004) is convinced that the driving force behind neoliberal reform was ideological rather than technical, at least initially, while Olukoshi (2000) was struck not only by 'the strong, one-sided anti-statism of structural adjustment on a continent where state-led development was prevalent', but also the persistence or longevity of an intervention which 'was initially seen and treated as a temporary diversion from the actual business of development'. And little wonder when, according to te Velde (2010), 'Africa has ... offered higher profits for multinationals than the rest of the world for more than a decade.'

Stories of the intended and unintended consequences of the ensuing neoliberal globalisation for individuals, groups and nature abound in *ROAPE* and elsewhere. These recall, against a backdrop of TINA's brooding presence, an assortment of local and other encounters with, experiences of, and reactions to multi-scale attempts to re/create the conditions necessary for the reproduction and expansion of capital – the globalisation of capital, in other words (Harvey 2010).

Thus John Briggs and Ian Yeboah (2001), for example, have argued using Tanzanian and Ghanaian case study material that a combination of economic peripheralisation and neoliberal globalisation have characterised Africa's incorporation into the world economy; that 'many significant engagements with the global economy have tended to be [Structural Adjustment Programme] SAP experiences' (p. 19); that the continent's engagements with adjustment have been most visibly played out in the form and structure of its growing (particularly 'gateway' capital) cities; that while 'many aspects of SAPs have unequivocally pressurised urban livelihoods ... many urban Africans, ironically perhaps, talk about the improvement of life chances that have come about as a result of SAPs' (p. 24); and, finally, that increased economic activity aside, SAPs have contributed to 'reinforc[ing] investment in exchange and consumption rather than in production', with residential real estate benefiting at the expense of investment in industrial and commercial development (p. 24). And, away from cities, analysis of regional impacts of SAPs in Ghana's rural and regional production zones has revealed improvements in macroeconomic performance, but highlighted, too, that at the microeconomic level rural poverty in particular was still 'alive and well'; and that adjustment may have exacerbated socio-economic and spatial inequalities, with undesirable consequences for 'subsistence-oriented' populations and regions existing alongside the more widely trumpeted positive effects on export-oriented areas and populations (Konadu-Agyemang 2000, Konadu-Agyemang and Adanu 2003). Indeed, Ghana's gold belt, export-oriented zone *par excellence*, is thought to exemplify a 'development hyperspace' in which a neoliberal strategy of 'territorial restructuring', involving powerful local, inter- and multi-national actors 'assuming ever greater control over the *places* and *spaces* of production in order to guarantee the essential structural conditions that facilitate predatory corporate mining activities', is redirecting 'a very large sum of capital ... towards large-scale gold mining operations at the direct expense of the local people and the environment' (Armstrong 2008, p. 18).

Thus, even though it was (and remains largely) founded on an insistence on a lack of serious policy alternatives, notwithstanding the examples of China and parts of Latin America, among others (James 2003, Munck 2003), the reality of neoliberalism-as-adjustment in Africa:

> does not quite match the panacea that [World] Bank economists envisioned. Instead, countries in the region have been compelled by SAPs to engage in a 'race to the bottom' as they compete to lower labor, social, and environmental costs for the TNCs. As a result, the region's poor majority has been forced to endure a devastating downward spiral of *underdevelopment* — persistent and growing poverty, inequality, hunger, disease, economic stagnation or decline, indebtedness, falling real wages, unemployment, and ecological degradation. (Armstrong 2008, p. 6)

From a policy perspective, therefore, as Olukoshi (2000) has noted, the disenfranchising effects of reform conditionality and cross-conditionality, on the one hand, and 'the donorisation of the decision-making structures and processes', on the other, have combined to create 'choiceless democracies' with little room for manoeuvre by governments, and even less incentive for internal political debates on policy and governance *choices* during the 1990s. Indeed, the whole process of formulating a developmental agenda for the continent, he suggests, was relegated to a position of secondary importance for the more than two decades during which adjustment was transformed into a permanent feature of African life, arguably 'the very essence of [continental] economic management' (Olukoshi 2001).

Instead, given the often spectacular malfunctioning of market capitalism, as well as its direct and indirect contribution to undermining the capacity of states to undertake progressive redistributive intervention or promote sustainable livelihoods, the institutionalisation of palliative measures such as the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA) Programme in Africa with minimal potential for 'bucking the market' became a favoured policy option (World Bank 1990). Other poverty alleviation interventions designed to 'give adjustment a human face' operated via the market or the so-called third or charity sector, which became a major beneficiary of 'outsourced' service provision functions which were formerly the purview of the state. Welfare provision was thus partly privatised and, by means of poverty reduction strategies (PRSs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ultimately globalised. Indeed, the formalisation and adoption of the MDGs was itself an acknowledgement of the limits of a market-based economy in responding to the needs of the world's poorest countries and communities. As the MDG Africa Steering Group put it (2008, p. 1):

> [I]f fully achieved, [they] will allow African communities and countries to raise productivity and compete successfully in world markets to increase economic growth. Investing in the MDGs and promoting the private sector are critical steps in charting a course towards stability and sustained economic growth that will build capital, attract foreign investment and overcome Africa's current need for external assistance.

The MDGs, then, fulfil the dual role of helping in the fight against poverty in 'hot spots' like Africa, while allowing the world's rich to preserve a sense of solidarity (Sachs 2010). In thus providing a fig leaf for neoliberalism's failings, the MDGs assume a material and symbolic significance which is heightened in the midst of the most recent of capitalism's periodic crises. This is particularly so when, as the MDG Africa Steering Group notes, 'Africa as a whole is lagging behind on each Goal despite a very encouraging recent rise in the rate of economic growth, an overall improvement in the policy environment, and strong macroeconomic fundamentals' (2008, p. 1); and doubly so, given that – as the Steering Group warns in singularly instructive language – 'the MDGs are too important to fail' (*ibid*.). Too important, according to the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, not because of pity for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, but because a sense of global solidarity and a recognition of global interdependence demand it (cited in Greeley 2010). Others express this in starker terms. Elliott (2010), for instance, hints at unspecified potential threats to global economy and society in the absence of the social protection or safety nets provided by MDG-related activity, however limited in scope and coverage, while cautioning against ignoring 'trends that in the past have been the recipe for misery, civil unrest, and even revolution'.

Like the major European and American banks during the recent financial crisis, then, MDGs are considered central to the survival of neoliberal globalisation, as shown by the convening of, the arrangements for, and the deliberations at the just-concluded UN 2010 MDG summit (20–22 September). Indeed, a potent reminder of this, if one were needed, was provided by Jeffery Sachs's (2010) observation that:

> The MDG summit took place in the same days that Sweden saw a far-right, anti-immigrant party take seats in parliament. France is harassing the Roma for local political gain. The US is in the throes of anti-Islamic fever, a right-wing Tea Party challenge and anti-immigrant fervour. High unemployment, economic uncertainty and political manipulation of the public by various interests threaten our very social stability. For many, Africa is a target of racism and opprobrium, not partnership.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the summit recognised the uneven progress recorded within and between country and region; reaffirmed the need for countries, governments and their development partners to stay the course; and identified priorities and strategies for accelerating progress towards the achievement of all MDGs by 2015 (UN 2010). Yet while the summit document acknowledges the financial and economic crises as only 'set-backs', alongside challenges posed by climate change-related impacts among others, Sustainability Watch, a Southern civil society network, identifies 'market-oriented economic development framework' as the most critical of the 'five key barriers' preventing developing countries from achieving the MDGs (Armstrong 2008). But it is precisely in this market-based economy that the MDG Africa Steering Group (2008, p. 27) places unshakeable faith: 'rigorous and bankable country strategies . . . if fully implemented will', the group is convinced, 'accelerate economic growth and achieve the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals'. Clearly, the struggle to give adjustment a human face is deeply implicated in the process by which a TINA ideology is reinforced.

Beyond orthodox neoliberalism?

But could any of the foregoing have been otherwise, given that society appears to exercise only a tenuous mastery over the market? Or, indeed, when the current debate in Western policy circles is polarised between what Walden Bello (2010) describes as the 'pro-spending people' and 'anti-deficit people', one in which 'reason has taken a back seat to ideology, interests, and politics'? In Africa's long experience with neoliberal adjustment, the market fundamentalists won what became a long, drawn-out battle of attrition, while pro-state spenders had to settle for SDA- and MDG-type interventions; subsequent concessions have been extremely hard won, and the nature, pace and direction of 'development' remains heavily circumscribed by the inordinate influence of the continent's development partners. As with the current wave of popular and other protests against proposed deficit reduction measures in the advanced capitalist economies, the legitimacy of neoliberal globalisation was called into question from the very beginning, with initiatives like the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) (UNECA 1980) and African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAP), among others, being suggested as possible (structuralist and Keynesian) alternatives during the 1980s and 1990s (Adedeji 2002).

TINA as an ideology did in fact have to contend with widespread and often sustained contestation from popular forces (Callinicos 2010b, Harvey 2010), much of which was routinely deflected as either misguided ('the continental crisis would have been a lot worse without reform') or wrongly targeted ('limitations and failures of reform were due to wrong, partial or non-implementation rather than faulty or inappropriate design') or just overly hopeful ('expectations were unrealistically high') (World Bank 1994, Olukoshi 2002). Furthermore, African academics debated its limitations endlessly and activists of all kinds worked tirelessly to highlight (and attempt to counter) its most pernicious effects. Indeed, the recognition of the need to (re)focus on poverty reduction, and an acknowledgement of the necessity to confront questions of 'ownership' of adjustment programmes, were in part concessions to this pressure which fell far short of fundamental challenges to the structure or functioning of neoliberal adjustment to which the continent's development partners were (and remain) inextricably wedded.

But where does all of this leave the prospects for neoliberalism's 'marginalised' in Africa, those who currently struggle to survive under conditions of persistent and growing inequality in the context of an economic downturn, volatile food prices, reduced aid, and migrant remittances, among other challenges to individual and group survival? And why, given the malfunctioning of market capitalism recently, is there so little in the way of discussions about alternatives *to* capitalism, despite renewed interest in Marxist explanations of the crisis (cf., for example, Callinicos 2010b, Harvey 2010, and Kothari and Kuruvilla 2010)? In Europe, as in the US, mainstream debates are about the merits and demerits of *alternative capitalisms* and their associated state regulatory mechanisms, particularly financial market regulation. The main UK political parties appear reconciled to significant deficit reduction and are largely embroiled in arguments about how deep and how fast such cuts should be, and which sections of the public service should bear the brunt of the cuts. Similarly, in the US, the Obama administration has neither 'advance[d] an aggressive anti-neoliberal narrative to explain [the crisis]' nor presented its proposed measures for tackling the latter as 'elements of a broader program of social reform aimed at democratising control and management of the economy' (Bello 2010).

It is precisely the opportunity to explore such democratisation in the management of society, economy and nature – what Olukoshi has called 'developmental democracy' – which Africans have sought throughout the era of adjustment (and its 'successor regimes'):

> The formulation of a renewed developmentalist agenda would, inevitably, involve a well-thought strategy for bringing the state back into the policy formulation and implementation process. After some decades of neoliberal demonisation of the state, this would seem to be a point on which there is increasing consensus but it is important to stress that within the framework of the developmental democracy which is being proposed, the role of the state in the development process is treated as a legitimate one by definition. It is also a role that goes beyond the simple creation of an 'enabling environment' as the Bank frequently suggests. Beyond any regulatory and enabling functions, the objective need exists economically, socially and politically for the state to take a leading role in the development process of African countries. Given the profound damage which has been done to the state in Africa over the last two decades of structural adjustment, its reinstatement as a central development player will necessarily involve an investment in rebuilding its capacity for effective policy formulation and implementation. In a sense, effective policy capacity is integral to the rehabilitation of the state as a legitimate organiser of the development process. (Olukoshi 2001)

Crisis episodes offer opportunities for change, revolutionary or otherwise. After all, the 'global financial crisis and the need to address climate change have shaken confidence in the ability of the market, or government, to do everything on its own. There is now a more nuanced view of the respective roles of state and business, and their interaction' (te Velde 2010). The current crisis of global capitalism can be just such an opportunity for Africa to articulate feasible alternatives to neoliberal globalisation based on policy heterodoxy and, crucially, for these to be taken more seriously by the continent's development partners than were predecessor attempts like the LPA and AAF-SAP.

In this issue, David Williams analyses the World Bank's policy interventions in one of the 'showcase' African states: Ghana. By detailing the ways in which policies are funded, advocated, and (at least in part) designed by the Bank, Williams shows how liberal interventions are realised. In effect, the state is pushed between a 'scissors movement' of both roll-back and disciplining, and enabling and capacity building. The underlying dynamic here is a need for external agencies both to remain hostile towards 'big' government, but also to rely upon the state to audit and reform society, and to facilitate market expansion.

The kind of 'liberal imaginary' that Williams avers also relies on a certain kind of civil society which both complements and restrains the state. This expected relation seems especially absurd in the context of many African countries – an absurdity that is a clear symptom of the continued ideological imperialism of Western intellectuals concerned with development. In this issue, we have articles that reveal the more intricate, nationally specific – politically fraught – interactions between states and socio-political organisations. Lene Bull Christiansen considers the ways in which ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe has elaborated a discourse in which it has positioned itself as the protector of women. In doing so, it has portrayed women as a metaphor for Zimbabwe's nationhood and represented the opposition movement as undermining or even threatening women's/Zimbabwe's integrity or wellbeing. Bashir Ali then analyses the struggles of citizen-based organisations in the face of an increasingly authoritarian state Islam under the National Islamic Front in Sudan.

This edition also carries two articles on Africa's relations with India. Amrita Narlikar sets out a context of renewed (but not entirely novel) interest in East Africa on the part of India. Gerard McCann looks at a specific country case study – Kenya – to tease out some of the more fine-grained aspects of the political economy of Indian involvement in East Africa. Starting with a recognition of the history of Indian involvement in the region – a product of British colonialism, McCann highlights the ways in which different forms of investment have been realised in Kenya through attitudes towards ethnicity and connections to the state.

Finally, Cyril Obi meticulously examines the various 'resource curse' approaches to conflict in Africa, and more specifically in the Niger Delta region. Pointing towards a kind of fetishisation of oil, he offers a more historically embedded political economy reminiscent of Gauteng's concept of structural violence.

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OBITUARY

Basil Davidson (1915–2010): a tribute

Basil's contribution as a writer and historian on Africa is without parallel in Europe. His active study and active involvement in the politics of liberation was also outstanding. It was natural that he provided, as scholar and activist, an inspiration for this *Review* but also practical support from the word go. He was one of the first to sponsor the project and remained one of our International Editors from 1973 until his death this year. The debt of those associated with this journal and everyone concerned with understanding Africa to his life's work is enormous. But as the time for obituaries and solemnities passes, the celebration of that life's work can begin – not by erecting a monument, but a true tribute: a considered evaluation of the living legacy he leaves.

Basil had established himself as a journalist before and after World War II. In broadening his writing beginning in the 1950s to concentrate on Africa, he was to make major contributions in three areas: first in African history, then the studies of liberation movements, and finally, I would argue, the nature of African politics.

A series of general books and a stunning TV series on African history opened up to scholars and a broader public what has become a whole sub-discipline but was at the time only embryonic. One of the first generation of UK Africanist historians, Roland Oliver, described Basil's role as 'the most effective popularizer of African history and archaeology outside Africa, and certainly the one best trusted in Africa'. The inspirational effect of this body of work is attested to by scholars around the world. And all this scholarly impact from a man who remained outside the professional realms of academia, although he was recognised by several honorary doctorates and by being the first-ever recipient of the Distinguished Africanist Award of the African Studies Association UK.

> 'I first read Basil's *Black Mother* while still at school in Sierra Leone, and from that moment wanted to devote myself to African history.'
> *Professor Tunde Zack Williams, UK*

> 'Discovering Basil Davidson's writings was what turned me on to solidarity activities with African liberation movements, and eventually to African studies.'
> *Professor Makoto Sato, Kyoto, Japan*

> 'It was his *Old Africa Rediscovered* of 1959 that encouraged me to apply for a studentship for historical-archaeological research in East Africa. His inspirational message of the necessity of recognising an independent pre-colonial Africa, and equally – despite the scepticism of main-stream academic historians in Britain – of the feasibility of researching that through Iron Age archaeology – was especially influential at the time.'
> *Dr John Sutton, archaeologist, Oxford, UK*

Beyond memorialising this pioneering body of work, it deserves (re)reading, if only because Basil writes like a dream. But what more does it leave behind? Clearly more in the approach than in filling in specific parts of the record. Clearly, too, an 'Africanist' history in terms of the stress on the richness and complexity of the indigenous past rather than on the colonial experience. But also not just a 'celebration' of all things

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traditional, and especially not of the kingdoms, as a recent TV series was called, and their hierarchies. How does his less grandiose claim that pre-colonial Africa 'when Africa knew no such misery and crisis' (as today) stand up to scrutiny? One hopes that the specialist historians might usefully generate a debate by testing such insights.

The insights he offered about the nationalist movement and achievement of Independence also deserve revisiting. He campaigned against colonialism and racism – he was Vice-President of the UK Anti-Apartheid Movement for many years – and was cautiously optimistic following the achievement of statehood. Does the fact that events have turned out differently necessarily mean the analysis is without insight and should be just forgotten as sympathetic over-enthusiasm? It has been suggested, even in the *Guardian* obituary, that in particular he was discreet about the national liberation movements and the 'logic' of armed struggle. But how far was this a result of a conscious suppression of information or as he questioned a generation later: 'what did we miss?'; see below on 'nation-statism'. What is the case was that he proved ready to be frank in what he said face-to-face with the inner circles of power.

His insight into national liberation struggles came about from the mid 1960s when Basil made a series of daring safaris into areas liberated by the emerging nationalist movements in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, and much later in Eritrea. He reckoned he walked 600 miles in the four visits to ex-Portuguese Africa (Jeremy Harding in *London Review of Books*, 5 August 2010). He brought to those missions a deep understanding of guerrilla movements from his liaison with anti-Nazi partisans in Yugoslavia and northern Italy in World War II, the subject of a memoir and a novel. The contacts that led to these travels arose when Basil happened to meet a young and unknown Amilcar Cabral on an extended visit to London, before he formed the Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC). As the armed struggle got under way Cabral kept Basil informed of its form and progress, and through him the English-speaking world. Field visits among the liberation forces and the people in the liberated areas made the flow of information real. Basil's second stay coincided with the Portuguese military coup in 1974 that overthrew the Fascist regime. He described in his first book how in the lead-up he was able with PAIGC cadres to have clandestine meetings with progressive Portuguese army personnel (Davidson 1981). Many years later the Portuguese President presented Basil with one of that country's highest honours in the fields of history and culture. He was made Grand Officer of the Order of Henry the Navigator, the citation referring to him as a 'historian of Portugal and colonialism', a recognition of how he had seen the African liberation struggles as generators of democratisation in Europe (see report in *ROAPE*, 29 (91), pp. 117–119).

Another example of how influential was Basil's reporting at first hand on the guerrilla struggles was given to me by Marcelino dos Santos, former President of Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) and of Mozambique at a conference in Dar es Salaam this year, when he recalled how Basil, returning from FRELIMO's Second Congress in the liberated areas of northern Mozambique in 1968, via Tanzania, was debriefed by President Julius Nyerere:

> up to then Nyerere and Tanzania had given great support to the cause, but we felt there was a degree of qualification about it; it was 90% backing. But after Basil reported to Nyerere doubts disappeared, especially about the new leadership, after the death of Mondlane, the support became 110%!

Basil and Eritrea

In the late 1970s Basil began to engage with the Eritrean liberation struggle, and on reflection he took the position that Eritrea should not be denied the chance for 'self-determination' enjoyed by all ex-colonies in Africa. Of course liberation from Ethiopian over-rule was a much more controversial issue than the support of anti-colonial struggles in southern Africa. His writings on the liberation movements in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique and his support for liberation of the settler colonies in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa had sounded an automatic resonance on the Left and among young people, and in Pan-African circles, which no longer came into play over Eritrea. Ethiopia was caught up in a proxy conflict of the cold war, with the United States its enemy. As one old-guard fellow-traveller MP said when Basil made the case for Eritrea to the Africa Committee of the Labour Party: 'I hear what you report but at the end of the day I simply ask myself what side Fidel is on!' In African circles supporting the Eritrean case for self-determination against their enforced incorporation into a unitary Ethiopian state was seen as endorsing secession and fragmentation of an African state. Only a few among radicals on the Left or in Pan-Africanist circles, such as Ruth First, shared Basil's courage in espousing this cause.

He was involved in the first public raising of the Eritrean question in the West, a conference in London in 1979 initiated by Bereket Habte Selassie, and they co-edited the proceedings (Davidson *et al.* 1980). Thereafter Basil was contacted on occasions by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front seeking endorsement of specific positions or requesting he speak at some event but he told them, like others, he did not feel able to go beyond his initial stating that they had just cause without more information on their struggle. He cited the pattern that had grown up in relation to Guinea-Bissau with Amilcar Cabral sending briefings, and eventually invitations to visit, to Basil and others giving solidarity. It took a couple of years before Basil's suggestion was acted upon, but networks were gradually established, leading to a 'seminar' in the liberated areas in 1983, once the throwing back of the last of Ethiopia's several offensives made that possible. And one result was the setting up of the Research and Information Centre for Eritrea (RICE) with offices in Rome and Brussels, the beginnings of an archive and a monthly newsletter, which was a partnership between the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and its 'friends'. Ultimately this work and the archive were built on in setting up the Research and Documentation Centre in Asmara after liberation. As word spread and more 'friends' had made their own visits, a more considered volume on different dimensions of the struggle was put together in 1988 at the suggestion of the EPLF, with Basil co-editing (Cliffe and Davidson 1988).

Basil used his considerable reputation in the cause of solidarity. He spoke to the Labour Party Africa Committee, which did take an official position of support for the Eritrean liberation. He also made representations to Cuba, where his efforts to support the cause of liberation in Angola, especially, were well known, to question its support of the Derg regime in Ethiopia and thus its indirect bolstering of attempts to suppress the Eritrean liberation cause. (Cuba had a military presence in Ethiopia but it should be said, unlike the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR], it did not allow its personnel to be involved on the Eritrea front.)

Basil was not able to attend the 1983 seminar but did eventually make the arduous trip into what the Eritreans called the 'Field' in 1988 and was able to witness the decisive battle of the liberation war at Afabet, where the EPLF forces broke out of their 10 years of encirclement. He even broadcast from the battlefield just after the victory direct to British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service in London on a line the EPLF had managed to set up, announcing 'the most significant conventional battle in the Third World since the Vietnamese liberation forces defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu'.

With the achievement of statehood in 1993, Basil was one of the invited guests at the Independence celebrations in Asmara. At a small informal party for the international 'friends' he gave a brief, inspiring speech in replying on their behalf to remarks by President Isaias Afeworki. The latter had said rhetorically that what Independent Eritrea would continue to require from friends was 'criticism'. Whether he meant it or not, Basil made some cautions about the future at a seminar a few days later when he was invited to give his views to an audience that included many senior party leaders about the lessons from the post-liberation experiences of other African countries. His main advice was the need to avoid the institutional crises that resulted from the gap between leaders and people through encouraging those traditions of participation and answerability built up in the years of struggle. I was able to unearth the notes I had taken at the time to pass back to Basil when emissaries from the regime came to pay a 'courtesy call', presumably to keep him 'on side' after the war with Ethiopia (1998–2000) and after the most authoritarian moves occurred in 2001. He reminded them of his earlier warnings at that time, and in criticisms of the authoritarianism and imperviousness to criticism, notably in one of his last writings, the Introduction to collected material by another 'friend', Dan Connell (Davidson and Cliffe 2004).

One ridiculous but sad moment occurred during the celebrations when Lady Trumpington, a junior Foreign Office minister who was the official representative of the Thatcher government, came across a hotel lobby to greet two people who looked to be compatriots, and when Basil introduced himself, her immediate response was to blurt out, 'aren't you the fellow traveller?' Even her Foreign Office minder looked embarrassed by this instinctive bluntness, although someone like him had presumably prepared the briefing for her containing that categorisation – evidence that he was still seen in these terms by UK officialdom. Basil's coldly polite response was to ask whether she understood the significance of what we were all there to celebrate, the victory of a movement that was independent in all senses, against a Soviet-backed counter-insurgency – a struggle he had supported for years in the teeth of severe criticism by the Communist-influenced Left.

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Basil's recognition of the harsh realities of post-colonial Africa, and of the limited impact of 'popular struggles', in southern Africa and then in Eritrea and Ethiopia, led him to interrogate the earlier work of himself and others. And in posing the question 'what explains this degradation from the hopes of newly regained independence?' and in his specific answer, a 'crisis of institutions', he made a third major contribution, into the nature of the contemporary state and politics (Davidson 1992). This work delves back into post-colonial history but to come up with a contemporary thesis. He argues that the universal pattern of equating 'national' independence as a project within existing colonial states, 'nation-statism', ensured that it became a 'modernising' project, following liberal democratic norms, eliminating any prospects of either building on any indigenous roots, and inviting a new form of chronic tribalism or unqualified repression. This work deserves to be kept alive within current discourses on politics, alongside and in contention with the likes of Mamdani or the neo-patrimonialists.

In this and in many other dimensions Basil's work should remain a source of insights and controversy.

Lionel Cliffe

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OBITUARY

Ken Coates (1930–2010)

Ken, who passed away in June 2010, was a socialist well known in the UK and Europe. He has a special place in the memory of those involved with this *Review* in the early days, even though he had no particular involvement with Africa. The exception was his enduring link with former President Ben Bella of Algeria, whom he brought into international campaigns on human rights and against imperialist wars, including the several war crimes tribunals. These were organised by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which Ken served as Secretary and then Chairman from 1963. Associated with the Foundation was Spokesman Books, a Left-leaning publishing house, and its printing press, the Russell Press. It was to the latter and to Ken that this *Review* turned in the late 1980s in efforts to overcome early crises and to replace the self-help printing with a more professional appearance. Every quarter, editors descended on the Press in Nottingham and corrected the proofs on the spot. But the relationship went way beyond a business one with a printer/publisher. Russell Press and Spokesman nurtured the *Review*, as it has done with the companion *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. We had sympathetic political support, and the generous extended credit kept us alive through bleak times. Ever the complete internationalist, Ken saw the long-term importance of radical perspectives on and in Africa. This support he offered amidst an incredibly busy life: the Press, the Spokesman magazine he edited, the Foundation, the Institute of Workers' Control he founded, a university post in extra-mural studies, and writing many books on current global as well as national politics and political economy. He was thoroughly involved in the labour movement, and served as a Member of the European Parliament for a decade, until Tony Blair and New Labour hounded him out as too radical – and too influential. *ROAPE* will thus remember him with special gratitude. As someone who spanned the fields of scholarship and activism, his life offers a role model to radicals the world over.

Lionel Cliffe

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