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Accumulation with or without dispossession? A 'both/and' approach to China in Africa with reference to Angola

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In the burgeoning field of research on China in Africa, analyses generally fall on a continuum between two divergent positions. With reference to Angola, this paper reviews perspectives on China in Africa as well as the main features of Chinese engagement with the continent in order to interrogate the 'divide' between the 'China threat' and 'peaceful rise' positions. The goal is not to take a centrist position, but rather to suggest that China represents for Africa *both* a new imperialism *and* a new model of development. While differentiating between the new Euro-American and Chinese imperialisms, China's new engagement, exemplified by its relationship with Angola, is a project of recolonisation and appropriation of economic surplus. The Chinese variety of imperialism, however, offers African states a compromise to their elite and to their citizens that has heretofore been missing from post-colonial Euro-American imperialism – the prospect of sustained economic growth and improvement to the quality of everyday life.

Keywords: China; Angola; oil; accumulation; new imperialism

[Accumulation avec ou sans dépossession? Une approche « à la fois/et » à la Chine en Afrique, avec comme exemple l'Angola.] Dans le domaine de la recherche en plein essor sur la Chine en Afrique, les analyses se situent généralement sur un continuum entre deux positions divergentes. En prenant comme exemple l'Angola, cet article examine les perspectives de la Chine en Afrique ainsi que les principales caractéristiques de l'engagement chinois envers le continent afin de questionner le fossé entre les positions craignant la « menace chinoise » et celle croyant en « la montée en puissance pacifique » du pays. L'objectif n'est pas d'adopter une position centriste, mais plutôt de suggérer que la Chine représente pour l'Afrique *à la fois* un nouvel impérialisme *et* un nouveau modèle de développement. Alors qu'il se différencie des nouveaux impérialismes euro-américains et chinois, le nouvel engagement de la Chine, illustré par sa relation avec l'Angola, est un projet de recolonisation et d'appropriation de l'excédent économique. La grande variété de l'impérialisme chinois offre cependant un compromis, à l'élite et aux citoyens des États africains, qui était précédemment absent de l'impérialisme postcolonial euro-américain – la perspective d'une croissance économique durable et de l'amélioration de la qualité de la vie de tous les jours.

Mots-clés : Chine ; Angola ; pétrole ; accumulation ; nouvel impérialisme

The mid 2000s began a period in which academic research into China in Africa has become extremely fashionable. China has made inroads into several countries by offering large amounts of money for infrastructure development and becoming a major trading partner

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throughout the continent. From an African perspective, this new relationship suggests the possibility that China's investment could spark economic growth and social development. On the other hand, China's support has bolstered many leaders with questionable democratic credentials while renewed ties have led to an influx of people and goods. Overall, China's actions have therefore produced a decidedly mixed result along with charges of Chinese imperialism.

Analyses generally fall on a continuum between two divergent positions. On one extreme, 'China threat' theory, popular among conservative elements in the US, sees China as exploitative and invokes claims of a new imperialist scramble for Africa. Conversely, theorists of what Giovanni Arrighi (2007) calls China's 'peaceful rise' view Chinese engagement as a boon for the continent. The two extreme positions and their role in American foreign policy have been widely commented upon in academic literature on China in Africa.

In the West, the recent proliferation of scholarship about China in Africa has been dominated by notions of China as threatening and dangerous. This is perhaps why Arrighi highlights China's doctrine of 'peaceful rise' as a direct rebuttal to the idea of 'China threat'. The notion of a peaceful rise expresses the view that China's emergence as a global superpower benefits neighbours instead of exposing them to violence and plunder. However, China can also be viewed as both capitalist and imperialist. In the context of what is clearly a major Chinese play for the African continent, it is crucial to not only ask whether China's development model can produce different outcomes for China and the world capitalist system, but also, fundamentally linked to that question, whether or not the theorised 'Beijing Consensus' can produce different outcomes for Africa than the neoliberal orthodoxy of the Washington Consensus.

The placement of a particular analysis on the 'threat–benefit continuum' often depends on the author's theoretical approach and subjective point of view. To argue either extreme is to take either with a pro-Western or pro-China position. Most sophisticated analyses – particularly analyses that claim to take an 'African view' – tend to reject the dichotomous understanding and instead fall somewhere in the middle. Clearly, then, the context of the African locale selected and the sector of the economy that is being investigated are important variables in determining exactly how a particular analysis is formed.

Angola has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention from those who wish to investigate the role of China in Africa (see Corkin 2011; Alves 2010; Vines *et al.* 2009; Campos and Vines 2008). Around the world, headline-grabbing announcements proclaim the vast amounts of Chinese investment in Angola and the new importance of the country – which currently alternates on a monthly basis with Saudi Arabia as China's top supplier of crude oil – for China's energy security. The Angolan case is most often selected due to the depth of Chinese engagement and is particularly useful in making wider generalisations to other cases in which China is engaged in significant natural resource extraction. Within certain limits, the Angolan case can also be applied to draw broader conclusions about China in sub-Saharan Africa.

This paper reviews perspectives on China in Africa, as well as the main features of Chinese engagement with the continent, in order to interrogate the 'divide' between the positions outlined above. The goal is not to take a centrist position, but rather to suggest that China represents for Africa both a new imperialism and a new model of development. While differentiating between the new Euro-American and Chinese imperialisms, China's new engagement, exemplified by its relationship with Angola, is a project of recolonisation and appropriation of economic surplus. The Chinese variety of imperialism, however, offers African states a compromise to their elite and to their citizens that has heretofore been missing from post-colonial Euro-American imperialism – the prospect of sustained economic growth and improvement to the quality of everyday life.

The new scramble for Africa

Political economy scholars have mainly dwelt on the question of whether China will compete with Europe and the US, either in terms of global dominance or in shifting the world system away from the hegemony of neoliberalism. However, this question cannot be disentangled from the context of Euro-American and Chinese imperialisms. It is here that Africa presents not only case studies, but entirely different perspectives for evaluating claims of a 'Chinese model'.

Scholars of African political economy are increasingly speaking of a 'new scramble for African resources' (see Yates 2012; Southall and Melber 2009; Ampiah and Naidu 2008; Guerrero and Manji 2008; Alden 2007; Manji and Marks 2007; Klare and Volman 2006; Watts 2006). In the current moment, not only China, but also Europe, America, and other strongholds of global capitalism, are looking to Africa for new opportunities. The past decade has seen a shift in how the rest of the world views Africa. Today, Africa is more likely to be called a new frontier of opportunity than a lost continent. It is in this geopolitical context that John Saul refers to the 'recolonisation' of Africa by the 'Empire of Capital' (Saul 2008, 2010). Just as Africa has been peripheral to the centres of global capitalism, it has historically been peripheral in debates about global political economy. However, in the current moment of world history, African development is becoming an increasingly central theme in key debates about global political economy in the same way that the exploitation of Africa's resources is becoming increasingly important for the functioning of the capitalist world system.

The new scholarly focus on China in Africa shifted into high gear in 2006. In a show of its new power and influence, China attracted 41 African heads of state and government to its African cooperation forum in Beijing.[1] The summit, along with China's sponsoring of the annual meeting of the African Development Bank in Shanghai a year later, marked the beginning of increased scrutiny of China's involvement in Africa in both mainstream and critical scholarship. At the same time, increasing attention has been placed on China's energy situation in light of its growing demand for oil, fuelled by a booming Chinese economy, which incredibly grew an average of 9% per year between 1978 and 2005 (Lee and Shalmon 2008, 110).

As Alden notes, China turned from net exporter to net importer of petroleum in 1993 and now consumes more petroleum than Japan (Alden 2005, 148). The energy dimension of China's (and the US's) engagement with Africa warrants further consideration before proceeding to an analysis of China in Africa based on the Angolan case. Eighty-five per cent of new global oil reserves found between 2001 and 2004 were on the west/central coasts of Africa. These resources are particularly attractive for both advanced petroleum-dependent economies and the so-called emerging ones, given that 90% of the world's untapped conventional oil reserves are owned by states, most of whom exclude or sharply limit outside investment in oil (Sautman and Hairong 2008, 92). Crude oil accounts for roughly 70% of Africa's exports to China, a country that is particularly dependent on foreign oil. Coupled with the fact that China also requires many other minerals and natural resources that are found in large quantities in Africa, and that the West also needs these resources in the manufacture of high technology products, it is no wonder that many are referring to a new scramble for Africa.

Unfortunately, Marxian political economy moves very quickly and at a high level of abstraction from the empirically well-defended position that China is capitalist, to a more contestable yet still well-supported view that China is imperialist, before arriving at a very crude assumption that China offers nothing different to the Global South than traditional relations of neocolonialism. This approach leaves a reader interested in an African or even a Chinese perspective on China's engagement in Africa completely unsatisfied. Therefore, the basic principles and core theoretical contributions of the Marxist approach must be re-examined and reapplied in order to better reflect the reality of what China's approach to Africa means to the continent.

China's new engagement with Africa can be best understood through an understanding of its role in the global political economy. In his book on China's changing role in the capitalist world economy, Minqi Li writes:

> To restore the profit rate and reinvigorate capital accumulation, it is necessary for the core states to shift their capital out of certain economic sectors with declining profit rates and relocate these sectors to geographic areas in the periphery and semi-periphery where the wage and taxation costs remain sufficiently low... China has been the primary beneficiary of the latest round of global capital location. (Li 2008, 107)

What Li describes is a what David Harvey (2003) calls a 'spatio-temporal fix', a dynamic that he describes as particular to capitalism. Harvey explains: 'The capitalistic (as opposed to territorial) logic of imperialism has, I argue, to be understood against this background of seeking out "spatio-temporal fixes" to the capital surplus problem' (2003, 89). However, China's manufacturing capacity has grown so rapidly, it must constantly seek new markets for the vast quantities of goods it now produces. As an illustration, China's total exports to Africa have increased from under US$5 billion in 2002 to over US$60 billion in 2010 (UNCTAD 2011[2]). By sending its surplus commodities elsewhere, China switches the surplus from commodities to money. This can often only be done with the advancement of credit to facilitate the switching in locations where the state has limited resources. This excess capital must be absorbed through new spatio-temporal fixes. For this reason, Harvey (2003) writes that imperialism under capitalism is set apart by the capitalist logic and endless capital accumulation.

Interest in the topic of China in Africa, and particularly in oil extraction (which has been central to the new scramble for Africa), has also been generated by a spate of recent high-profile energy deals. The largest of these deals have involved China's closest ally on the continent, Angola. Beijing has been a major player in Angola for several years. The international community caught on to just how serious a player China was becoming in 2005 when China provided a US$2 billon aid package to Angola. The loan from China's EximBank was secured by future Angolan oil production. China followed this up with a second US $2 billion loan and a further US $500 million. These loans represent only the tip of the iceberg in terms of Chinese financing.[3] In fact, the international watchdog organisation Global Witness details several loans to Angola (through the state oil company, Sonangol) worth close to US$14 billion from various, mostly Western European, banks (Global Witness 2009).

As a result of China's new relationship with Angola, trade between Angola and China has gone from US$1.1 billion in 2002 to almost US$25 billion in 2008. Despite lower trade volumes in 2009 due to the global financial crisis, by 2010, trade between the two countries was back to 2008 levels (UNCTAD 2011). In 2007, China overtook the US as the largest importer of Angolan crude oil. By 2009, it was importing nearly double the amount of the US, which remains the second-ranked importer of Angolan oil (MINPET 2010). This means that Angola alone supplied nearly 17% of China's total imports of crude oil that year.[4] At the same time, foreign investment from China has also skyrocketed. Data obtained from the Angolan Agency for Private Investment (ANIP) shows that in 2009 there was US$166,403,000 of private Chinese investment in Angola, making China second only to Portugal as a source of foreign investment. The construction sector accounted for US$152,299,000 of China's private investment recorded by ANIP. The data excludes most oil investment, since this investment is made under the terms of the Production Sharing Agreements and also excludes all public investment (including private investment from China under the loan arrangements with China Exim Bank).

Many commentators have viewed China's loans as undercutting the efforts of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to impose transparency on Luanda. However, a standby agreement between Angola and the IMF was reached in 2009 in a changed context in which Western diplomacy with regard to Angola has become increasingly pragmatic. It is therefore more accurate to view China and the West as competitors in Africa engaged in similar types of activities. This point must be understood in order to properly contextualise the impact of China in Africa and the notion of a Chinese alternative to the dominant Western paradigm of development.

Perspectives on China in Africa

Stephen Marks argues that there is such a thing as a Chinese model of development because, like Japan and the 'Asian Tigers', China did not develop by following the prescription of the Washington Consensus. Like many of the other authors writing on this subject, he outlines two views on the Chinese model of development: a 'Western' view that China avoids good governance and human rights conditionality in its relations with others, and a counter-view that China has a greater relevance to Southern countries because it too is developing and can therefore engage in South–South cooperation in areas such as rural development, and intermediate technology (Marks 2007, 6–7). Of course the dichotomy, like most dichotomous understandings of complex phenomena, is a false one.

A more complete picture of African development and underdevelopment can be reached by accepting that the propositions of both extreme standpoints are fundamentally correct, although not necessarily interchangeable. Rather than being a question of either one perspective or the other being true, this is clearly a case that calls for a 'both/and' approach in which the two supposedly contradictory views are both understood to be true from different standpoints.[5] A more sophisticated study of Chinese engagement in Africa, grounded in African political economy, reveals that while China acts with a logic of new imperialism that clearly displays characteristics of accumulation by dispossession, it offers at the same time something different to traditional Western models of engagement with Africa.

At the level of foreign policy, China's involvement in Africa is understood as part of China's entry onto the world stage. The Council on Foreign Relations' *More than Humanitarianism*, which mainly reviewed the United States' growing interest in Africa, devoted an entire chapter to China, charging that it protects rogue states, deploys its influence to counter Western pressure to improve human rights and governance, and unfairly competes with US firms in contract bids. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded by arguing that China has a 'strategic partnership' with Africa based on political equality, mutual trust, economic win–win cooperation, and cultural exchange (Sautman and Hairong 2008, 88). For this reason, China often contrasts its policy of offering aid without political 'strings attached' with what it views as European and American interference in domestic affairs.

The entry of China has been a factor in Africa's own emergence onto the world stage – presenting an opportunity for African governments to 'play the China card'. The Chinese goal of a 'strategic partnership' with Africa as part of its 'peaceful rise' raises a potential challenge to Euro-American hegemony. Chinese foreign policy at the global level is very concerned with American hegemony. This reflects the US's position as the only power with the political will and military means to thwart Beijing's interests (Alden 2005, 152). China is deeply concerned about the US's intentions and the long-term objectives of US imperialism. This has caused it to focus more on foreign policy and find strategic partners with common interests (important interests include mutual respect for state sovereignty, non-intervention in domestic affairs, etc).

In the American government, there are two dominant discourses of 'threat' and proposed strategies to address the 'threat', roughly corresponding to the two perspectives outlined above. The divide can be seen as a shift from the Clinton administration's view of China as a 'strategic partner' to the Bush administration's view of it being a 'strategic rival'. Alden sees this as a divide between administration 'hawks', who are primarily concerned with defense and who see China as a force to be actively countered, and more moderate forces from the state department and foreign policy establishment, including many democrats, who argue for cooperation and dialogue with China (Alden 2007). Arrighi also notes this divide by citing a debate in the pages of *Foreign Policy* between Mearsheimer (representing the 'containment/China threat') and Brzezinski (representing 'engagement').

Competing perspectives on China have led the Council on Foreign Relations and the Heritage Foundation, two of the major protagonists in what can be characterised as the cooperation/containment debate, to very different analyses of what to do about resource security. *More than Humanitarianism* notes: 'It would be easy, but mistaken, to consider China an adversary in Africa. Like other growing economies, China is a legitimate competitor for natural resources' (CFR 2006, 52). However, in their short paper for the Heritage Foundation, Peter Brookes and Ji Hye Shin argue that:

> The United States must also be alert to the potential long-term disruption of American access to important raw materials and energy sources as these resources are 'locked up' by Chinese firms for the PRC's domestic market to maintain China's economic growth. (Brookes and Shin 2006, 2)

By 2006, those calling for dialogue and cooperation with China seemed to be winning out. In making a case for viewing China as a 'strategic partner', Gill *et al.* write:

> Recent experience has affirmed that the two countries stand a far better chance of dealing with the many security challenges they face – from stemming the nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea to securing energy supplies to tackling the problem of global climate change – through cooperation and healthy competition rather than confrontation. (Gill *et al*. 2007, 15)

Engagement is also the basis of the Obama Administration's approach to China in general and to China's engagement with Africa. However this policy has not stopped the US from issuing warnings about China. In a June 2011 trip to the continent, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton warned against a 'new colonialism' as China expands its presence in Africa:

> We saw that during colonial times, it is easy to come in, take out natural resources, pay off leaders and leave… And when you leave, you don't leave much behind for the people who are there. We don't want to see a new colonialism in Africa. (Krause-Jackson 2011)

Speaking to an audience in Zambia, Clinton warned that China too often pays African elites to extract concessions in new investment opportunities. She reassured her audience: 'The United States is investing in the people of Zambia, not just the elites' (Carmichael 2011).

The tension is apparent on the ground in Angola, which is perhaps the site of the fiercest US–China rivalry. Yet even in Angola an American diplomat emphasised US–China cooperation regarding Angola and suggested that the containment approach had never been operationalised in American foreign policy, even during the Bush years, and was no longer influential either in Washington or in the embassy in Luanda.[6] The diplomat's comments were somewhat contradicted a few weeks later at a public forum in Luanda on the role of China in Angola when an American defence attaché from the embassy commented publically that China was trying to create 'a new slave empire in Africa', demonstrating that the extreme 'China threat' position is still alive and well amongst many in the Pentagon.

In private, American diplomats have been quite keen to denigrate the quality of Chinese infrastructure projects in the country and argue that the Chinese 'don't have any interests here other than resource extraction'. The representative from the US embassy mentioned above quipped: 'It's plain and simple. They are just here for the resources. They are not interested in the country's well-being, only in extracting what they need economically'. The diplomat went on to insist that the United States espouses a much more holistic set of interests than China:

> Yes, Angola is the sixth largest supplier of oil to the US, but that is not the sum total of our relationship. We still promote democracy and human rights, and our goal is free, secure, and peaceful relationship with Iraq – I mean Angola. (*Ibid.*)

Although they may both be engaged in one form of (re)colonisation or another, both the US and China seem eager to disassociate themselves from the worst forms of the other's naked imperialism.

China's engagement with Africa

This paper will argue that China's actions in Africa are in general no different to what Western countries have done and are doing, though there may potentially be more advantages to China's relations with Africa. In order to assess China's involvement in Africa since the 1990s, it is necessary to look at three broad categories suggested by Guerrero and Manji (2008); namely: aid, trade, and foreign direct investment (FDI).

China uses its aid strategically to support commercial and investment interventions in Africa, just as the West does, by supporting key infrastructural development projects, training programmes, debt relief, technical assistance, and tariff exemptions for selected products from Africa. Additionally, both American and Chinese aid is largely tied. In 2000, total trade between China and Africa was US$11 billion. Sino–African trade hit US$55 billion in 2006 and US$74 billion in 2007 (Taylor 2009, 1). By 2010, trade between China and Africa was just under US$120 billion (UNCTAD 2011). Today, China is Africa's second largest trading partner after the US, ahead of the UK. However, China's trade with Africa is still a small proportion of China's trade with the rest of the world. Finally, Chinese FDI to Africa has, along with trade, been growing rapidly. By the end of 2006, various estimates of China's FDI stock in Africa put it at around US$8 billion (Sautman and Hairong 2008, 93), with one estimate putting it as high as US$11.7 billion (Asche and Schüller 2008, 26), up from US$1 billion in 2005.

In terms of military cooperation, Chinese engagement with Africa can be broken down into peacekeeping, military training, and the supply of arms. In the year 2000, China deployed fewer than 100 peacekeepers. Since then, there has been a dramatic 20-fold increase in its contributions (Gill and Huang 2009). As of April 2008, China had 1457 military peacekeepers, observers and police participating in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, out of 1981 Chinese personnel in such operations worldwide. Its commitment makes China the twelfth largest contributor of personnel to UN peacekeeping missions, compared to the US, whose 300 personnel rank forty-third (Shinn 2008, 177).

Chinese military assistance pales in comparison to Western, and particularly US, engagement. At the same time, China's programmes are, on a smaller scale, essentially indistinguishable. Asche and Schüller write:

> The programmes providing military training and arms supplies to the most important oil customers were so similar that the conclusion had to be drawn that China's efforts to acquire oil assets in Africa followed an 'essentially indistinguishable pattern' to that of the United Kingdom, France and the USA (Klare and Volman 2006). In our observation this is incorrect in only one significant aspect, namely that China does not maintain any notable military bases in Africa – or at least not yet. (Asche and Schüller 2008, 70)

Asche and Schüller go on to note that: 'China is the world's fifth-largest supplier of weapons, and one of the largest in Africa. China has supplied weapons to Sudan, supplied both sides in the wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and also supplied arms to Zimbabwe' (2008, 44). At the same time, the West has supplied arms to conflicts in Africa and around the world, propping up repressive regimes and not only fuelling but also intervening in civil strife. A notorious example of this was its support of the murderous Doe regime in Liberia. A more current example would be the continued supply of tear gas to Egypt for use against demonstrators in Tahrir Square. In Angola, the US supported the rebels of UNITA, who were themselves heavily supported by apartheid South Africa (another US ally for many years).

Brookes and Shin assert that:

> African dictatorships are regular buyers of Chinese weapons and military equipment, which they often use to oppress minority populations, quash political opposition, harass neighbouring countries, and extinguish any glimmers of democratisation. (Brookes and Shin 2006, 4)

However, given the examples above, their assertion would be equally valid if the word 'Chinese' were to be replaced with the word 'American'. Additionally, while China's arms sales to Africa are significant, they represent only 6–7% of all arms delivered to Africa (Alden 2007, 25, citing Curtis and Hickson 2006 and Tjonneland *et al*. 2006).

In terms of political cooperation, China has worked closely with many African governments, engaging them in robust and reciprocal relations and treating African leaders as equals. This differs sharply from the Euro-American tendency to treat Africans as junior partners at best (Rupp 2008, 68). Since the mid 1990s, Chinese leaders have criss-crossed Africa several times, visiting numerous countries and building friendly relationships. This has led to a popular perception that China interacts with African countries more as equals. Although Brookes and Shin write: 'China rewards its African friends with diplomatic attention and financial and military assistance, exacerbating existing forced dislocations of populations and abetting massive human rights abuses' (2006, 1), this again is a sentence in which the word 'China' could equally be replaced with the word 'America'. Examples of US misdeeds in Africa in no way excuse China for supporting repressive regimes in Sudan, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere. Rather, such cases simply add balance to the 'both/and' analysis being advanced in this paper.

It is indisputable that, in many respects, the actions of the Chinese are generally similar to the North Americans and Europeans. In many instances, Chinese actions – particularly in terms of investments – are likely more positive for Africa, particularly in countries like Angola, which are of key strategic importance to China. In Angola, Chinese investment can be seen everywhere – it is difficult to walk around the capital, Luanda, without tripping over a Chinese construction project. For Angolan non-governmental development organisations, Chinese projects are similar to Western ones in terms of outcomes. The most noticeable difference articulated by one Angolan development practitioner in Luanda was that the volume of Chinese investment seems much higher given their very visible programme of investment in infrastructure, education, health, agriculture, and fisheries.[7] This is a commonly held view in Angolan development circles.

The similarities between Western and Chinese engagement raise important questions about the discourses of 'threat' that have come to dominate Western and some African analyses of China in Africa. As we have already seen, notions of a threat to African development, particularly in the West, are understood to come from China. Obviously, neither the US nor China has direct control over any African state. Therefore, it is necessary to examine China's military, political, and development cooperation with Africa in order to get a handle on the depth of China's engagement, as well as to establish what is so threatening about what China is doing, and who are the perceived victims of this threat.

(New) imperialism and (re)colonisation in the 'new scramble for Africa'

This paper has asserted that Chinese activities in Africa are no different to Western ones. In no way does this assertion condone what Harvey (2003) calls accumulation by dispossession, which for any given state has many forms both internal and external. This premise informs the argument made above that China's engagement with Africa has created situations *both* of mutually beneficial cooperation *and* of exploitation.

A tension exists among Western scholars in terms of how to analyse China outside of the discourse of threat, even for those who do not necessarily see China that way. In the opening lines of his book, Rotberg writes that China and Africa need each other – China needs Africa to grow, Africa needs China to develop. Therefore, 'both benefit significantly from this remarkably symbiotic relationship'. A sentence later, Rotberg adds, 'China hardly wants to colonise, but it does have immense mercantilist ambitions' (2008, 1). These two sentences, appearing back to back at the beginning of page one are contradictory. Mercantilism, the theory 'informing' the golden age of European expansion and the making of the 'Third World', is plunder at worst, or, at best, it is profiting by exchanging items of low value for items of high value. There is no sense in which a mercantilist foreign policy can be understood as symbiotic.

Naidu and Davies (2006) argue that the biggest difference between the nineteenth century scramble for African resources and the contemporary one is that Beijing's economic engagement is accompanied by investment. Indeed, as outlined above, there are concrete benefits to what Davies (2008) has referred to as China's development model. More in depth, country-specific analyses are needed to appreciate the differences between Chinese and Euro-American imperialism. This paper provides a framework for such studies, moving beyond simplistic analyses of China from both the right and left. This approach, however, need not necessarily deny the negative and outright imperialistic aspects of China's position.

Africans have good reason to be uncomfortable with a unipolar world characterised by Western dominance. According to Ndubisi Obiorah:

> China's emergence as a major axis of global power is often welcomed among African intellectuals, who hope that it may herald a return to global multi-polarity in which milieu Africa and the developing countries will have a greater role on the global stage than they currently do. (Obiorah 2007, 40)

As Stephanie Rupp writes, China has been increasingly open and responsive to African concerns about imbalances in economic competitiveness and the effects of Chinese imports on African economies and African industry. It has been willing to find middle ground with countries, particularly countries that are central to its Africa strategy.

According to Rupp: 'This willingness to find middle ground with their African counterparts, indeed making concessions to support African industries that compete directly with Chinese investments, marks a significant departure from classic relations of dependency' (2008, 71). To back up her claim, Rupp observes that when China, in an attempt to respond to South African concerns, withdrew its imports of textiles from South Africa, a key African market for China, this led not to a relaunch of South African businesses, but to an opening for cheap imports from Bangladesh and Vietnam. This example suggests 'that in the twenty-first century Africa is being buffeted by the broader challenges of globalisation, rather than by specific competition from China' (*ibid*.). China's development and infrastructure projects also depart from the classic model of colonialism and are part of a concerted effort to target people in rural communities and those whose lives are directly affected by the presence of Chinese extractive industries.

In tackling the question of imperialism, Horace Campbell writes:

> Chinese banks, oil companies, insurance companies, construction conglomerates and trading firms do not yet have the kind of self-confidence and track record to act with imperial impunity, as did the more robust and experienced imperialist entities from those societies that underdeveloped Africa. (Campbell 2008, 102)

Campbell goes on to say that:

> The other area where the interests converge is on reparations. China has been forthright in its call for the Japanese to rewrite its textbooks to reflect a different account of the Japanese occupation of China. African activists share the same goal of calling on Europe and the USA to repair their relations with Africa after centuries of the slave trade and colonialism. (Campbell 2008, 103)

Although Rupp and Campbell are persuasive in defense of China, it must be noted that there is a tendency for all material relations between actors of differing power to be exploitative. In terms of contemporary capitalism, David Harvey (2003, 2006) has convincingly argued that increasing reliance on accumulation by dispossession is an in-built and ongoing feature operating in concert with capitalist accumulation. Therefore, with the lessons of the first scramble for Africa in mind, Africans ought to remain guarded against (neo)imperialism and (re)colonisation.

The struggle against recolonisation requires a sophisticated analysis of how new imperialism operates in sub-Saharan Africa in the current conjuncture. Embracing such an analysis requires critical theorists to move beyond the anachronistic belief that an acknowledgement of a tendency toward exploitation necessarily suggests the classical theory of imperialism. In particular, it is incorrect to assume that late nineteenth and early twentieth century theories of inter-imperialist rivalry have saliency in the context of the new scramble for African resources. To bolster his claim of a new rivalry, Campbell quotes German Chancellor Merkel as saying: 'We Europeans should not leave the continent of Africa to the People's Republic of China... We must take a stand in Africa' (Campbell 2008, 92, citing Godoy 2006). However, while Campbell implies that this quotation is evidence of rivalry, it turns out that he has taken the Chancellor's words out of context. In the source, an article in the Asia Times by Julio Godoy, the two sentences in this quote are separate. From the article, it is clear that Merkel, speaking to a conference on urban development, makes the first remark to encourage continued responsibility for Africa's development (Godoy 2006). With the call to take a stand, which in Godoy's article is unconnected to the first assertion, Merkel is actually calling for fair extraction of natural resources and sustainable development.

Rupp writes that due to recent American and European moves in Africa (e.g., the creation of AFRICOM and the EU–Africa Summit), it 'is clear that China, Europe, and the United States are engaged in a triangular competition for influence in Africa' (2008, 67). This statement highlights the problem of different meanings of the word 'competition' at play in analyses of China and the West in Africa. For some authors, competition evokes the inter-imperialist rivalry of the past, while for others it merely signifies the competition inherent in the global capitalist system. This connotative difference raises an important question about the bases upon which it is assumed that China's role will be in opposition to that of America and Europe and the basis upon which it is assumed that China has different motivations than the West. While there clearly is a scramble for African resources, this scramble requires more nuance in analysis than the classical theory of imperialism allows for.

China and new imperialism in Angola

For Harvey, new imperialism is defined by the domination of capitalist logic of accumulation. In his 1982 book *The Limits to Capital* (2006), Harvey expands the 'first-cut' theory of crises of overaccumulation based on Marx's theory of the tendency of the profit rate to fall. He does this firstly by integrating temporal dynamics introduced by the credit system (the 'second-cut' theory of crises) and secondly by integrating social space under capitalist relations of production and exchange into the theory of crises through the concept of uneven geographical development (the 'third cut' theory of crises). New imperialism, through the lens of Harvey's theory of crises, can be viewed as a powerful conceptual apparatus for understanding imperialism under capitalist social relations.

In *Limits,* imperialism and continued exploitation under capitalism is explained as a 'spatial fix' for the contradictions of capitalism (Harvey by 2003 had renamed 'spatial fix' to the more accurate 'spatio-temporal fix'). As Harvey writes: 'Centres exploit peripheries, metropolis exploit hinterlands, the first world subjugates and mercilessly exploits the third, underdevelopment is imposed from without, and so on' (2006, 439). In *The New Imperialism* (2003), Harvey explains further. Following Arendt, he argues that endless capital accumulation requires the state to 'endlessly seek to extend, expand, and intensify its power' through geographical expansion and spatial reorganisation (2003, 43).

Continued exploitation and plunder under the capitalist mode of production resembles what Marx refers to as 'primitive accumulation'. However, since he views it as peculiar to call an ongoing process 'primitive', Harvey (2003) terms the wide range of processes used to plunder wealth under capitalism 'accumulation by dispossession'. China's recolonisation of Africa, though it involves a compromise with domestic elites that may produce very different developmental outcomes and potentials than European imperialism in the first scramble for Africa and Euro-American neo-colonialism, must be understood as accumulation by dispossession. Using Angola as a case study, it will be shown that accumulation by dispossession is an important and meaningful concept for understanding China's engagement with Africa.

Rather than focusing on the size of China's massive loans to Africa, the political economy of China in Angola begins with the simple question of asking who benefits from these loans and what effect China is having on Angolan development/underdevelopment. Angolans are keenly aware of the positives and negatives of China's role in its post-war reconstruction. The almost exclusive use of Chinese labour, Chinese firms (including subcontractors), and Chinese materials in projects financed by Exim Bank, despite provisions that 30% of the value of the contracts will go to Angolan firms, along with the lack of significant technology transfer from Chinese investment, demonstrate the most obvious ways in which Angolan reconstruction benefits the Chinese. In turn, Angolans are well aware of the strong possibility that their own government officials may be privately benefitting from the opaque deals with China.

On the one hand, the roads, bridges, and other infrastructure being built are sorely needed in a country devastated by decades of war, while investments in schools and hospitals are investments in Angolan's human capacity. China's new role in Angola has brought the financing needed for the country's reconstruction and significant investment has been made in key sectors of the economy. Journeys that once took most of a day can now be completed in a few hours and neighbourhoods are being connected to national power grids for the first time. Chinese assistance is having a real impact on people's everyday lives – not only through their credit facilities but also through cheap access to scooters, electric generators, and countless other products that have increased the average person's buying power and standard of living.

Highlighting the ways in which Chinese trade and investment is having an impact on the average Angolan, one Angolan living in Cabinda Province noted:

> My personal opinion, not being aware of the numbers of the amount of money coming from China, is that what counts are results in everyday life. What we see with Chinese projects is that they make quick results for the population of the country and we are noticing a lot of improvement because of Chinese cooperation. I have to accept these changes are bringing a benefit to the community.[8]

Through the Angolan Ministry of Finance, details were made available about the public works undertaken with financing from China Exim Bank and completed prior to the 2008 national election.[9] The projects included several large irrigation projects, electrification projects, and the construction of several new health clinics, hospitals, schools, polytechnics, and agricultural institutes. Although the government has been less transparent since the election in updating the data, there is little doubt that the projects are having a major impact on the country. Concerns remain over the implementation of the project, with key concerns including wasteful spending, stories of which abound in Angola. Some of the worst examples are in the government programmes to promote industry, agriculture, and fisheries, which often fail due to a large-scale modernisationist approach that went out of style decades ago. However, in a country that is defined by a system that Steve Kibble (2006) has called the 'the politics of disorder', elites, defined by their relationship to presidential patronage, are the main beneficiaries of government investment.

China plays a key role, not only in providing opportunities for corruption, but also in allowing the government to avoid popular demands for substantive and participatory democracy. One very well-connected Angolan journalist I spoke with complained to me that 'accountability is awful with the Chinese'. A economy correspondent for one of the most important news sources in the country, he admitted he had no idea how much money Angola has got from China, but concluded that it is highly likely that powerful people are gaining from Chinese loans.[10]

In explaining uneven development under capitalism, Harvey writes:

> Imperialistic practices, from the perspective of capitalist logic, are typically about exploiting the uneven geographical conditions under which capital accumulation occurs and also taking advantage of what I call the 'asymmetries' that inevitably arise out of spatial exchange relations. The latter get expressed through unfair and unequal exchange, spatially articulated monopoly powers, extortionate practices attached to restricted capital flows, and the extraction of monopoly rents. (Harvey 2003, 31)

Interestingly, the Chinese have been accused of engaging in all of these practices in Angola, although the biggest beneficiaries of their employment may actually be the Angolan elite. China's business dealings in Angola's oil sector are obscured behind a murky relationship involving Sonangol, Sinopec, and the quasi-private Chinese firms that have come to be known as the '88 Queensway Group', after their common Hong Kong business address (Levkowitz *et al* 2009). China's business dealings in the Angolan oil sector highlight the worst aspects of how the Chinese benefit from a lack of transparency and accountability and how they have been quietly building a kind of indirect empire through the activities of supposedly private Chinese firms. After losing out in earlier attempts to gain stakes in the Angolan oil sector,[11] Sinopec turned to a man named Xu Jinghua (also known as 'Sam'), whose connections to Angola date back to his involvement in selling arms to the government during the civil war.[12] His association to Angola's President may date back even further to an association from their days as students in the Soviet Union (*Economist* 2011; Brautigam 2009, 372). Sinopec's move led to the entry of the '88 Queensway Group' into Angola and into the oil sector. The US–China Economic and Security Review Commission (Levkowitz *et al.* 2009) and Chatham House (Vines *et al.* 2009) have produced detailed reports on the group, naming several individuals connected to the group. Chatham House names Xu Jinghua as Director of China Beiya Escom, Board Chairman of Dayuan, and Board Chairman of the China International Fund (CIF), while the Congressional report produced by Levkowitz *et al.* make several attempts to connect Sam and his empire to the Chinese state and its security apparatus.

In Angola, in addition to CIF, 'Sam' is in charge of a group of companies called 'China Sonangol', including China Sonangol International Holdings Ltd (CSIH) and China Sonangol (Shanghai) Petroleum Co, Ltd, which on the ground in Angola are one in the same. Under 'Sam's' direct control, China Sonangol has investments in many countries including Gabon, Guinea, Tanzania and Zimbabwe in crude oil, minerals, manufacturing and construction. China Sonangol's investments in diamond mining in Zimbabwe, have been acknowledged by Sonangol's CEO Manuel Vicente in Sonangol's glossy publication *Sonangol Universo* (2011). 'Sam' has also recently been accused of providing funding and material support to the Zanu–PF and the notorious Zimbabwean Central Intelligence Organisation (Swain 2011) and appears to be behind the funding of new airplanes for Air Zimbabwe (Africa–Asia Confidential 2011), all the while shoring up access to valuable mineral resources.

While Chatham House's report on China and Africa distinguishes between CSIH and Sonangol–Sinopec International (SSI), the same individual from the China Sonangol (Shanghai) Petroleum Co, Ltd has represented SSI and China Sonangol at group meetings for partners in the blocks held by both companies, possibly the source of confusion about whether certain blocks were actually held by China Sonangol or SSI.[13] In late 2009, Sinopec bought a majority stake in SSI and it now appears that they are integrating their own staff members into SSI, while 'Sam' retains control of both CIF and China Sonangol. Although there have been reports of a fractured relationship between China and Angola, notably after the government blocked Marathon's sale of 20% of Block 32 to CNOOC and Sinopec, it appears that many signs that were taken as evidence of a growing rift may have been a simple reorganisation of assets between Sinopec and the 88 Queensway Group. While Sonangol exercised its right to buy back the 20% stake in Block 32, one source confided to me that the stake ended up going to China regardless. This assertion was later confirmed by the company's CEO, Manuel Vicente (Sonangol 2010).

The heavy involvement of private Chinese companies in Angola's oil industry and indeed the entire project of Angolan reconstruction, in which China plays a central role, allows the Angolan elite – particularly those who are well connected to the ruling party, the MPLA, and the military – to maintain privileged positions within the Angolan state and Angolan society. Tony Hodges (2004), in his well-known political economy of Angola, foresaw that the Angolan elite were shifting their strategies of accumulation from the more crude methods of the past and to more sophisticated strategy involving integration into domestic and international circuits of capital. As a result, these elite have cultivated fantastic new opportunities to accumulate wealth. On the other hand, CIF has also been involved in bringing new industrial development to Angola in sectors as diverse as cement production and automobile assembly. This accomplishment has led one of the most well-respected Angolan development practitioners to comment that Chinese investment is actually better for the majority of Angolans than investment from Brazil or Portugal.[14]

Multiple sources in Angola (both Angolan and Chinese) confirm that many, if not most, Chinese civil construction projects are actually completed at a loss – both by state construction firms and by CIF.[15] The fact that these companies are willing to carry out projects at a loss suggests that these projects are part of the compromise the Chinese state and Chinese capital are making with the Angolan elite to allow Angola to be both a continued supplier of natural resources and a consumer of Chinese finished commodities. Sonangol's interference in the open sale of Marathon's asset to CNOOC/Sinopec and under the table awarding of it to China–Sonangol (whose Angolan ownership is unknown) highlights not only the differences between different Chinese actors, but also the tendency for the worst aspects of the accumulation of wealth and power by a small elite to thrive in the intersection between oil, geopolitics, and the recolonisation of Africa by what is more rightly understood not as an 'empire of capital' but *empires* of capital. While Chinese imperialism may have more benefit for average citizens, the vast majority of the benefit accrues to African elites and their Chinese partners.

Conclusion

That 'China' is not one actor in Angola but many necessitates a 'both/and' answer to the question of the effect of China's involvement in the country. China represents a potential solution to many of Angola's most pressing needs while it reinforces some of the most objectionable practices of its elites. Unlike in previous eras of imperialism, China's engagement with Africa offers a real potential benefit. Angola can and does share in a rent-surplus extracted from its natural wealth. While it would be foolish to suggest that such extraction does not involve both dispossession and degradation, it would also be foolish to ignore the potential benefit of that surplus for one of the most underdeveloped countries in the world. It is through the operation of this premise, exemplified in the Angolan case and visible throughout sub-Saharan Africa, that a new moment can be imagined and understood – as both a moment of opportunity and of dispossession.

Although presented as 'either/or', the dual outcomes are well-captured by Deborah Brautigam (2008), who understands the opportunity for increased industrialisation as a model of 'flying geese' and the dispossession as a danger of a 'hidden dragon'.[16] The 'flying geese' model represents the Japanese example of moving actual production from Japan to other countries (as in the example of Japanese textile production being moved to Thailand). This follows a logic of what Harvey (2006) called 'relative locational advantage'. In the flying geese model, the Japanese then established joint ventures with locals and eventually sold their stakes in the industry altogether, leaving it to locals. However, with China, Brautigam writes, there is a real danger of the 'hidden dragon' – that Chinese exports could simply contribute to deindustrialisation, which has been ongoing since the imposition of trade liberalisation in Africa.

Whether Chinese engagement leads to economic growth or deindustrialisation may depend not as much on the Chinese model as on internal dynamics within particular African states. As the Angolan case demonstrates, surplus appropriation and dispossession are at their worst in oil economies. The accumulation of wealth by the Angolan elite has so altered the balance of power in Angola that civil society is struggling to push for a redistribution that would allow the majority of the population to share in that wealth in a meaningful way. This moment for Angola and for Africa is pregnant with the possibility of significant economic growth and development – a possibility that has not seemed as real to many of its citizens for many years as it does now. The important question, being asked over and over again by Angola's small yet determined civil society organisations, is to whom those beneficial results will accrue.

The recolonisation of Africa is a capitalist project. Just as there are varieties of capitalism, there were varieties of colonialism – British, French, German, and Portuguese colonialism in Africa operated according to very different logics and had different outcomes on the ground for Africans. Although the new scramble for Africa is one that is situated wholly within the framework of capitalist accumulation and recolonisation by empires of capital that come from both the east and the West, Africans must be cognisant of the differences between Euro-American and Chinese imperialisms in order to struggle against the different yet similarly unjust social relations inherent in each.

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Notes

1. For more on FOCAC, see Taylor (2011).
2. Calculations citing this source are the author's own based on UNCTAD's ITC Trade Map web site.
3. For more on Chinese financing in Angola, see Corkin (2001), Alves (2010), Human Rights Watch (2010), Vines *et al.* (2009), Global Witness (2009), and Campos and Vines (2008).
4. Calculated using statistics on total Chinese imports of crude oil from the US Energy Information Administration (http://www.eia.gov/).

5. The ‘both/and’ conceptual stance is a theoretical import from feminist ontology and theories of oppression, which rejects ‘either/or’ dichotomies of ‘Eurocentric masculinist thought’. For more on this, see Collins (2000).
6. Interview in Luanda, July 2010.
7. Interview in Luanda, May 2010.
8. Interview in Cabinda, August 2010.
9. Several reports on the first two phases of the projects can be found at http://www.minfin.gv.ao/docs/dspProjGov.htm. A list of concluded projects can be found at http://www.minfin.gv.ao/docs/dspprogGovcompletos.htm.
10. Interview in Luanda, July 2010.
11. For more on China’s early efforts to enter Angola’s oil sector, see Corkin (2011).
12. Interview in Luanda, June 2010.
13. Interview in Luanda, June 2010.
14. Interview in Luanda, June 2010.
15. Interviews, June–August 2010.
16. Brautigam’s (2009) book focuses more on the ‘flying geese’ production cycle (Chapter 7) and China’s potential as an industrial catalyst, particularly in key sectors (Chapter 8), without much mention of the ‘hidden dragon’ concern raised in earlier work.

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Industrial policy and the political settlement in Tanzania: aspects of continuity and change since independence

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This article explores Tanzania's experience of industrial policy since independence through the concept of the political settlement. Higher growth in manufacturing since 1996 has been seen as a vindication of neoliberal policies of market liberalisation. Yet, the neoliberal approach fails to take account of the important legacy of state-led industrialisation under socialism and aspects of the political economy of the state in Tanzania that explain some of the longer-term constraints on industrialisation. Critical aspects of Tanzania's political settlement relate to state–capital relations and the distribution of power between contenting factions of intermediate classes within the state.

Keywords: Tanzania; political settlements; industrial policy; manufacturing; liberalisation

[Politique industrielle et le règlement politique en Tanzanie: aspects de continuité et de changement depuis l'indépendance.] Cet article examine l'expérience tanzanienne en matière de politique industrielle depuis l'indépendance à travers le concept du règlement politique. La forte croissance dans le secteur industriel depuis 1996 a été considérée comme une justification de politiques néolibérales de libéralisation des marchés. Toutefois, l'approche néolibérale ne parvient pas à prendre en compte l'héritage important d'une industrialisation gérée par l'État sous le régime socialiste ainsi que les aspects de l'économie politique de l'État en Tanzanie, qui expliquent certaines des contraintes à plus long terme à l'industrialisation. Les aspects essentiels du règlement politique en Tanzanie concernent les relations État-capital et la répartition des pouvoirs entre les factions des classes intermédiaires se contentant de la situation au sein de l'État.

Mots-clés : Tanzanie ; règlements politiques ; politique industrielle ; production industrielle ; libéralisation

Introduction

In recent years, poor industrial performance under socialism in Tanzania has been blamed squarely on state-led industrial policy (World Bank 2002). Formally, industrial policy is the official strategic effort to develop the industrial sector; however, in practice industrial policy encompasses a number of different policy areas and institutions for promoting investment and technology acquisition. Reforms to industrial policy under liberalisation dismantled

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much of the formal framework of state support to industry that had been constructed during the socialist period. In its place, industrial policy was reoriented towards encouraging private sector manufacturing through privatisation, promoting foreign direct investment and implementing a number of trade related policies to encourage manufacturing for export. Initial reforms led to a collapse in manufacturing and a severe process of deindustrialisation (Semboja and Kweka 1998) but after 1996 there was a return to expansion with manufacturing growing at an average of 7% per year (World Bank 2011). While this was an improvement of growth rates compared to the 1980s, this represented a return to the manufacturing growth rate of around 7% achieved from independence to the mid 1970s (Kim 1986). In recent years, therefore, the manufacturing sector has remained small and undiversified (Kahyarara 2011) but manufacturing growth has occurred across a number of low value-added activities including food and beverages, garments and textiles. The growth of manufacturing under liberalisation appeared, at least superficially, to confirm the neoliberal view that reducing state interventions in the market would lead to higher growth by reducing price distortions and clientelist corruption within the state (Krueger 1974). According to the theory, this would allow a return to a path of industrial growth determined by fundamental cost structures where comparative advantage would be found in low value-added manufacturing based on low wages and natural resource extraction (Balassa 1977).

Over a longer time horizon, however, weaknesses in the neoliberal account of manufacturing growth in Tanzania under liberalisation become apparent. This is because the neoliberal account underplays the historical role of the state in industrial development in Tanzania by ignoring critical elements of the legacy of socialist industrial policy for subsequent industrial development under liberalisation. It also misses vital aspects of the political economy of the state in Tanzania that explain some of the deeper constraints on successful industrial policy that have persisted under both the socialist and liberalised eras. Outside the narrow focus on liberalising markets of the neo-classical mainstream, success and failure of industrial policy in developing countries have been extensively examined through heterodox economic theories of 'developmental states' (Wade 1990; Amsden 1989; Evans 1995). These theorists identified certain institutional features of the state that enabled a high degree of central control over industrial policy rents where rents are understood as the state interventions that create incomes over and above a market return. State-created rents are widely recognised as necessary for successful industrialisation in developing countries given the requirements for a period of 'learning-by-doing' in order to catch up with the productivity levels of advanced industrialised countries (Gershenkron 1962). Theories of 'developmental states' suggest that the most important aspect of centralised control by the state was that the state was able to exert a credible threat that if rent recipients did not improve their performance, the rent would be removed.

A common view was that examples of 'developmental states' would be absent from Africa because of the dominance of 'neopatrimonial' politics that would enmesh industrial policy in redistributive clientelist relations (Easterly and Levine 1995). Yet this view has been challenged by those who have pointed to the ubiquity of clientelism in Asian developmental states (Kang 2002) and to the historical role of African states in fostering development (Mkandawire 2001). A focus on state institutions, however, can only take us so far. This is partly because while the state may adopt formal industrial policies, the effectiveness of these policies may be constrained, not by the formal structure of state institutions, nor by the existence of clientelism per se, but by the wider distribution of power in society (Khan and Blankenburg 2009; Di John 2009).

The combination of political institutions and the distribution of power between historically constituted contending groups, in the form of classes, fractions of classes or multi-class clientelist networks is captured by the concept of the political settlement (Khan 1995, 2010).[1] A social distribution of power depends on a range of socioeconomic factors. Economic resources are one factor in the power of any social group; yet, the distribution of political power is not simply a function of the distribution of economic power. The multi-faceted construction of political power involves the ability of different groups to organise politically, drawing upon ideas, force and institutions, to protect or demand particular structures of property rights, including claims to incomes created by industrial policy. This process occurs both within and outside formal political institutions. An understanding of the social distribution of power that affects the implementation of state policies, including industrial policy, therefore needs to be constructed from a reading of social and economic history, looking at the past outcomes of social conflict as well as the organisation of production.

This article explores how the political settlement in Tanzania has shaped the implementation of industrial policy since independence. The first section of the article examines industrial policy during the socialist period and the second section examines three key elements of industrial policy under liberalisation: privatisation, encouraging foreign direct investment and export incentives for manufacturers. The article argues that many features of the political settlement that are relevant for industrial policy implementation have been common to both the socialist and liberalised periods of Tanzania's first 50 years of independence. These critical facets relate to the institutionalisation of political power within the ruling party, the relatively equal distribution of power between intermediate class groups within the state, the limited success of attempts to restructure economic power under socialism and the difficulties in constructing a relationship between the state and capital under liberalisation that would allow the state to channel subsidies while monitoring their use.

Tanzania's political economy has frequently been explained in terms of the legacy of centralisation of political power within the institutions of the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), and the suppression of alternative political institutions during the socialist period (Lockwood 2005). Yet within this centralised institution, the actual distribution of power between different factions of the intermediate classes that ran the state was relatively equal. The low level of social and economic differentiation in society more broadly, facilitated the centralisation of power within TANU as there was less scope for political mobilisation outside of the party structures. This was partly a result of the relatively short and largely constitutional nature of the independence struggle (Pratt 1976) as well as the smaller number of intermediate class groups,[2] due to limited socioeconomic differentiation. Thus, the appearance of centralised power within Tanzania's ruling party was based on a fluid political balance between factions at the centre rather than a strong centralised leadership that could impose decisions upon senior Party officials. The article argues that during the socialist period, industrial managers were able to evade the compulsions of state-led industrial policy because of the degree to which actual control was fragmented between intermediate class groups within the state structure. Yet the shift away from state-led industrial policy did nothing to address these underlying political constraints and they continued to shape the implementation of industrial policy initiatives under liberalisation.

The other critical aspect of Tanzania's political settlement for industrial policy relates to the complex and often ambiguous relationship between capital and the state since independence. One of the key political aims of the socialist period was to restructure the colonial inheritance of economic power that was largely in the hands of foreign and non-indigenous capitalist groups. Yet, half of all industrial activities remained within private hands during the socialist period and covert relationships between those holding economic power and those holding political power subverted aspects of industrial policy. Despite a formal commitment by the state to promote the private sector, the relations between existing and emerging non-indigenous capitalist groups and the state remained complex under liberalisation. The political difficulties in implementing a more effective industrial policy, where the state could channel resources to developing manufacturing capabilities while disciplining capital, were not addressed by the focus on market liberalisation. This hampered the success of the much more limited set of industrial subsidies offered under liberalisation through Export Processing Zones and international initiatives to promote manufactured exports. The dominant neoliberal approach to industrialisation based on market liberalisation and privatisation did little to address these more fundamental political constraints that faced Tanzania in bringing about an industrial transformation.

Socialist industrial policy

On independence, Tanzania had a tiny and largely foreign-owned industrial sector that was dominated by agro-processing and a number of low value-added manufacturing activities. Until 1967, industry continued to grow along the lines established during the colonial period. The main objective of industrial policy at that time was to create productive capacity within the sector, rather than to redress the racial imbalance in industrial ownership inherited from the colonial period; foreign investment was central to this aim (Costello 1994). This early phase of industrial policy was important in establishing an industrial sector from a very low base and for expanding the role of Tanzanian–Asian petty capitalists in industry.

Industry grew rapidly during the 1960s. This was largely because of a number of state subsidies and tariffs on manufactured imports that made manufacturing profitable as part of a strategy of import substituting industrialisation. Tariffs were often set based on discussions between investors and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry rather than through a cohesive industrial strategy (Rweyemamu 1979). Nevertheless, industrial policy was initially successful insofar as expansion and diversification of the industrial sector took place; for example, Tanganyika's first five textile mills were established between 1961 and 1968. The ownership structure of industry also changed during the first years of independence. Colonial restrictions that had reserved certain industrial activities for British firms were removed (Silver 1984) and the spread of the co-operative movement into trading activities encouraged a shift of Tanzanian–Asian petty (and not so petty) capitalists out of trade into industry (Coulson 1982). Thus, in the early 1960s there was a rapid growth in Tanzanian–Asian manufacturing; firms such as Sunguratex and Kilitex producing textiles were established, as well as Kioo Limited for glass bottle manufacturing and ALAF (Aluminium Africa Ltd) for aluminium products.

The Arusha Declaration of 1967 spelt out a more activist role for the state in the industrialisation process with the intention of bringing about a productive economic transition as well as the radical restructuring of economic power by limiting the expansion of domestic and international capital. This was to be achieved primarily through nationalisation of segments of existing industries and the creation new industrial parastatals. Given the lack of an indigenously owned industrial sector, almost all the industrial firms that were nationalised were owned by Tanzanian–Asians (Mukandala 1988). Yet despite the commitment to transforming economic power in industry, the extent to which nationalisation changed the ownership structure of industry was, in many ways, quite limited. The urgent need to generate economic growth within the existing social structure led the state to adopt a de facto cautious approach to the reform of ownership patterns in industry. Nyerere himself argued that private investment was necessary for the development plans of the country and that government and business should work together to achieve this (1968). The result was that half of all industry remained in private hands throughout the period (Bigsten and Danielson 2001). Further, many of the new parastatal investments were undertaken as joint ventures between the state and the private sector so that the private sector often continued to have important ownership stakes in nationalised firms (Silver 1984). In other cases, the previous owners stayed on as managers under the new ownership structure. This was the case for the National Milling Corporation, created in 1967 by the merger of eight private sector milling factories. The owner of the largest private domestically owned milling factory, Jayantilal Keshavji Chande, was appointed as general manager (Coulson 1979) and he maintained close relations with the CCM throughout the Ujamaa and the liberalisation period.

While private investment was seen as necessary for industrial development, open political relations between the state and the Asian–Tanzanian private sector became increasingly difficult over the period. From the end of the 1960s, calls for nationalisations by the Party grew and open hostility by some members of Parliament towards domestic private sector industrialists, often framed in overtly anti-Asian language, became more common (Brennan 2005). Nyerere was frank about the fact that many of the Ujamaa policies were designed to redress racial imbalance in economic power (Nyerere 1968). This meant that while the private sector continued to play a role in industry, its existence was often overlooked in development plans in order to avoid any obvious commitment to the existing private sector that could alienate the Party's main political base (Hartmann 1990).

Given the political constraints on attempting to develop private sector industry, the main focus of formal industrial policy was on the state-owned industrial parastatals. While the extension of state control was meant to transfer power to workers and to peasants, in reality, economic control was increasingly vested in an expanding group of party, bureaucratic and management officials (Shivji 1976). The types of industrial policy rents available to industrial parastatals included direct state subsidies, access to finance directly from state owned commercial banks, foreign concessional financing by donors for specific projects, as well as rents related to import substitution such as those created by tariffs and exchange rate policy (Bigsten and Danielson 2001). As with many other import substitution strategies adopted by developing countries, manufacturing activities with the highest rates of effective protection in Tanzania were the consumer goods industries, particularly the less durable and luxury goods type (Rweyemamu 1979) and most industry was focused on assembly-type activities at the last stages of production (Coulson 1982).

Industrial policy under socialism led to an expansion of industrial parastatals which in turn drove the growth of industrial output and industrial diversification. Labour productivity also grew up to 1973, mainly as a result of rapid capital investment (Szirmai and Lapperre 2001). The creation of an industrial base from virtually nothing was an important achievement of the socialist period and had significant implications for industrial development under liberalisation. Yet despite high levels of investment and capital accumulation, the sector quickly began to show signs of poor economic performance. As the 1970s progressed, the contribution of industry to overall growth declined and became negative by the end of the decade. The major problem was that the high investment rates that were maintained in the 1970s were coupled with falling productivity. The main cause of this was the chronic underutilisation of capacity, falling to below 30% across manufacturing enterprises through the 1970s (Bigsten and Danielson 2001) and to less than 10% capacity utilisation in many textile mills by the mid 1980s (Ladha 2000). Some cases were even more extreme; for example, the Morogoro Shoe Company, built with donor finance to produce shoes mainly for export, never reached more than 4% of installed capacity (Temu and Due 1998). In many parastatals, underutilisation of capacity coexisted with continued investment in capacity expansion (Wangwe 1979).

As efficiency and profits fell, industry became increasingly dependent on state subsidies to survive. By the end of the 1970s, 11% of total government expenditure was dedicated to direct subsidies to parastatals (Costello 1994). The size of the parastatal was a critical factor in determining the level of subsidy that could be negotiated with the central state. From the end of the 1970s, the state tried to reduce the growing cost of subsidisation and parastatal influence through a rationalisation programme that involved splitting up existing parastatals into smaller units and attempting to cut down on the overall number of parastatals. These policies were largely subverted from within as managers made deals with supportive politicians and bureaucrats within line ministries to expand by establishing new subsidiary parastatals, starting new branches or new areas of activities (Mukandala 1988). Instead of reducing the overall number of parastatals a proliferation took place over this period.

Conventional approaches to understanding this kind of severe underutilisation of capacity in industry focus on the extent to which state-led industrial policy distorted 'market' prices through very high levels of effective protection for import substituting industries and restrictive trade policies (World Bank 2002). This ignores other critical reasons for poor industrial performance under socialism in Tanzania. Some of the reasons for this failure to drive up industrial productivity relate to the sheer scale of the industrialisation challenge facing Tanzania. As a new nation with limited industrial experience and economic resources, problems such as shortage of inputs, foreign exchange limitations and poor infrastructure were huge constraints that Tanzania shared with other poor countries seeking to pursue ambitious industrialisation strategies. Beyond these reasons, however, was a political problem relating to the compatibility of industrial policy with the underlying political settlement.

The expansion of subsidies coupled with falling productivity suggests that the power of the central party institutions to manage the industrialisation process by disciplining rent recipients of the kind that was used in successful 'developmental states' was largely absent during the socialist period. Despite the apparent formal political centralisation of power endowed by the dominance of party institutions within the state, the central leadership within the Party could not effectively impose discipline on different parts of the state responsible for industrial policy. Crucially, the Party could not force managers to use subsidies efficiently. Managers were able to maintain their hold on state-created industrial rents even when their performance was poor. Managers of parastatals were very much part of the cohesive intermediate class group that ran TANU (Shivji 1976; Mukandala 1988). However, the Party was not able to discipline this group as they were able to make coalitions with supportive bureaucrats and ministers to maintain rents despite poor performance.

The Party attempted to reduce the power of parastatal managers, initially by removing many of the parastatals from under the National Development Corporation (NDC) and placing them under the direct control of parent ministries (Coulson 1982). However, this did not address the underlying weakness of the central authority of the Party to impose its will on its different constituent parts. The stable and inclusive coalition within TANU gave the overall appearance of strength, but central control over the constituent parts was actually quite weak. Once the economic crisis had taken hold by the early 1980s, manufacturing output effectively collapsed. Parastatal managers increasingly engaged in illegal activities to bolster their falling incomes and racketeering became common. Racketeering involved managers trading goods illegally at high prices based on their monopoly status. This form of corruption usually involved collusion between parastatal managers, CCM state officials and traders from the dwindling numbers of petty capitalists who sold the goods on the black market (Tripp 1997). Political leaders were outspoken in their condemnation of these activities but were relatively powerless to stop them (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990). In 1983, Operation Economic Saboteur championed by Edward Sokoini, the popular Prime Minister, led to the imprisonment of thousands of Tanzanian–Asian shop keepers identified as having undermined the central planning system. Importantly, these arrests were not indiscriminate but targeted those in the commercial class who did not have links to the Party (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990). Informal links between the private sector and the state were therefore in existence prior to liberalisation and continued to play a role in the accumulation strategies of the emerging private sector in industry.

Industrial policy under liberalisation

From the early 1980s, the political consensus on industrial policy slowly consolidated around the conclusion that state-led industrial policy interventions during the Ujamaa period had hampered successful industrialisation, because of high levels of corruption and market distortions. Along with many other developing countries, the answer that was adopted was to reduce industrial policy rents and withdraw state ownership in the industrial sector (Campbell and Stein 1992). The initial liberalisation in the 1980s of prices, distribution, trade and exchange rates had a negative impact on the industrial sector. Controls on the prices of manufactured goods were among the first group of price controls to be significantly reduced. Controls on domestic trade and marketing of all imported and domestic manufactured goods were also dismantled. In practice, even by the end of the 1980s, unofficial markets and a very lax regime on imports meant that state control of the distribution and price of manufactured products had come to an end (Husain and Faruqee 1994). These reforms reduced the effective rate of protection for manufactured goods and as a consequence, many of the poorly performing manufacturing parastatals found it increasingly difficult to sustain themselves. As a result, the industrial sector shrank considerably until 1996 (Semboja and Kweka 1998).

The new market-led approach to industrial development was set out in the Sustainable Industries Development Policy 1996 to 2020 (United Republic of Tanzania 1996). The policy articulated a desire to attract foreign investment into industry as well as expanding the indigenously owned industrial sector through the promotion of small and medium industrial activities. The industrial policy tools for achieving these aims involved a limited set of state interventions focused on privatisation, encouraging foreign direct investment and promoting manufactured exports. Nevertheless, while industrial policy rents were scaled back under liberalisation and reoriented towards private sector manufacturing firms, similar political constraints on the state that had influenced state-led industrial policy continued to hamper their effective implementation. The deeper political determinants of industrial policy success were not addressed by the neoliberal market reforms.

Privatisation

The privatisation programme in Tanzania was similar in most respects to other privatisation programmes of the era across Africa, implemented under the tutelage of the International Financial Institutions (White and Bhatia 1998). Many of the larger and more profitable manufacturing firms were sold to international buyers. Other smaller manufacturing parastatals, most of which were not operational, were sold off as asset sales to local purchasers. A considerable number of the privatised manufacturing firms were actually sold back to their pre-nationalisation owners (Waigama 2008). A number of firms that had been involved primarily in trading activities during the socialist period bought up industrial parastatals. For example, Mohammed Enterprises, expanded its manufacturing activities by buying up industrial parastatal assets and Aluminium Africa (ALAF), producing roofing sheets, was sold back to Chandaria Group (Kenya) which had been the former owner (Gibbon 1999). The extensive dismantling of the industrial parastatal sector through privatisation in the early stage of liberalisation meant that the pool of industrial managers who could have used their experience of the industrial process and their political power within the state to launch new private sector industrial activities was relatively circumscribed. This is in contrast to Vietnam, for example, where a larger industrial state sector was maintained under liberalisation in which state managers became de facto emerging capitalists (Fforde 2004; Gray 2012). By 2000, only 1% of manufacturing firms remained in state hands. Foreign ownership had expanded significantly and 25% of manufacturing firms had some, and often significant, degrees of foreign ownership (Chandra *et al.* 2007). The number of manufacturing firms owned by Africans had also expanded to around 44% but this was largely in small and micro enterprises (*Ibid*). While indigenous manufacturing did expand after liberalisation in very small-scale manufacturing activities (Tripp 1997), medium to large-scale industrial activities were predominantly returned to the ownership of non-indigenous and foreign capital. By 2002, Asian capital accounted for around 26% of all manufacturing firms (Chandra *et al.* 2007).

Liberalisation heralded the development of more open relationships between domestic capital and the state. The resurgence of the private sector was accompanied by a gradual inclusion of business people within the formal framework of the ruling party. Formal institutions linking the private sector and the state were created, such as the Tanzania Business Council, chaired by the President. An increasing number of CCM MPs also came from the private sector (Mmuya 1998). Prominent Tanzanian–Asian businessmen such as Mohamed Dewji, Chief Executive of Mohammed Enterprises, and Rostam Aziz gained formal positions of power within the Party. Yet, the relationship between non-indigenous capital and the state continued to be complex and often ambiguous in many respects under liberalisation. Hostility towards Asian capital was exhibited in the ferocious public debate about 'uzawa' (indigenisation) across the period (Heilman 1998; Kelsall 2003). The Sustainable Industrial Development Policy called for the state to enact specific policies to promote indigenous manufacturing. In reality however, the industrial policy institutions, such as the Small Industries Development Organisation that could have fostered the growth of indigenous industries faced considerable budget constraints over the period of liberalisation (Mukama and Yongo 2005). Other organisations that focused on local manufacturing initiatives, such as the Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organisation, became increasingly oriented towards providing commercial services such as repairs, rather than engaging with local industrial research and development (UNCTAD 2002). The liberalised financial sector also failed to provide adequate credit facilities for domestic manufacturers (Odhiambo 2010; Wong *et al.* 2007).

The informal relations that had been constructed between state and capital through clientelist relations towards the end of the socialist period became increasingly apparent under liberalisation. Numerous cases of grand corruption that came to light over the period in the media were indicative of the close informal relations between senior CCM politicians and business figures (Gray and Khan 2010). Critically for the success of industrial policy however, the closer formal, and informal, relationships between capital and the state did not mean that the state had developed a greater political capacity to discipline industrial policy rents. The neoliberal argument for privatisation of industrial assets was that the private sector would use industrial assets more efficiently and with less scope for corruption between state officials. However, privatisation did not address the deeper political constraints on the implementation of industrial policy. An example of the continued problems of corruption within industrial subsidisation occurred in loans given to the General Tyre East Africa Ltd. The General Tyre East Africa Ltd had been established in 1971 and had been the largest industrial plant in East Africa. In the mid 1990s, Continental AG bought a 24% stake in the company and promised to revive production (Mikaili 2011). In 2005, the performance of the company was still very poor and profitability had not improved despite privatisation. The company was able to persuade the government to agree to a subsidised loan through the National Social Savings Fund (NSSF) of US$10 million to enable the company to purchase raw material and restart production (Ihucha 2011). This type of loan to a poorly performing company was very similar to the loans available through the nationalised banking system to weak parastatals. Six years later, production at the plant had not been revived and auditors found that the loan had been squandered by the management (Mikaili 2011).

The shift in the pattern of industrial ownership from state to the private sector did not, therefore, insulate industrial subsidisation from the types of corruption that were seen to have hampered industrialisation under socialism. Perhaps more importantly for Tanzania's industrial performance, neither does it seem to have strengthened the state's capacity to monitor industrial policy rents, such as subsidised finance, available to industry. Rather, the process of privatisation was driven by the neoliberal consensus that the market alone can drive technology acquisition and capability development in developing countries. The problem of devising a successful industrial policy system that could channel resources to the growing private sector to finance learning while also imposing discipline on the rent recipient were clearly not resolved by the privatisation process.

Promoting FDI in industry

Under liberalisation, the major strategy for inducing technology acquisition in industry was delegated to the promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI). A formal policy of promoting FDI was adopted and the 1990 Investment Act and 1997 Tanzania Investment Act liberalised regulations restricting foreign ownership across all sectors of the economy. Yet the ability to attract investment into industry under liberalisation was not simply a result of returning to market-determined prices but related to critical actions of the state that lowered the cost of doing business in Tanzania. For example, the legislation provided a number of ring-fenced incentives to attract foreign investment. These included removal of ownership restrictions and performance requirements, a fiscal stability clause that provided a guarantee to investors that incentives would not be modified ex post, removal of restrictions on the repatriation of profits and the currency in which transfers could be made (United Republic of Tanzania 1997). These ring-fenced incentives had a strong and positive impact on FDI flows into the industrial sector overall and into manufacturing. By 2008, the manufacturing sector accounted for around 21% of total FDI stock, second only to the mining sector that accounted for around 28% (Bank of Tanzania 2009). The inflow of FDI was a major reason for the return to growth in manufacturing by the end of the 1990s (World Bank 2002). The credibility of these fiscal incentives for investors was strongly influenced by Tanzania's reputation for political stability in the eyes of foreign investors (UNCTAD 2002). Thus, the overarching political architecture that attracted foreign capital into industry had little to do with market liberalisation per se. Instead, the political stability that made Tanzania attractive to foreign investors primarily resulted from the legacy of the attempts to centralise political power within the party and restrict forms of political competition that had occurred during the socialist period.

Further, FDI into manufacturing came in predominantly to firms where capabilities and had already been established during the previous period of state-led industrialisation rather than to establish new industrial activities. While the assets of many of the smaller manufacturing parastatals were not returned to manufacturing activities after privatisation, much of the growth in manufacturing output was driven by a handful of large manufacturing parastatals that had been taken over by foreign capital (Afrodad 2007). These were producing low value-added goods for the domestic market such as beverages, tobacco, chemicals and plastic. A number of these firms experienced a dramatic improvement in their performance; for example, Tanzania Breweries Ltd increased capacity utilisation from 10% in 1992 to over 90% in 2001 and the Tanzania Electrical Goods Manufacturing Company increased capacity utilisation from below 50% in 1995 to 100% by 2001 (Waigama 2008). From the end of the 1990s, other manufacturing sectors such as textiles and garments also began to grow again after the severe disinvestment of the early 1990s and similarly in this sector a number of the larger firms had operated as parastatals during the socialist period or were based on upgraded units that had been purchased through the privatisation process (Ladha 2000). State-led industrial policy in Tanzania therefore played a role in establishing the industrial base and subsidising the attainment of industrial capabilities that were subsequently important for the return to manufacturing growth under liberalisation.

Manufacturing export promotion

While foreign direct investment into industry expanded under liberalisation, the ability of the state to manage the more limited set of industrial policy tools that were designed to drive productivity growth in industry by promoting manufactured exports were much less successful. Most of the manufacturing sector remained oriented towards the domestic market after 1986 but exports of manufactured goods stared to increase from the end of the 1990s and by 2005, exports of manufactured goods had tripled, albeit from a very low base (Treichel 2005). However, the incentive schemes to promote manufactured exports seem to have had quite a peripheral impact on export performance. A number of international schemes that created potential subsidies for Tanzanian manufacturers to export were established during the liberalisation period. The most important of these were the US African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the EU Everything but Arms (EBA) initiative, as well as market access initiatives from France, Japan and Canada.

Tanzania qualified for the wearing apparel provision and lesser-developed country status of AGOA in 2002. This meant that it could import textile inputs from non-qualifying third countries. Despite the incentives offered by these programmes, the impact of rents generated by international export initiatives appears to have had quite a weak impact on industrial performance. The majority of goods exported through AGOA were agricultural and forestry products rather than manufactured goods (Kweka 2004). Even in the years following Tanzania's qualification for textile exports, the total volume of exports under this programme remained extremely low, accounting for under 1% of the total volume of exports to the US. The entire quantity of exported textiles were produced by just a handful of factories (Kweka 2004). Overall, AGOA only achieved a moderate supply response and limited dollar earnings for the country in comparison to neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Ethiopia (World Bank 2005).

Aside from these international initiatives, the most important aspect of domestic industrial policy was the establishment of Export Processing Zones (EPZs). Legislation to permit the establishment of EPZs came relatively late to Tanzania as it was only in 2002 that the Export Processing Zones Act established the legal framework for EPZs. The policy logic of the EPZs was to attract investors into manufacturing by offering tax incentives and subsidised infrastructure and to impose some compulsion on improving productivity through requirements to sell in international markets.[3] After considerable delays in setting up the programme, the management of EPZs was given to a newly established parastatal, the Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZA), under the Ministry of Trade and Industry in 2006. In the first years of the EPZ programme construction on three EPZs started in the Dar es Salaam area and by 2010 five industrial parks had been gazetted (Meru 2010) and future EPZs and SEZs were earmarked for 14 regions (Mweta 2010).

Yet even after the first parks had been established, the total number of firms operating inside the physical EPZs remained very low. The vast majority of manufacturing continued to be outside these zones; in 2005, only 2.7% of manufacturing firms were located within an EPZ (Chandra *et al.* 2007). One of the main reasons for this was that the EPZs themselves operated poorly in their first decade of existence. Subsidised infrastructure, that, along with fiscal incentives, was supposed to be one of the major attractions for setting up within an EPZ, was severely deficient. Unreliable power and water supplies, undependable infrastructure and expensive administration costs were all identified as major constraints on firms operating within EPZs (Khan and Gray 2006). In 2005, of the three EPZs established in Dar es Salaam, only one had sufficient infrastructure, while basic facilities such as electricity and roads were lacking in the other two (World Bank 2005).

Another limitation was the lack of on-site customs offices and management offices. A World Bank survey of EPZs in Africa identified that the clearance times within Tanzanian EPZs were actually worse than for manufacturing firms outside EPZs (Farole 2011). While the clearance procedures for EPZ firms were established by law, many customs agents working at the port and airport were unaware of the system. Serious port delays significantly hampered the EPZ programme. The fact that duty-free access arrangements were implemented by many different government agencies, especially the customs authority (*Ibid.*) also caused delays. Fragmentation of control over delivery of the programme, in particular the difficulty in enforcing performance from infrastructure providers meant that subsidised industrial incentives were difficult to obtain for firms located within the Zones. The problem was not simply a technical issue about co-ordination between state institutions but also related to the fact that the success of the EPZ programme depended on the transfer of significant infrastructural subsidies to industrialists whose political legitimacy remained contested throughout the period.

Yet while the overt subsidies to EPZs were politically difficult to achieve, the informal relations between state and capital continued to influence the effectiveness of industrial policy. By far the most common way for the EPZ initiative to be rolled out was by granting individual businesses EPZ status, without requiring them to be located within a specific Zone. By 2010, 19 stand-alone EPZ licences had been issued. These were overwhelmingly given to domestic manufacturers rather than international firms. This contrasts with the international experience of countries with high labour-intensive manufacturing growth through EPZ programmes, such as Vietnam, where most of the firms in the scheme were foreign-owned (Malesky 2008). The stand-alone aspect of the EPZ programme attracted existing domestic producers to switch into the EPZ programme to attain the fiscal incentives. The mechanisms for ensuring that these firms changed their existing pattern of production and export orientation, however, were not very effective and this undermined the success of industrial subsidies provided through the EPZ programme.

Questions remained as to whether some firms in the EPZ programme were fulfilling their export requirements, although evidence for this largely emerged from reports in the media rather than from cases of corruption taken through the courts. In 2006 a case was widely reported of fiscal incentives that had been granted to a textile firm on condition that it met requirements for exporting. NIDA was among the first textile and apparel making companies to operate under an EPZ licence (Mande 2007). In addition to the fiscal incentives offered as part of the EPZ programme, the company managed to negotiate a special tax exemption from the Ministry of Finance for the importation of raw materials from its parent company in Pakistan. NIDA had asked the Ministry of Finance to grant it zero per cent import duty on extra-wide grey fabrics materials of a width wider than 80 inches, which it claimed was not available within Tanzania or the region (Chhatbar 2006).

The company claimed that the imports of raw material were essential for the operation of its textile mill (Tarimo 2006). Other industrialists strongly opposed the exemption on the grounds that NIDA would flood the domestic market and have an unfair advantage. They also claimed that the raw materials were available from within Tanzania (Chhatbar 2006). A committee was subsequently established to review the granting of the exemption made up from the Ministries of Industry, Trade and Marketing, and Finance, the Tanzania Revenue Authority and the CTI (Mande 2007). The final decision reached by Government was that the exemption could stand as long as NIDA exported 50% of its output (Correspondent 2006). This was below the official minimum export requirement for an EPZ licence.

Poor enforcement of export requirements of the EPZ programme under liberalisation echo the earlier failures in industrial policy management under socialism where parastatal managers, state officials and members of the private sector were able to evade the compulsions attached to state subsidies for industrial development. Yet the weakness of clientelism as an explanatory factor, in itself, of economic performance is clear from the numerous examples from Asia that show that clientelist relations are not inimical to successful industrial policy. Nor is it the case that successful industrial policy necessarily requires a highly centralised state. Political configurations underlying successful industrialisation strategies have varied considerably between countries (Moore 1966). The compulsion on industrialists to use industrial policy rents productively can come from sources other than a centralised state. Indeed, developing countries such as Vietnam (Gray 2012) and Bangladesh (Khan 2009) that lacked the type of highly centralised political order that characterised the rapid developers in North Asia experienced faster labour-intensive industrialisation through a similar set of industrial policy incentives as Tanzania under liberalisation.

In the cases of Bangladesh and Vietnam, aspects of their political settlements, such as the prior changes in agrarian structures, extent of primitive accumulation, the nature of competition between capitalists as well as the specificities of the relationships between the state and emerging industrial capitalists meant that the subsidies provided by export promotion schemes under liberalisation were effective at driving a more rapid process of labour-intensive industrialisation. In Vietnam, similarly to Tanzania, many of the elements of industrial policy under the control of the central state were not very effective under liberalisation (Perkins 2001). Yet, in contrast to Tanzania, the much denser legacy of decentralised industrial activities of the state meant that there was a high level of competition between emerging capitalists from within provincial and local levels of the state. The relatively decentralised distribution of power in Vietnam created a form of industrial disciplining that was sufficient to drive a very rapid expansion of low value-added manufacturing under liberalisation (Gray 2012).

Further, in other countries, the existence of a non-indigenous capitalist class, itself a relatively common legacy of colonial policy, did not preclude the development of more effective management of industrial subsidies. In Malaysia, for example, the ruling UMO party was able to establish a distribution of rents and incomes between the non-indigenous Chinese capitalists and the indigenous Malay that facilitated a rapid industrialisation (Jomo 1993). This suggests that it is possible to construct successful industrial policy even where the majority of industrialists have limited political legitimacy.

The underlying conditions in which liberalised industrial policy was more effective in these countries relate to differences in the balance of power in these societies that reflect specific historical trajectories of contested socioeconomic change rather than the degree of market liberalisation, as argued by neoliberal economic theory or the degree of state centralisation, as argued by the developmental state school.

Conclusion

Mainstream economics has mainly approached the history of industrial policy in Tanzania by highlighting the failures of state intervention. However, by rolling back the state and conflating an industrial strategy with trade liberalisation, industrial policy under liberalisation failed to address the critical political constraints on industrialisation. Examining the political economy of industrial policy in the socialist period and its legacy under liberalisation is a central part of understanding these constraints. State-led industrial policy was important in terms of the creation of a manufacturing base that did not exist prior to independence. Nevertheless, the failure to bring about a productive industrial transition limited the legacy of a creation of an industrial workforce and cadre of industrial managers who could have played a role in the emergence of domestic industry under liberalisation. With the abandonment of the commitment to an alternative, more egalitarian path of industrial development, the pace of industrial development has been influenced by the extent to which the state can support capitalist accumulation strategies in industry. The expansion of foreign direct investment in manufacturing, often on the back of previous industrial investments made under state-led industrial policy, was facilitated by aspects of the political settlement under socialism, such as the construction of the one-party state. This limited political competition and left a legacy of a stable political order that appealed to foreign investors.

In terms of the emergence of domestic industry, industrial nationalisations were much less encompassing than is often recognised and half of all manufacturing remained within private hands. Informal relations were constructed between the remaining private sector and the state that continued to influence accumulation strategies within industry under liberalisation. Liberalisation may have had little impact on levels of corruption but perhaps more importantly it did little to strengthen the capacities of the state to manage industrial policy. As well as the technical and ideological constraints on industrial policy under liberalisation, there were political challenges for the state in supporting an inequitable process of capitalist industrial development that was seen to benefit foreign and non-indigenous capitalist groups. The much more limited set of industrial policy tools available to Tanzania under liberalisation were woefully inadequate to meet the enormous challenges of developing domestic industry. The result was a continuation of the longer historical trajectory of a gradual and uneven path of industrialisation in Tanzania.

Note on contributor

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Notes

1. This approach has its intellectual roots in Robert Brenner's account of struggles over property rights and the distribution of power in the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe from the fifteenth century (1985). Brenner argues that this occurred primarily as a consequence of changes in property relations, brought about by historically specific distributional struggles between different classes, fractions of classes and the state in the feudal economy. Brenner provides a framework of analysis to assess the historically specific conditions that generate different patterns of capitalist development from within existing social relations.
2. The term intermediate class comes from Kalecki's description of intermediate class regimes (1967) and in the context of Tanzania refers to made up from elements of the classical petty bourgeoisie and bureaucratic professionals, that Issa Shivji terms the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' (1976). What distinguishes the intermediate classes is not their position within the system of production directly but their organisational power within the party structure which enabled them first, to lead the nationalist movement, and second to consolidate their power within the state following independence.
3. This was followed by the establishment of a competing programme for Special Economic Zones (SEZs) that was launched by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Empowerment in 2006, following the publication of the Government's Mini-Tiger Industrialisation Plan (URT; 2004). The EPZ initiative was initially under the National Development Corporation while the SEZs were under the control of the Ministry for Trade and Industry. The difference between an EPZ and an SEZ was that EPZs firms had to invest in manufacturing and had to export over 70% of output. EPZ status could be granted to stand alone enterprises as well as firms locating in particular physical zones that had access to specifically provided infrastructure. SEZs, on the other hand, were created to support investment across all sectors and allowed producers to sell in domestic as well as foreign markets. Despite the passage of the SEZ Act, by 2010 the programme was still not properly operational as no legislation had been passed establishing an institutional structure for regulating and managing the programme (Farole 2011).

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Deep Integration in north–south relations: compatibility issues between the EU and South Africa

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Deep Integration (DI), defined as the abolishment of 'behind the border' trade restrictions, has been a major focus of activity within the European Union. More recently, Deep Integration has also been included in the negotiations of new bilateral and regional trade agreements. This paper chooses the current EU–South Africa negotiations as a case study and argues that these tendencies may become a dangerous restriction for the economic policy space of the South African government. We will discuss selected issues of Deep Integration projects – in particular corporate governance and competition policies – with a 'comparative capitalism' framework as the analytical backdrop.

Keywords: Deep Integration; comparative capitalism; north–south relations; South Africa; corporate governance; competition policy

[Intégration forte dans les relations nord-sud: questions de compatibilité entre l'UE et l'Afrique du Sud.] L'intégration forte, définie comme la suppression des restrictions commerciales au-delà des frontières, a été un objectif majeur au sein de l'Union européenne (UE). Plus récemment, l'intégration forte a également été incluse dans les négociations de nouveaux accords commerciaux bilatéraux et régionaux. Cet article a choisi les négociations actuelles entre l'UE et l'Afrique du Sud comme cas d'étude et soutient que ces tendances pourraient devenir une restriction dangereuse aux marges de manœuvre du gouvernement sud-africain. Certaines questions relatives à des projets d'intégration forte seront discutées – en particulier la gouvernance des entreprises et les politiques de concurrence – le cadre analytique choisi étant le contexte d'un « capitalisme comparé ».

Mots-clés : intégration forte ; capitalisme comparé ; relations nord–sud ; gouvernance des entreprises ; politique de la concurrence

Introduction

During the last decades, Deep Integration (DI), defined as the abolishment of 'behind the border' trade restrictions, has become a major focus of activity within the European Union (EU) and within the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). More recently, DI has not only become an 'internal' issue for the United States and the EU, but has also been included in their current negotiations of new bilateral and regional trade agreements, in particular after the failure of the Singapore Issues in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations 1996. Since an agreement on this new form of

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'deep' trade integration had failed within the multilateral framework of the WTO, the northern governments (especially the EU and US) have been busy pushing these issues within regional and bilateral agreements.

Among the first developments to consolidate these new forms of cooperation in north–south relations are the current negotiations of the European Union with South Korea, India and the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) Group of States, including South Africa. While the inclusion of Deep Integration into trade agreements has only become an issue during the last 15 years and substantial consequences are not yet visible, it raises important questions of institutional compatibility with specific regard to the long-run development of capitalism in Africa. In order to develop our argument, we are drawing on a comparative capitalism analytical framework, an approach which has become somewhat canonical for the study of Western economies. Nevertheless, this framework has rarely been applied to African economies. From this perspective, economic institutions do not travel well and rely on crucial institutional complementarities for their effectiveness. Correspondingly, the EU's attempt to prescribe a single best (liberal) practice does not take into account Southern institutional requirements. We are illustrating our arguments with case studies on competition policies and corporate governance in South Africa, given that these institutional areas are central to the comparative capitalism approach, but have been neglected in existing research on Deep Integration. We have chosen the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiation between the EU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as an exploratory case study, placing a particular focus on South Africa. South Africa is not only the biggest African economy, but also the most proactive in fighting this process in the region. Moreover, South Africa is a 'crucial case' (Gerring 2007) for our argument because of its liberal institutional environment that is much closer to the standards proposed by the EU and the US: if Deep Integration is incompatible with the South African institutional context, it is certainly even more so with other, less liberal African economies.

This article proceeds as follows: First we provide an overview of the Deep Integration research agenda, with particular emphasis on its north–south dimension and the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Next, we present our comparative capitalism analytical framework and demonstrate its potential relevance for the analysis of north–south relations. At the centre of our presentation stands an evaluation of current DI issues in the context of negotiations for the EPA between the EU and SADC with a focus on South Africa's corporate governance and competition policy.

What is Deep Integration and why does it matter for north–south relations?

Definition of Deep Integration

Deep Integration 'moves beyond the removal of border barriers' (Lawrence 1996, 8) and focuses on removing restrictions to trade that hinder investments across borders. Within orthodox trade agreements, the focus has usually been on the abolishment of tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers for the trade of goods (Shallow Integration). More recently, however, the focus has changed towards harmonisation of national economic regulation to facilitate foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade in services:

> The development of regional production systems and the promotion of service investment require deeper forms of international integration, for example, the elimination of differences in national production and product standards that make regionally integrated production costly. Investment also depends on credible and stable governance mechanisms and secures access to large foreign markets unhindered by customs officials or by domestic actions such

> as antidumping. Since much of the investment relates to the provision of services, the regulatory regimes governing establishment and operation become the focus of attention. (Lawrence 1996, 17)

Correspondingly, the 'explicit actions by governments to reduce the market segmenting effect of domestic (non-border) regulatory policies through coordination and cooperation' (Hoekman and Konan 1999, 1) are a vital part of DI efforts. Thus, not only trade issues are in the focus of DI, but also the free movement of capital and labour (Evans *et al.* 2004, 12–13; Lloyd 2008, 20; Young and Peterson 2006, 798). Harmonisation forms an important element of this particular type of integration, for instance in product/technical standards, regulation of investment conditions (including questions of corporate control and corporate governance), intellectual property rights (IPRs) or competition policy (Lawrence 1996; Evans *et al.* 2004; Ghoneim 2008).

While the standard approach to Deep Integration refers to economic integration theory (mainly based on Balassa 1961) the term 'deep trade agenda' by Young and Peterson (2006, 798) describes the political practices regarding DI within the EU new trade policy. In this context, some authors differentiate between 'WTO plus' or 'WTO extra' (Ahearn 2011; Holmes 2010; Horn *et al.* 2009), thereby differentiating between regulations which are part of the realm of the multilateral trading system and those that go beyond current agreements (e.g., IPRs provisions that are not part of the WTO TRIPS agreement). Although Deep Integration covers partly the same issues, one key difference between WTO plus/extra and DI is that the latter also occurs beyond legal agreements. This means that firms and states in the global south also adapt EU and US norms to receive access to their markets without any legal requirement (Holmes 2010, 6; Ahearn 2011, 14–17).

Deep Integration in north–south relations

Within the global trade regime, several changes of trade patterns have been taking place in the multi- and bilateral arenas over the last two decades. In the context of the 1996 WTO meeting in Singapore, northern governments attempted to attain better market access in key Southern economies through the harmonisation of national policies under the umbrella of the WTO. In this and later negotiations, northern governments strived for a harmonisation of regulations on public procurement, investment policies and intellectual property rights (IPRs). Nevertheless, the majority of the WTO member states, mainly from the global south like India or Tanzania, refused to accept these plans (Khor 2004, 1). The implementation of a multilateral agreement on DI has been stalled within the WTO for years. Therefore, the EU and the US turned towards emphasising an inclusion of these issues in their negotiations of new bilateral and regional trade agreements, because it seemed to be more promising to implement these issues with fewer negotiations partners, if compared with the WTO (Shadlen 2005).

The assessment of the effects of Deep Integration in north–south relations is a rather young research area (Claar and Nölke 2012). Some 10 years ago, researchers in development economics started to deal with the question of whether DI hinders or supports the development strategies of southern states, based on standard neo-classical models (Evans *et al.* 2004; Ghoneim 2008; Meyn 2006; Robles 2008; Sally 2007). With respect to south–south relations, there are some studies on DI in regional integration processes, in particular in Asia (Dubey 2005) as well as in the form of bilateral agreements between Asian countries (Lloyd 2005, 2008). Regional agreements among southern states, however, still focus on trade facilitation and better market access, rather than on Deep

Integration (Evans *et al.* 2004). Some more recent studies (Ahearn 2011; Holmes 2010; Horn *et al.* 2009) on the EU/US trade agreements concentrate on the different strategies by these two driving forces of Deep Integration. While both have some common concerns like IPRs and free movement of capital, the US also include anti-corruption, environment and labour in their preferential trade agreements. In addition, the legal provisions by the US are standardised. The EU is more flexible regarding its legal texts and uses various phraseologies. Social provisions and competition policy are important issues in EU agreements (Ahearn 2011, 13f, 17f; Horn *et al.* 2009). These different strategies also challenge the partners in the global south and it is questionable whether these agreements create a gain for all contracting partners.

Studies in development economics usually focus on the potential advantages that DI can offer for Southern governments, such as increases in inward investment, technology transfer and industry upgrading (Gasiorek and Holmes 2010, 146–148). More specifically, in analysing the broader impacts of DI on national economic development, the most common approach has been to axiomatically provide data confirming the negative impacts of protectionist policies on national economic growth, subsequently providing a foundation for positively assuming that countries can and do only benefit from DI, as harmonisation is supposed to not only stimulate large increases in capital inflows, but also lead to the improvement of the institutions in Southern economies (see Ghoneim 2008).

EU, economic partnership agreements and Deep Integration

Traditionally, the European Union has a close relationship to the ACP countries, mostly because several EU members were colonial powers. Besides political cooperation and development assistance, trade plays a crucial part in the relationship. While the EU supported asymmetrical access to the European market for a long time, it has now changed to reciprocal agreements with the EPAs. Young and Peterson (2006) and Orbie (2008) describe the refocused EU strategy as the ‘new trade politics’. Due to the prominence of Deep Integration, more obviously political issues have become involved on the trade agenda. Although the EU has been increasingly challenged by emerging markets and other developing countries (Young and Peterson 2006, 797–803), it remains a norm-setting actor in global trade relations (Orbie 2008; Langan 2009). The EU has considerable experience in negotiating and implementing DI issues because of its internal market, which serves as a model for other world regions. Correspondingly, the EU has made ‘deliberate attempts to export its “model”’ (Orbie 2008, 37). Young and Peterson (2006) argue that the EU is aggressively promoting DI issues as part of its new trade strategy. Others argue that EU Deep Integration trade policy rather is a continuation of the traditional relations between the EU and ACP states (see Langan 2009). Within those relations, the EU transfers its institutional settings and, therefore, a specific form of capitalism.

These developments were controversially debated in the negotiations of the EPAs, the follow-up agreement on trade policy and co-operation between the EU and ACP states under the umbrella of the Cotonou Agreement. While the WTO waiver for the regulations on trade in Cotonou agreement expired in 2007 and should be addressed with the EPA, the Cotonou Agreement will continue to be in place to address developmental aspects and a political dialogue until 2020 (Spieker 2011, 57–59). In 2008 EPAs should have been implemented, but so far only the CARIFORUM region has signed a full agreement. Other negotiation groups faced various challenges, such as differences between the membership of the regional integration project and the members of the negotiations

(Jakobeit *et al.* 2005). These problems, together with the DI provisions, are the main reason for the lack of full EPAs with the African states until today.

A major concern for African governments is the impact on national economic development if they adapt the EU provisions. Therefore, several studies about the prospective adjustment costs of the ACP countries were conducted over the last years. Concerns relate to implications such as a reduction of government revenues, deindustrialisation, an economic recolonisation and privatisation of services (Goodison 2007, 149–150). Other studies focus on trade-related aspects like gains in exports and loss in imports for the ACP states (Fontagné *et al.* 2008, 2011). According to some studies, the EPAs have a positive effect on imports and welfare for the ACP countries (Andriamananjara *et al.* 2009; Morrissey and Zgovu 2011), while Patel (2007) argues that in the case of trade in goods hardly any change will occur for Ghana. These studies, also including publications by Fontagné *et al.* (2008, 2011) only focus on trade in goods and give no estimation how Deep Integration issues could affect the development of the ACP countries. Furthermore, fiscal adjustment costs are considered – Milner (2006, 77, 113–114) concludes that the implementation of the EPA might cost €9 billion – but institutional adjustment costs are not.

Those studies show that it is possible to analyse the EPA impact on trade in goods, but it is far more difficult to show how Deep Integration issues might impact on national regulations. It is impossible to come up with any comprehensive measurement of DI effects before these policies have been implemented on a broad scale. Even in the case of the CARIFORUM EPA, signed in 2008, it is difficult to relate economic developments back to the EPA provisions on behind-the-border issues (see Nicholls 2011). In the absence of systematic, theory-driven studies, speculations abound. Patel argues that Deep Integration issues, especially investment regulations, will not increase investment flows. Furthermore, the space for developmental national policies might be reduced (Patel 2007, 22). Other concerns have been raised regarding the imposition of Western standards for IPRs through EPAs that would limit the use of traditional standard tools to regulate patent holders (Shadlen 2005, 766–768; Brücher 2008, 209). Similar concerns relate to the role of technical and security standards in the process of economic development and their treatment in the context of Deep Integration (*ibid*.).

However, existing literature fails to take into account the complex interactions between Deep Integration and the institutional context of advanced African economies. For this purpose, the comparative capitalism research programme is used here as an analytical framework for analysing the potential impacts of DI, especially in terms of creating and maintaining an environment that stimulates economic growth through supporting the development of a coherent and complementary institutional framework. Such an approach not only broadens the scope of existing analyses, but also aims to add depth to our empirical and theoretical understanding of Deep Integration.

Comparative capitalism as an analytical framework for the study of Deep Integration

The comparative capitalism analytical framework

Comparative capitalism has become the common denomination of institutionalist approaches towards comparative political economy that are building upon, but at the same time transgressing, the ‘varieties of capitalism’ approach as developed by Peter Hall and David Soskice (Hall and Soskice 2001a). The basic hypothesis of the original 'varieties of capitalism' approach is that the inherent institutional complementarities of two different basic types of market economies, coordinated market economies (CMEs) and liberal market economies (LMEs), are able to explain their innovation patterns (Hall and Soskice 2001a). Each element of the two basic types has strong institutional complementarities with other elements of the same model, and differs clearly from the functional equivalent of the other model. Usually, five interdependent elements can be highlighted (Hall and Soskice 2001b, 17–33; see also Jackson and Deeg 2006, 11–20); namely (1) the financial system, i.e., the primary means to raise investments; (2) corporate governance, i.e., the internal structure of the firm; (3) the pattern of industrial relations; (4) the education and training system; and (5) the preferred mode for the transfer of innovations within the economy. The primary means of raising capital for investment in the LME system are bonds and equities issued on international capital markets. In CMEs, domestic bank lending plays a much bigger role, together with retained earnings. Correspondingly, there is a stark difference between corporate governance systems in the two models. The LME model focuses on outsider control by dispersed owners, based on active markets for corporate control (mergers and acquisitions, including hostile takeovers). The CME model, in contrast, has rather strong disincentives for hostile takeovers and is primarily based on the insider control by major shareholders (block holders). Managers have to find the consensus of their supervisory boards for major decisions and therefore have to involve block holders and labour representatives. In sum, the two models differ in particular regarding the prominence they give to international capital markets. Whereas the latter clearly play the dominating role for corporate finance and corporate governance in the LME model, the CME model allows for much more influence for other stakeholders, including block holders, major banks, management and labour. All capitalist varieties rely on the speedy transfer of innovations throughout the economy. Different types of innovation systems, however, have important repercussions for the design of competition policies, particularly in CMEs: inter-company cooperation, particularly between small and medium scale enterprises, needs to be exempt from overly strict competition policies in order not to hinder the transfer of innovations. In LMEs, in contrast, competition policies need not pay attention to these exceptions. Instead, they rather tolerate high degrees of economic concentration, as long as this concentration is compatible with the search for low consumer prices (Wigger and Nölke 2007).

Traditionally, Western Europe, the US and Japan have been the sole focus of the comparative capitalism (CC) research programme. More recently, these typologies have been adapted to semi-peripheral states (Schneider 2008, Nölke and Vliegenhart 2009, Nölke and Claar forthcoming). However, in order to be applied in Southern settings, CC must be adapted as well as complemented with a transnational perspective. By 'transnational' we mean the systematic incorporation of trans-border influences, both by actors (multinational corporations, financial actors) and institutions (regional and global economic regulation). A transnational perspective is particularly important if we talk about the embedding of institutional frameworks to support capitalism in Southern settings. Here, capitalism developed in a different path than in the north, within a different stage of development of the capitalist world system, in particular during a more intensive integration into the world economy, as indicated by a much stronger penetration by multinational corporations and by a much more powerful moulding by international institutions (such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation), leading to quite different state–economy relationships than within the northern governments (Coates 2000, 226f; Phillips 2004, 10–13).

Comparative capitalism and Deep Integration in South Africa: the theoretical argument

According to Ben Ross Schneider, we can identify a third form of capitalism besides LME and CME, namely hierarchical market economies, which he sees as the dominant form of capitalism in South Africa as well as in Latin America (Schneider 2008, 15). But others argue (Nattrass and Seekings 2010, 29) that South African capitalism cannot be categorised in those forms of capitalism, because Schneider limits his analysis only to corporate concentration. More recently, Nölke and Claar (forthcoming) have elaborated that South Africa has more obvious similarities with a state-permeated market economy. In this model, capitalism is marked by a particularly close relationship between state and business. In contrast to minority shareholders (LME) or institutional block holders (CME), major companies in state-permeated market economies usually are either dominated by families or by the state, in any case organised by national capital. Competition policies are less strict, but geared towards the temporary support of individual companies, e.g., to enable expansion into other markets.

The purpose of DI issues in EU (and US) trade agreements is to implement policies characteristic for an LME form of capitalism. An adoption of LME institutional settings may cause considerable problems for Southern economies. For instance, the single-minded focus of competition policy within LMEs in favour of low consumer prices does not fit into the praxis of temporarily tolerating exceptions of small and medium-scale enterprises in order to create global competitive companies. In addition, the LME model of corporate governance with its focus on minority shareholder protection puts pressures on the family cooperation as well as on state ownership and collides with national policies in favour of particular stakeholders (e.g., disadvantaged social groups). Although the EU also includes CME economies like Germany, it has pushed for policies that mainly fit to LME institutional systems in their bilateral agreements with Southern economies during the EPA negotiations. As we will demonstrate below with regard to the political economy of South Africa in the domain of corporate governance and competition policy, Deep Integration based on LME standards is hardly compatible with the national institutional requirements of a state-permeated market economy.

South Africa's trade relations with the European Union: the economic partnership agreements

Before analysing the question of compatibility, the historical evolution and the current relation between South Africa and the EU needs to be considered to understand the different pathways. In order to tackle the issue of the desirability of a Deep Integration EPA from the perspective of South Africa, the following two sections focus on analysing two particular issue areas, namely competition policies and corporate governance, which are closely related topics within investment.

Trade relations during apartheid proved difficult not only for South Africa, but also for its trading partners. Due to the repressive regime in South Africa other states tried to isolate South Africa both economically and politically. The European Community did not implement sanctions against South Africa properly because it was interested in its national resources. Moreover, multinational corporations (MNCs), e.g., in the automobile industry, had economic interests in South Africa because the apartheid environment provided cheap labour (Wolpe 1972). After the first post-apartheid election in 1995, South Africa became a member of the World Trade Organisation. As the government was interested in a reorganisation of its trade relations, one of the first steps taken was to accept a number of multilateral and bilateral trade agreements. In the context of EU trade relations, the new government expected to gain access to the EU market under the Lomé Convention, but the EU rejected this claim in 1995. During the negotiations of a bilateral free trade agreement between 1996 and 2000, South Africa traded with the EU under the generalised system of preferences (Akinkugbe 2000, 282).

In January 2000, the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) came into force. This free trade agreement is WTO-compatible and the main goal is the liberalisation of both markets. It contains regulations of duty- and tax-free exports in the industry sector and the agricultural sector. South Africa can export 95% of its products to the EU and the EU can export 86% of its product to South Africa without duties or taxes (Akinkugbe 2000, 282). While some observers are celebrating the TDCA, there is still a huge imbalance between the openness of both sides. Indeed, South Africa opened its markets up to 81%, while several restrictions on the EU side, especially in the Wine and Spirits Agreement, are still in place. For example, South Africa is not allowed give the same name to some of its wines as those in Europe (Venter and Neuland 2004, 194–197).

At the beginning of 2007, South Africa joined the Southern African Development Community (SADC)–EPA negotiations as a full negotiation partner. Before that, South Africa only enjoyed observer status. South Africa and its neighbouring countries – Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Mozambique and Swaziland – requested the change in status. Despite this cooperation, South Africa still decided not to sign the Interim EPA at the end of 2007, due *inter alia* to concerns over the liberalisation of services and over harmonisation in issues like intellectual property rights (*Business Day*, 23 December 2008; TradeInvest South Africa 2007). One reason is that the SADC members are still lacking a common regulation on intellectual property rights. This regulatory topic is intended to be tackled in the full SADC EPA with the EU; nevertheless some have argued that a common rule within SADC needs to be established beforehand (Phiri 2008).

In 2010, South Africa and the region started to negotiate again on an EPA. While some members of the negotiating group, like Botswana, were committed to discussing services issues, South Africa so far decided not to discuss issues on services and investment (Carim 2010, 1). Currently, the main focus is on agricultural issues and the EU is bringing in its protection of geographical indicators system (GIs), which might affect only South Africa and not the neighbouring countries (Grant-Makokera and Botha 2011)

South Africa and the desirability of an EPA: corporate governance and investment regulation

In the comparative capitalism perspective, corporate governance issues are at the centre of differences between various capitalist production systems. In case of South Africa, post-apartheid policies play a particular role in this regard. In order to overcome inequality and poverty through the distribution of ownership and better access to jobs, the South African government introduced the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and its follow-up Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) with considerable impact on the corporate landscape. All corporations listed at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) must increase the number of black directors, share ownership, suppliers and black management (Southall 2006, 182). Moreover, the Code of Good Practices is valid for the public and private sectors and any company that wants to do business with the government (Krüger 2011, 210). Five big conglomerates (Billiton, Old Mutual, Anglo America, South African Breweries and Dimension Data) moved their listings from the JSE to the London Stock Exchange. While Armstrong *et al.* (2005, 23) do not see a connection to the governance structure, except in the expansion of its capital internationally, other observers argue that there is a strong connection between flight of capital and BEE. According to Terreblanche, the opportunity for the accumulation of substantial 'black capital' flew out of the country, since companies could save their capital from redistribution by BEE (Terreblanche 2002, 122–124).

Although the BEE policy is necessary in the national environment, the international market has not taken it very favourably. Firstly, international firms are excluded from the ownership clause, but still have to meet the other BEE targets if they want to do business in South Africa (Mebratie and Bedi 2011, 8). In the last years, South Africa has had a very low rate of foreign direct investment (around US$1 billion annually, Armstrong *et al.* 2005, 12), which could be related to BEE's being a hindering factor for investors. Veloso (2008: i, 77–78) argues that the relative level of FDI into South Africa declined since BEE and that FDI flows by multinationals in other African states are higher. Other observers assume that BEE has not hindered FDI flows into South Africa, since FDI numbers still grew. Some even argue that there is a positive effect of BEE for FDI (Empowerdex 2005). Others argue that business confidence declined more generally, not related to BEE. For example, investment in the mining sector dropped because of the Mining Sector charter.

Secondly, the BEE policies are partly not in line with the WTO commitments. For example, management control and employment equity interfere with the regulation that employment should not be based on citizenship. Furthermore, multinationals usually do not have to invest in local human development (Mortenson 2006, 15). Some observers thus argue that in order to meet the WTO regulations South African government should revise its BEE provisions (Mortenson 2006, 15). Similar problems are discussed in the case of bilateral treaties (Yazbek 2010, 111–113; Chigara 2011) and provide evidence that BEE is one of the main controversial issues as regards investment regulations and DI treaties. Within the new Growth Path the government considers a revision of the BEE regulation to achieve more economic growth (EDD 2010, 50–51). Others, however, highlight the important role of BEE regulations for more than just social peace in South Africa (Andreasson 2011). Of particular importance here are the King Reports on corporate governance published by the Institute of Directors in Southern Africa to advise the government (Armstrong *et al.* 2005, 20–22). A particular feature of corporate governance in South Africa as highlighted in the King Reports is that companies are treated as social entities that are not only an asset of their owners: 'South Africa must carefully balance the interests and rights of shareholders with the needs and demands of a wider range of stakeholders in society' (Andreasson 2011, 666). Correspondingly, the King Reports propose a system of corporate governance that explicitly acknowledges legitimate claims of a range of stakeholders, including workers and trade unions. Among its more specific elements are not only well-known policies such as triple-bottom-line accounting, but also an obvious endorsement of BEE policies (Andreasson 2007a, 15).

Undoubtedly, these specific features would be undermined by a more comprehensive adoption of LME-based Deep Integration agreements in South Africa, e.g. in the context of the current EPA negotiations with the EU. Behind these agreements – and EU policies in general – we identify a perspective that assumes the existence of a single best practice in corporate governance – a best practice that is modelled along the model of Anglo-Saxon LMEs. More specifically, the EU proposal from June 2007 for a full EPA envisages a chapter on investment that demands for the liberalisation of rules that are regulating FDI, including the abolition of so-called 'performance requirements'. Black Economic Empowerment regulations are part of these requirements and would need to be abolished, if the EU had its way without any reservations (Müller 2011, 124). Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) already challenge the BEE policies because foreign investors complain against those policies in South Africa, but also in other regions (Chigara 2011, 215, 219–220).

Even if we do not want to overstate the positive effects of BEE policies, it certainly would be problematic if EU-driven policies and foreign investors undermined one of the cornerstones of post-apartheid efforts for societal conciliation in South Africa. Given that the EU in the current political climate appears to be willing to compromise on these issues – as indicated by the long list of exceptions contained in the CARIFORUM EPA section on investments (Brüchner 2008, 197–200) – this is not an imminent threat. Still, it is indicative of the potential dangers emanating from an EU approach that might be feasible under different political circumstances. Our comparative capitalisms perspective thus warns against a wholesale adoption of LME corporate governance standards. MNCs in Southern economies frequently profit from corporate governance structures that do not conform with the Anglo-Saxon model and its emphasis on short-term profit and quarterly reports to the financial markets. Instead, a more stable ownership structure, based on family or state ownership, rather enables successful companies to pursue long-term economic strategies, in particular aimed at enlarging market shares – somewhat similar to the historical evolution of German or Japanese capitalism. In the South African case, family businesses have a tradition and during apartheid they intervened in the political sphere and took over social responsibility (Venter 2008). Around 80% of businesses are family-owned, mostly small and medium enterprises (Gupta *et al.* 2010, 149; Venter *et al.* 2003, 1). From this perspective, the export of Anglo-Saxon corporate governance standards in the context of current negotiations in north–south Deep Integration trade agreements may well inhibit economic development in South Africa's economy. Similar arguments have been made regarding Deep Integration elements within the NAFTA treaty, e.g., regarding the disability of the Mexican government in preventing acquisitions of Mexican companies by Canadian or US companies (Shadlen 2005, 766). At least for those 'emerging economies' that are harbouring the potential for the emergence of successful home-grown companies it may not always be desirable to adapt Anglo-Saxon corporate governance models with their emphasis on the dominant role of the international capital markets and on an active market for corporate control.

The EPA, comparative capitalism and South African competition policies

Similar problems can be observed with competition policy regulations which are a main DI subject in EU trade agreements (Horn *et al.* 2009; Ahearn 2011) and are included in all early EPA drafts. Developing countries have different approaches from industrialised countries with regard to the implementation of competition laws (Roberts 2004, 230). While there are some similarities between EU and South African competition policy, the differences relate to the focus and the goal of competition policies. The EU generally wants to maximise competition in its single market and South African actors 'focus on the competitive process and the social balance that is inherent in this aspect and underpinned by the different characteristics of the South African economy' (Walt 2010). The latter leads to a linkage between competition and industrial policies.

One particular focus of South African competition policy is on the reduction of economic concentration. Already during the apartheid period, antimonopoly legislation existed and in 1979 South Africa passed the Maintenance and Promotion of Competition Act, but the effect of these policies was minimal; it resulted in corporate ownership and the control over capital being in the hands of the few South African conglomerates by the end of apartheid (Roberts 2004, 227). Moreover, the major South African firms provided two-thirds of employment and had a large share in industrial output (Kaplinsky and Manning 1998, 144). Due to this fact, small and medium-sized enterprises provided only few employment possibilities and were practically absent from the industrial development of the country (Hirsch 2005, 198; Kaplinsky and Manning 1998, 144). Correspondingly, the South African government focused on supporting small and medium-scale enterprises in its Competition Act of 1998 (OECD 2003, 52). To be more precise, the Act called for small and medium-scale enterprises to obtain 'an equitable opportunity to participate in the economy' (Republic of South Africa 1998, section 2).

Another notable feature of the Competition Act is that the South African government also included public interests and social goals, two areas which are more often not considered and 'not always compatible with the explicit goals of regular competition policy' (Chabane 2003, 5). In regard to South Africa there is a strong connection with BEE because the Act also refers to a promotion of 'a greater spread of ownership, in particular to increase stakes of historically disadvantaged persons' (Republic of South Africa 1998, section 2). During apartheid, the ownership and the control of firms were concentrated in the hands of the white elite because blacks were restricted to participate as owners by law. The barriers of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) to enter the market were still high because of the historical concentration of business. Thus, nowadays black-owned SMEs are supported via the means of competition policy, by addressing the issue of economic concentration. The specific focus on SMEs was intended to stimulate long-term economic development, including growth, employment and distribution of wealth (Chabane 2003, 7; Hartzenberg 2008, 12). Unfortunately, the process of implementation of new institutions for supporting SMEs has been slow so far (Hirsch 2005, 202–204). In sum, South Africa's competition policy focuses on the special needs of its particular business and social structure.

This competition policy is potentially contradictory to the one pursued by the EU, which is highly controversial in the context of the EPAs, precisely because the EU would like to implement its very own competition policy within these agreements. With the reform of EU competition policy in 2004 the EU made a major shift towards the US (LME) approach, not only in terms of administrative enforcement (abolition of notification procedure), but also in substantial terms. Thus, the focus of EU competition policy on anti-competitive conduct is much more tolerant about economic concentration than about co-operation between small- and medium-scale enterprises (Wigger and Nölke 2007). These developments are also visible in the EPA draft. Besides an implementation of competition rules and regulating bodies by both parties (EC–SADC EPA Draft: Title 5, Art. 2), the EU has also made it clear that they refuse to allow any kind of 'agreements and concerted practices between undertakings, which have the object or effect of substantially preventing or lessening competition' as well as 'the abuse by one or more undertakings of market power' (EC–SADC EPA Draft: Title 5, Art. 1). South Africa would be particularly affected, considering that it is the only economy within the EPA with legislation on competition policy (Hartzenberg 2008, 13). If South Africa were to accept European competition policy principles, a number of developmental instruments, e.g., restrictions of BEE, reduction of the concentration of economic power within a small white elite, the build up of black-owned small and medium-scale enterprises, the ability to operate state monopolies (Holmes *et al.* 2008, 8) and to support public enterprises, e.g., with subsidies, would be most unlikely to be available anymore, thereby restricting the ability of government to set up a coherent institutional frame (Yu 2007).

As in the case of corporate governance regulation, our comparative capitalism perspective has highlighted potential tensions between EPA Deep Integration requirements and the South African developmental model. Again, this problem may not be unique to South Africa, given the importance of competition policies for the growth of home-grown companies in other emerging markets, such as Brazil, China, Mexico or Russia. Implementing the 'one size fits all' approach propagated by EU or US Deep Integration policies may prove to be a major inhibiting factor for dynamic growth in some Southern economies.

Conclusion

Our paper has argued that Deep Integration is one of the most pressing concerns in the debate about north–south trade relations. It has given an overview of the components of Deep Integration and its current empirical relevance – a relevance that is expected to rise in the years to come. In order to study whether Deep Integration is a desirable development from the perspective of economic development in South Africa, our paper has developed a comparative capitalism perspective on these issues as an institutionalist complement to existing approaches from neo-classical development economics. Departing from this perspective we have highlighted the particular features of the South African corporate governance and competition policy models and their limited compatibility with the more liberal standards that are implicitly contained in the draft EPA with the EU. If the EU succeeded in pushing their goals, South Africa might need to abolish policies that play an important role for overcoming post-apartheid economic inequalities and an equally important role for stabilising its companies against the whims of global capital market actors. EPAs are not the only institutions that create heavy restraints on the ability of countries such as South Africa in pursuing 'developmental state' strategies, but important ones (Andreasson 2007b, 8).

In conclusion, the implementation of Deep Integration issues in trade agreements may lead to severe compatibility conflicts in South Africa and in other Southern economies, because they cannot adequately protect their domestic institutions under these circumstances. Proper regulation, protection and reaction to special circumstances might not be possible anymore. More generally, northern economies frequently use Deep Integration to implement Anglo Saxon forms of capitalism in the global south, while the supporting institutional framework is often absent. In the case of South Africa, Deep Integration thus could be a chance for more integration into the global economy, but it could also pose a threat to its economic development.

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Labour and underdevelopment? Migration, dispossession and accumulation in West Africa and Europe

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Recent waves of accumulation have been well documented in this journal with regard to land and natural resources, but labour is missing from these important analyses of profound continuity and change. This article focuses on 'step-wise' migrations and specifically on cases of emigration from Senegal and entry to the Spanish labour market. The labour regime is conceptualised as unfree labour mobility, which integrates dispossession, territorial control, illegalisation, the ideology of racism and the exploitation of labour. Finding salience in earlier theories of unfree labour, this article shows how the control of capital over migration to Europe perpetuates underdevelopment.

Keywords: labour mobility; migration; Senegal; accumulation by dispossession; underdevelopment; Europe

[Travail et sous-développement? Migration, dépossession et accumulation en Afrique de l'Ouest et en Europe.] Les vagues récentes d'accumulation ont été bien documentées dans cette revue en ce qui concerne les ressources foncières et naturelles mais le travail n'est pas pris en considération dans ces analyses de continuité et de changement profonds. Cet article se concentre sur les migrations progressives et en particulier les cas d'émigration du Sénégal et d'entrée sur le marché du travail espagnol. Le régime du travail est conçu comme une mobilité du travail non-libre qui intègre la dépossession, le contrôle territorial, le travail illégal, l'idéologie du racisme et l'exploitation de la main d'œuvre. Recherchant le point saillant des théories existantes du travail non-libre, cet article montre comment le contrôle du capital sur les migrations vers l'Europe perpétue le sous-développement.

Mots-clés : mobilité de la main d'œuvre ; migration ; Sénégal ; accumulation par dépossession ; sous-développement ; Europe

In June 2011, this journal published a special issue on 'Land: A New Wave of Accumulation by Dispossession in Africa?' (Vol. 38, No. 128, June 2011). Its premise was that processes of underdevelopment are being repeated on a greater scale than in the previous decade, and furthermore that there is a qualitative difference in the ways in which land and land transformation are shaping Africa's political economy. An earlier issue examined mining, resources and underdevelopment (Vol. 35, No. 117, September 2008). Here, questions were raised about contemporary similarities with previous lootings of Africa's resources. This article will examine, in a similar light, not only how people are inevitably displaced as a consequence of such waves of accumulation, but moreover, how

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labour-power continues to *become* a source of accumulation in a separate but related process to displacement. This article revisits and foregrounds the importance of labour mobility as a core element of imperialistic relations.

This article is based on the findings from ethnographic life history and interview data collected between 2007 and 2009 in Senegal, Mauritania and Spain and on further observations of migration routes in Burkina Faso and Mali. The fieldwork developed around clusters of migrants at many stages of the journey between West Africa and Southern Europe and in sending households, incorporating stayers, failed attempts and periods of immobility. It was located in several convergence points of several routes, made possible because without the elusive visa, migrants' journeys are chanelled and constrained by borders and checkpoints, transport infrastructure and the availability of informal employment. Even with visas, limits to legality lead migrants into unexpected places, including step-wise channels of migration (Cross 2009). Numerous countries feature in migrants' histories, commonly showing direct passage through the Sahel countries (for lack of work opportunity), followed by longer stages with detention and casual labour in two or more of the Saharan countries of Libya, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. This does not represent a 'global' phenomenon but a regional one (Baldwin-Edwards 2004). The passage through several countries and the range of destinations is often caused by borders rather than indicating that their importance has diminished. Conflict and instability in parts of the Sahara, combined with border enforcements and deportations from one destination or transit country to another, amount to a turbulent and volatile trajectory for the migrant and changes in spatial patterns of migration from year to year.[1]

To conceptualise this labour mobility, it is necessary to consider the range of trajectories encountered in the journey north, rather than focusing on one location, network or 'successful' route. We must be panoramic in scope, but to rein in a coherent analysis, this article is particularly focused on connecting the processes that lead to emigration from Senegal, and to entry to the labour market in Spain. These links are most cogently established in an interpretive political economy approach.

This article brings to light a question that is unresolved and pertinent a quarter-century after its formulation:

> . . . because not all migrations are determined by demand for wage labour, and because not all migrations result from individual choice under structural constraint, the connection between capitalism and migration should not be conceived as a necessarily direct one but may be, at the very least, a mediated connection. Moreover, the positions to which migrants are recruited, characterised as they are by various forms of physical and legal compulsion, suggest again that we need to establish the nature of the relationship between capitalism and unfree labour. (Miles 1987, 6)

The apparent chaos of migration cannot be sufficiently explained by a single existing theory, nor can we be deterministic about its outcomes. However, the most comprehensive framework of analysis is rooted in modern economic dispossession and in the continual demand for unfree labour, both mediated by the processes and local meanings of capitalist globalisation. Without this demand, migrants would not disappear into the desert and sea in uncountable numbers, with a lesser proportion ultimately entering northern labour markets that are nonetheless essential to the growth of those economies.[2] The changing characteristics of migration offer new insight into the contemporary dynamics and struggles in the relationship between capitalism and labour mobility.

We begin by placing this migration in geographical perspective and examining its mechanisms. This will elicit the continuing importance of engaging with theories of labour mobility that developed in the 1970s and 1980s, and were subsequently abandoned in the post-structural era (Amin 1972; Meillassoux 1975; Burawoy 1980; Miles 1987; Cohen 1987). The focus here is on the connections with patterns of labour mobility that were established in colonial labour regimes and further developed as European countries called upon their African 'labour reserves' in postwar development. These are patterns that are not only caused by unequal development, but also reproduce and aggravate it (Amin 1995, 32). There are also substantive discontinuities, which this article links with recent forms of dispossession.

The growing significance of step-wise migration

In the latter part of the twentieth century, migrants began to break away from colonial labour systems and their routes diversified, adopting a voluntary appearance in light of previous regimes. However, a focus on the successful routes underpinning a 'culture' of migration, and on the apparent agency in this mobility, would obscure the more volatile picture of new upheavals related to the political and economic crises of conflict, mass expulsions and the collapse of industries.[3] In Senegal, structural adjustment programmes led the elites to abandon their ambitions for development, leading the youth to a culture of making do and 'managing' (*la débrouille*) in the informal sector or increasingly to heading abroad (Diop 2008, 20; see Lemarchand 1992, 187). Also, established migration strategies, on which some communities were already dependent, were destabilised in West Africa while at the same time, the European Union was in the process of consolidating its 'Fortress' and closing its external borders. These phenomena in West Africa and Europe lend themselves to the 'suicide crossing' through the extremes of desert and sea (Manuh, cited in Albert 2008, 14).

The 'irregular' journey towards Europe begins with a small amount of money, and the migrant must usually stop to work for cash on the way to the destination. This type of migration has been categorised as 'step-wise' because there are steps or stages from the migrant's place of origin to the destination. In one analysis of Africa–Europe migration, 'step-wise' is synonymous with 'transit' migration, and a less problematic or politicised term (Schapendonk 2010, 114). It overcomes the Eurocentric assumption that *all* sub-Saharans entering the Sahara are in 'transit' to Europe. It encompasses the channels of refugees, labour migrants and transit migrants that converge in Saharan hubs and fishing ports and this is essential because migrants move between these channels. Significant examples of moving across channels include: (1) migrants who intended an onward journey to Europe, but either fail or are deterred by the dangers of several days at sea, thus becoming labour migrants in the erstwhile transit country; (2) similarly, migrants who enter in boats from West Africa when they run out of supplies along the coasts of Mauritania and Morocco; and by air when expelled from European countries; (3) in reverse, sub-Saharan migrants who enter the Sahara for seasonal work or to work for an undetermined length of time, but the will or the opportunity develops for an onward journey to Europe, particularly if working in the West African peninsulas of departure towards the Canary Islands. Thus they become 'transit' migrants; (4) labour or transit migrants who become refugees as a result of local instability; and (5) refugees who become labour or transit migrants as they integrate in Saharan zones of recruitment.

By extension to these scenarios, it is impossible to quantify the number of migrants who are heading to Europe. The corollary of this is that not all migrations northwards are in the interests of European capitalism. There is greater consistency in the processes of dispossession that lead to the journey, which are the local outcome of the geographical expansion of capital. For the receiving end, north of the Mediterranean, there is a continuous and broadly controllable supply of labour, on which certain economic sectors are dependent. Having appropriated the ‘step-wise’ description to encompass this journey into the unknown, it is illuminating to see how it fails Dennis Conway’s (1980) ‘clarification of the mechanism’:

> . . . it appears necessary to reaffirm step-wise migration as a process of human spatial behaviour in which individuals or families embark on a migration path of acculturation which gradually takes them by way of intermediate steps, from a traditional-rural environment to a modern urban environment. (Conway 1980, 8)

The diversity of migrants and the multifarious nature of the migration preclude Conway’s characterisation as movement through a ‘spatial hierarchy’. Reactive border controls militate against the prospects of migrants carving out a stable route as their attempts continue. It cannot be reduced to an urban or rural phenomenon. The irrelevance of urban–rural explanations corroborate more broadly with the complexity of post-structural adjustment African migrations, which do not follow linear models and sometimes reveal counterurbanising trends (Potts 2011, 19). Contrary to the pattern of a spatial hierarchy, migration in West Africa is historically linked with underdevelopment and this continues in new migrations. We examine this connection in two Senegalese coastal communities, which have experienced dispossessions under particular, local circumstances. At the same time, the characteristics of this wave of emigration are typical of trans-Saharan or trans-Atlantic departures from other parts of West Africa, owing to the economic pressures that lead to emigration, and which are subsequently reproduced in processes of underdevelopment.

Dispossession, migration and underdevelopment in Thiaroye-sur-Mer and Rufisque, Senegal

Thiaroye-sur-Mer and Rufisque are roughly nine kilometres apart on Senegal’s Route Nationale 1 (see Figure 1). They are traditionally Lebu fishing communities. Their proximity to the capital, however, lends the youth Dakaroise levels of education, training and aspiration. This twenty-first century wave of emigration reveals discontinuity with the geographical patterns established in Samir Amin’s (1972) ‘Africa of the colonial economy’,[4] in which West African coastal areas were supported by labour from the hinterland as the trade focus shifted towards the Atlantic.

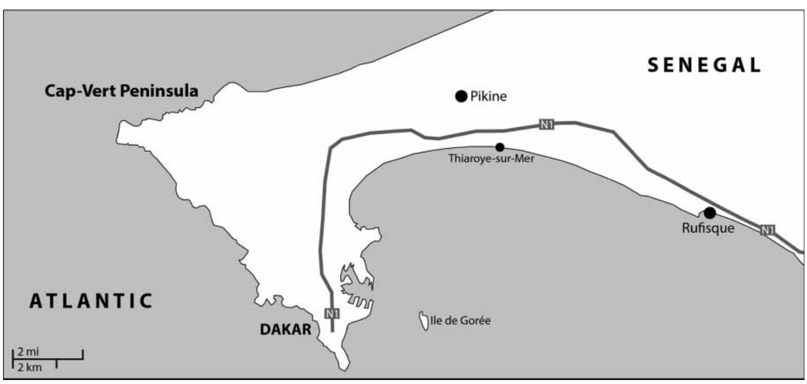

Figure 1. Thiaroye-sur-Mer and Rufisque in Senegal. Illustrator: Alex Van Zomerplaag.

Rufisque, located to the south of the Cap-Vert Peninsula, is one of the four colonial 'communes' of French West Africa, along with Dakar, Gorée and Saint Louis. It is now considered to be a suburb of Dakar, although the use of horse and carriages in the narrow streets of the Diokoul district contrasts sharply with the capital. Thiaroye-sur-Mer is located in the outskirts of Dakar in an area of heavy industry and high population density. It is known for the '*pirogue* phenomenon' wherein successful navigations to the Canary Islands at the start of the 2000s led to further attempts on a larger and sometimes disastrous scale. In March 2006, 162 youths were lost at sea in two *pirogues* (small wooden boats) leaving from the beach (Bouilly 2008a). These and other losses did not in themselves internationalise the devastation to this particular community; it was instead the mobilisation by bereaved mothers and relatives into the Collective of Women for the Fight Against Clandestine Emigration. These case studies will show the dynamics of dispossession and local resistance, explained in the testimonies of migrants and the activities of the Collective.

Dispossession and accumulation

The primary cited reason for clandestine emigration is that fishing is in crisis and is no longer profitable, the outcome of fishing agreements that have been signed between the Senegalese state and European companies. There was an increase in the number of foreign ships from Europe and East Asia that keep their fleets in the Senegalese waters, undermining artisanal fishing (Mbow and Tamba 2007, 5–6). According to local fishermen, the ensuing loss of access to pelagic resources is exacerbated by the expensiveness of materials and fuel for ever-longer fishing expeditions. This combines with the lowered selling-price of fish. A heap of it gains less than 15 pence, and it is the contradiction between these earnings and price hikes in purchased food that resonate with the dynamics of the colonial economy (Amin 1972).

Prices of food and oil increased steeply following the devaluation of the CFA franc (FCFA) in 1994, at which point remittances from Europe gained particular importance in many Senegalese communities. Food prices increased sharply again before the global economic downturn towards the end of 2008. In the year leading up to July 2008, the purchase price of rice in Dakar increased by 113% of the average 2002–2007 price (Cohen and Garrett 2009, 13). A food crisis of this scale is not attributable to poor weather, low grain reserves, high oil prices and increased global consumption but instead these fluctuations expose a precarious food system, constructed on corporate power (Bush 2010, 120–121). This unbalanced system might be exacerbated by a further currency devaluation if France looks south to alleviate the Eurozone crisis (Thiaw 2012). A returned migrant explained moreover that the financial system is a source of dispossession: it is not possible to save money with a local wage, and when the need for loans subsequently arises, this requires the mortgaging of houses and other possessions (interview, Rufisque, 24 June 2008).

Migrants' personal histories intersect with Harvey's criteria for accumulation by dispossession, which include the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; neo-colonial and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); the monetisation of exchange and taxation; national debt; and the credit system (Harvey 2003, 145). This recent wave of accumulation finds young adults barely able to maintain the houses that their parents and grandparents constructed.

These forms of modern economic dispossession are created because capital accumulation persists in its primitive form, continuing with the 'historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production' (Marx 1867/1970, 715). Labourers continue to be separated from the means by which they can realise their labour, and this continues on an expanding scale (Fine and Saad-Filho 2004, 75). The separation is reproduced and expansive because some people become incorporated in the capitalist economy, whereas its growth depends on the accumulation of raw materials and labour from beyond its own boundaries. Where this is not possible, owners of capital instead find ways to create the 'other' by means of dispossession. This was evident when, at the start of the 1980s, land organised around family networks was commodified and the Lebu progressively lost their land. Returning migrants could buy this commodified land, leading to a rise in land value and the 'negotiated expulsion' of the poorest to areas away from the centre (Tall 2008, 52–57). To view returned migrants as the new accumulators, however, would obscure the dispossession and unfree labour that precedes, and importantly succeeds, this role as migrants crossing the Atlantic and the Sahara recount their experiences of selling up what their parents have gained. The dispossession was caused not by returning migrants but by the trickled-down and locally articulated macroeconomic changes that are described above.

In the Diokoul district of Rufisque, young people have turned to carpentry, welding and building. The daily wage for a carpenter is FCFA 1500–2000 (£1.85–£2.45) and there are frequent claims that wages are not paid. Furthermore, work is rarely available, particularly after recent factory closures. One resident complained, 'if you stay here for a few hours, you'll see the house filled up like a national football team. We spend the whole day here drinking tea' (interview, Rufisque, 2 July 2008).

Clandestine emigration to Europe

This wave of accumulation has led some married fathers to sail into the Atlantic alongside younger men, distinguishing this mobility from the 'rite-of-passage' to gain autonomy that has explained other Senegalese migrations (Willems 2008, 282; Mbodji 2008). One such fisherman failed five attempts to reach the Canary Islands. He explained that in staying, he could provide some funds to the household, but 'say the flour mill breaks down, I can't repair it because we consume what I earn from day to day' (interview, Rufisque, 18 June 2008).

If the upkeep of houses and productive materials is impossible with current household incomes, it is unsurprising that these would be mortgaged or sold on to fund a migrant going to Europe. This was the dynamic in Thiaroye-sur-Mer, where families sold land, houses and jewels to pay their sons for the journey, and the decision-making was largely led by mothers (Bouilly 2008b, 18). A combination of early successful crossings from Thiaroye's beach and a greater severity of poverty than in Rufisque contributed to the broad acceptance of sea crossings and then the high incidence of tragedies there. Unemployment here had reached 80%, almost double that of the Senegal average, at the peak of the pirogue phenomenon (Bouilly 2008a).

The Collective of Women for the Fight Against Clandestine Emigration in Thiaroye-sur-Mer is composed of more than 350 women, each of whom make monthly payments into a *tontine*, an informal form of saving and credit. This fund provides rice, soap and oil each month. The Collective processes cereals, fruits, vegetables and seafood, then sells it nationally, to neighbouring countries and also to Europe (Sow 2012). Credits of up to 50,000 francs CFA (€76.22) are available to the most vulnerable women in the group to fund them in income-generating activities (Chauzy 2006, 7). The Collective also lends over €15,000 per year to repatriated migrants so they can re-establish themselves (Gano 2012). It has gained donor funding from the Spanish Commission for Assistance to Refugees (CEAR) and more than 100 small businesses had been sponsored by 2006 (Chauzy 2006). It has successfully lobbied for visas and sensitisation to migration routes, but its activities also encourage local development as a solution to the loss of young people. More precisely, these activities are based on meeting subsistence needs, on equipping workers, and on establishing a marketplace for producers and traders. One failed clandestine migrant gained a horse and carriage so that he could access markets for fish at a distance from the beach (interview, Thiaroye-sur-Mer, 3 June 2008). For this community endowed with marine resources and artisanal skills, the significance of accumulation by dispossession is clear. Both here and in Rufisque, there was the common sentiment that 'young people should have the materials and the means to do their trade' (interview, Thiaroye-sur-Mer, 6 June 2008).

In contrast to the family-driven phenomenon in Thiaroye-sur-Mer, secret departures dominated the clandestine journeys from Rufisque. One young man told his mother that he was going to Tambacounda (in the east of Senegal), but then called her after some days to shock her with the news that he was in Spain (interview, Rufisque, 2 July 2008). Similar departures, in which friends and parents were uninformed, led to fears in the district that others would leave without warning. One stayer, who was deterred from attempting to go to Europe by his mother, explained: 'At times [mother] has phoned me at the building site to see whether I have left or not' (interview, Rufisque, 20 June 2008). This secrecy was also found among step-wise migrants in the Sahara and in another shared characteristic, migrants in Rufisque often emigrated without paying cash at the start. 'I didn't pay because I'm a fisherman', explained one resident, who was repatriated upon arrival in Tenerife (interview, Rufisque, 18 June 2008). Mechanical or medical knowledge, or friendship with the captain, are also a strong currency.

Legal emigration

From March 2007 to the end of 2008, around 500 Senegalese workers were recruited on temporary visas to work in Spain's fishing and farming sectors (IRIN 2008). When asking the youth about contracts and visas, the response was frequently that you need *bras longs* (long arms – friends in high places) in order to benefit. A failed migrant from Thiaroye-sur-Mer claimed, 'the Spanish government wanted to grant visas in the fishing domain but the Senegalese state gave them to their close relatives, people who hadn't mastered the sea at all' (interview, Thiaroye-sur-Mer, 3 June 2008). Rufisque, however, possesses households with such political connections, owing to its historical role in Senegal's political development.

Both illegal and legal forms of emigration are yet insecure for the migrant and by extension the family that benefits. One young woman, with the help of her uncle, had received a rural work contract for two years which pre-dated the agreement between Senegal and Spain. Her mother explained that once the contract had finished, she had to stay in Spain and look for other work (interview, Rufisque, 24 June 2008). Another respondent's two sons, both fishermen, had tried clandestine emigration. One obtained a free *pirogue* journey to Spain through colleagues. The other sold his *pirogue* and then gained a fishing contract (interview, Rufisque, 2 July 2008). During the eight-month term, he sent remittances to his household via Western Union. It expired a month before our interview, and his mother explained:

> These days, he goes to the port to seek work. He's not with any acquaintance. He's alone because he resigned from his work before the end of his contract, to avoid them taking him back to Senegal just after it ends. (*ibid*.)

Summarising the experiences of other parents, she complained that, 'contrary to what is thought about the contracts, emigration of the recipients hasn't changed a great deal' (interview, Rufisque, 2 July 2008). This is because the time abroad required to secure household funds, beyond daily consumption, exceeds the terms of the visa. An emigrant working in a factory in Spain would earn €800 per month, at least 10 times the wage of a local carpenter or builder. However, showing one example of an expense that is not covered by workers' subsistence, one returned migrant explained:

> Travelling to Europe is firstly to meet the needs of the house. Emigrants must also think of investing to prepare for their retirement. For investment, emigrants will have to do 15 years abroad. (Interview, Rufisque, 24 June 2008)

This serious shortfall arises because the sending community reproduces, nourishes, houses, trains and habituates workers (Cohen 1987). Capitalist interests seek to pay the labour force at the lowest possible cost, and this can be done by externalising the cost of labour renewal to sending economies (Burawoy 1980). The means of renewal (new recruits to fill vacancies) are thus separated from those of maintenance (workers' day-to-day subsistence) (Burawoy 1980, 149). The emerging picture, therefore, is one of underdevelopment, in which temporary and rotating labour migration simultaneously preserves and exploits the domestic economy (Meillassoux 1975, 109–111). A paradox emerges, in which the 'domestic' sector needs to be preserved in order to keep supplying low-cost workers, but also its destruction has enabled such exploitation to occur. This means that at least one member must continue to earn wages in the capitalist sphere if the community is to avoid destruction.

Entry to Spain's labour market: the case of Catalonia

Having examined the economic and social processes that underpin emigration from Thiaroye-sur-Mer and Rufisque, this section focuses on another essential component of the West Africa-Europe migration regime, that of the Spanish labour market. Spain halted clandestine migration through the Strait of Gibraltar in 2003 and into its enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco during 2005. It significantly reduced illegal entries to the Canary Islands when the number of fishing boats from West Africa peaked in 2006. More recently, it was dealing with another wave of sub-Saharan migrants in Isla de Tierra, an uninhabited Spanish rock close to Melilla (*El País* 2012). All of these routes are dangerous and deadly, placing greater pressure on the Spanish government to block them. However, shootings of migrants who attempted to enter Ceuta and Melilla, deportations in North Africa to remote desert areas, and shipwrecks arriving in Spain's waters from as far as Guinea reveal a danger created by the EU's border regime and its clients in Africa as well as the natural hazards of desert and sea (Traoré 2007). This section focuses on the 'successful' migrants who bypass the deterrents, either by crossing the intercontinental boundary without documentation, or by exceeding the period or terms of legality set out in visa arrangements (see previous section).

To recap, this analysis of the migration regime is centred on clusters of migrants in particular locations, rather than a single route. My informants in the autonomous region of Catalonia started their epic journeys in numerous West African towns and villages. Most step-wise migrants' first point of arrival was in the Canary Islands or Andalusia, after which they were flown to Catalonia by the authorities, or reached it through further steps. At the end of 2008, 17.5% of the working population in this region were foreign-born, more than twice the national average (Pajares 2009, 4). Barcelona, its capital, was a well-known target for Senegalese migrants. The Wolof 'Barça mba Barzakh!' (Barça or the afterlife) exclamation is well-known in Dakar and is connected with local enthusiasm for the successful football team. At this time, Barcelona enjoyed a higher growth rate, at 8.4% from 2006–2007, than the Spanish average of 3.9%, and employment was also higher. However, its boom ended in the global economic downturn at the end of 2008, which caused 228,300 job losses in construction across Spain, followed by losses in industry and services, whilst agricultural jobs increased by 14,000 (EIU 2009a, 14–16). Agricultural centres in Catalonia therefore grew in importance as poles for undocumented labour.

In Barcelona, a trader from the Casamance region in the southern part of Senegal has occupied a series of buildings, periodically being moved on by the police. In 2008, he secured an apartment building with an adjoining restaurant and housed migrants from Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Equatorial Guinea and Uganda. He explained that 10 years ago, people came legally, but now most Africans he met had arrived on fishing boats. He would lend his residence papers to undocumented migrants (interviews, 17, 18, 20 August 2008). Africans, mainly from the North and West, comprise the largest immigrant population in the Catalonian provinces of Girona, Lleida and Tarragona, totalling over 11,000 people in 2008 before reducing to less than 8000 in 2011 (INE 2011). Immigrants who do not have residence papers or who have entered illegally and received expulsion orders may register on the Padrón (Municipal register). Because registered migrants were entitled to healthcare at this time, it was thought that the figures were reasonably accurate (Sandell 2006, cited in de Haas 2008, 34). A report by ACCEM (Spanish Catholic Commission on Migration), however, estimated 1500–2000 unregistered migrants in Salt, a municipality of Girona in which African telecentres, restaurants and other businesses are predominant. The overall foreign population there increased from 6.1% in 2000 to 37.5% in 2007 according to the town census. The study found that almost half of the unemployed migrant population were unregistered (Benabid 2008, 2–3). They are likely to have entered the country without detection.

One migrant from Cameroon reached Catalonia through a typical step-wise journey. It took him around five years to reach Spain, often delayed by long treks to circumvent checkpoints, or by stops in border towns where he would earn the money to pay smugglers. He passed through Chad, Libya, Algeria and Morocco, avoiding officials, working and sending remittances to pay for his mother's medication, but eventually he saved enough funds for the crammed boat journey across the Mediterranean and survived it. On arrival, as with other migrants, he was detained for 40 days, then was released and issued with a deportation order (interview, Barcelona, 26 February 2008). In another case, a groundnut farmer from Gambia was driven to migrate when his crops would not sell. He sought work in several West African countries and while working as a seaman in Senegal, he was offered a free passage to Spain from Diogué, located at the estuary of the Casamance River and close to the border with Guinea-Bissau. Boat migrations from Casamance increased when patrols were intensified around the Dakar region in 2006. When asked whether he felt danger on the boat, he explained:

> A French trawler escorted us for around two days, giving us food to prevent us from being detained in Morocco. They decided they can't leave us in the sea to die and they can't let us go to jail in Morocco. They brought us near to the Spanish coast and called the Spanish authorities. (Interview, Barcelona, 25 February 2008)

This kind of exceptional fortune echoes in other migrants' histories. One Gambian university tutor had been placed under intense surveillance by the government, eventually setting off in haste on a step-wise journey that incorporated rural work. Eventually reaching

Morocco, he received help from soldiers in Tanger when he was able to offer translation skills. He explained: ‘They needed to communicate with some of the people there, and I could speak for them... so actually my knowledge paid off the villains!’ (interview, Salt, Girona, 23 February 2008). Once in Spain, the reliance on chance continues. A woman from Edo State in Nigeria explained her arrival in Gran Canaria:

> I came here through Libya. Libya through Algeria. Algeria through Morocco. I came through the ‘patera’ [small boat], in the sea, in 2001. The journey almost took me one year on the road. When I came here I was talking to the police and they interviewed me. They separated everything when we were in Las Palmas; after, they let all of us come, but deported some people. It depends on luck. (Interview, Salt, Girona, 23 February 2008)

In spite of having visible and notorious anti-immigration controls, Spain’s economic and social conditions have ‘activated’ its inequality with sending countries, encouraging migrants to take the risk of entering (Sassen 1999, 136–137). They have moved independently through a ‘chain of work’, ‘a job network that enables people to circulate from a more peripheral area to one that is less so’, producing goods and services in a similar pattern to commodity chains; also resembling the ‘hopping’ of capital (Martínez Veiga 1999, 110; Ferguson 2007, 38). The ports and transit towns in West and North Africa offer areas to exchange information, seek work, pool resources and sometimes secure the onward journey to Spain, and then Spain’s agricultural and industrial centres continue this pattern within an unfree labour regime.

Alternatively, the pattern begins in Spain. A Nigerian migrant living in Salt, Girona, had obtained a three-month visa in Lagos and flew to Spain with his brother in November 2005. He worked in a telecentre in Salt for five months, which was owned by an associate, then lost his legal status. He had to seek work with an agent and entered into informal agricultural work (interview, Salt, 23 February 2008). Documented workers would earn €6 or €7 per hour, but those without papers would earn €4 after the agent had taken a cut.

The pressures of capital on labour costs

In our case study of Spain as a receiving country, it is important to note two things: firstly that it was a country of emigration only 25 years ago, and secondly that it has been considered as a marginal state in the EU, characterised by high unemployment and a large underground economy. Spain converged with the GDP per capita of OECD countries and experienced higher than average growth by 2005. It is still, however, considered to be in a marginal position vis-à-vis Europe (Amin 2010). Supporting this perception, it fared worse than the OECD average in the global financial crisis in 2008 with a steeper rise in unemployment and a more pronounced dip in GDP growth (EIU 2009b, 20).

Spain has been under sustained pressure from the international financial institutions to keep its labour costs down. Overall growth increased by 6.3% annually between 1996 and 2000, then 8.4% annually up to 2006, while salaries decreased from 5.3% to 3.1% over the same period (Martín Urriza 2007, 16). Furthermore, Catalonia became the main contributor to Spain’s growth, followed by Madrid and Andalusia (OECD 2009a, 18). Spain’s growth was the result of ‘increased labour utilisation and capital accumulation’ (OECD 2009b, 104). This principally concerned the construction and tourism sectors, which utilise cheap labour by employing temporary workers and a foreign labour force. In 2006, the Spanish Workers’ Commissions (CC OO) calculated labour costs in Spain at 54.5% of each product unit, below the Eurozone average of 56.5% and lower than Italy, Germany, France and the United Kingdom (Martín Urriza 2007, 21). Times both of growth and of recession in Spain show the continuous role of cheap labour in accumulation. Its comparative advantage in labour costs signifies a large and growing pressure to pay the labour force at a lower rate than the cost of reproduction and subsistence (Bush 2007, 57). As residential construction and private consumption ceased to drive growth, Spain was subjected to further pressure from international organisations to improve its productivity at lower costs (IMF 2009, 4).

This pressure is alleviated with a system of unfree wage labour, characterised by political and legal constraints which inhibit free circulation in the labour market. Political-legal restrictions are:

> . . . specifically intended to restrict the circulation of certain categories of labour-power within the labour market. Such restrictions may be overdetermined by related political constraints (e.g., the absence of the right to vote) but the latter do not by themselves constitute the defining feature of unfree labour. (Miles 1987, 33)

Forms of unfree labour, therefore incorporating the visa arrangements between Spain and Senegal, are both ‘anomalous’ and ‘necessary’ to capitalism (Miles 1987). They are anomalous because free wage labour tends to dominate, but they are necessary because the historical role of cheap labour in economic growth obstructs the universalisation of wages. In the contemporary context of ‘irregular’ migration into the EU, border regimes are key to restricting the circulation of those who enter. States legitimate this labour regime by defining the relationship between free and unfree workers, through legal and ideological means and in the policing of the frontiers (Cohen 1987, 26).

The role of ideology in unfree labour

Robert Miles (1987) argued that production relations are inseparable from political and ideological relations, and specifically from the process of racialisation, where racism is a dominant ideological element. This is because the expansion of capitalism established social relations, which would be abstracted to ‘race relations’, and these relations would develop their role as unfree labour in commodity production (Miles 1987, 9). This illuminates the dialectical relationship between the political and the economic. State managers and capitalists promote their respective territorial and economic logics of power, but enter into interdependent partnership with each other in the regulation of migrant workers. This understanding of territorial power vis-à-vis the flow and circulation of capital enables a richer analysis of ‘contradictory’ migration regimes than a framework of ‘realist’ international relations or Marxism alone (Harvey 2003; Ashman and Callinicos 2006, 111–116).

Prime Minister José María Aznar’s EU chairmanship in 2002 played a crucial role in the construction of immigrants as a threat to the EU. The term ‘illegal immigration’ was persistently deployed in connection with public safety and was explicitly connected with crime. It was argued that international solidarity with all human beings would permit more illegal immigration. This exemplified a ‘preformulation of racism by the elites’ (van Dijk 2005, 20). Aznar stimulated anti-immigrant sentiment as an acceptable element of political discourse in Spain.

Claude Meillassoux argued that the discrimination serves dual purposes: firstly to create an atmosphere of racism, propagated by the far right, which enables the overexploitation of ‘underdeveloped’ peoples; and secondly to keep migrants in a state of fear and crush demands for improved conditions. This also divides immigrants and indigenous workers, thus diminishing the scope for resistance (Meillassoux 1975, 120–122). Racism, xenophobia and other ideologies of discrimination are essential to the operation of a double labour market, which produces two categories of worker: those who are integrated and reproduce wholly within the capitalist sphere; and migrants who only partially reproduce themselves within the capitalist sphere. A major structural economic reform in Spain's austerity era, during which youth unemployment has soared to 47%, is to merge the double labour market by relaxing labour laws so that it is easier and cheaper to fire workers (*Economist* 2012). Despite this, the demand for migrant labour will continue because migrants are excluded from receiving *any* 'indirect wages' in the form of family allowance, pensions, unemployment benefits and sickness cover. Their sending households will cover these costs. *Tontines*, explained earlier as a pooled fund, are used in Catalonia and will also go some way to buffering underemployment and unforeseen expenses (Sow 2007, 40). The labour literature from Meillassoux and others might have missed such local dynamics, but this does not undermine their main observations.

Since Meillassoux's argument about the political economy of racism, the issue has intensified. Migration policies in receiving countries have 'hidden agendas', which are rhetorically against immigration but in reality encourage it (see below). Having created the double labour market, the power of nationalism and racism in destination countries in turn makes it preferable for politicians, social movements and the media to continue propagating public opinion against immigration (Castles, 2003, 214). Although the discrimination dynamic may have been 'efficient' in postwar France it is not clear in contemporary Spain's context that controls on immigrant workers 'make it easier to fix their length of stay in accordance with the needs of economy' (Meillassoux, 1975, 122). Unmanageable borders and shipwrecks at Spain's gateway add to its limited ability to control increasingly resourceful foreigners in the labour market. However, this attempt to regulate labour is explicit in EU policy[5] and is what the Spanish state attempts to do.

Controlling the labour market

Numbers of clandestine migrants and their degree of employment elude the official and speculative data and are excluded from global labour policy (Cillo and Perocco 2008). However, it is widely understood, not least by successive Spanish governments, that migrant labour is a structural factor in the economy and is managed to suit particular labour demands (Sabater and Domingo 2012, 193; van Dijk 2005, 20; Rius Sant 2006a). Amnesties have featured in Spain's migration politics since it became a labour-receiving country, but if migrants were entirely legal and incorporated, they would no longer fulfil this role.

Table 1 shows key regularisation programmes that were enacted between Spain's first immigration law in 1985 through to the Settlement Programme from 2006–2009. The programmes targeted particular groups of migrants, such as those who lost their legal status in 1996, and agricultural workers in 2005. For the latter programme, just over 90% of sub-Saharan applicants were successful in Barcelona Province (Sabater and Domingo 2012, 200). These programmes were limited in their numbers, time frames, type of permit and role, often 'segmenting' workers into agricultural or domestic work and then returning them to an 'illegal' status.

A government delegate in Barcelona stated that 980 out of 4700 cases of expulsion were enforced during 2008, leaving almost 80% of the illegalised migrants in restricted circulation (*El Periódico de Catalunya* 2008). Their future and that of the household is subjected to the vagaries of policy and economy. This was evident in 2001 when, early in the year, 133 destitute sub-Saharan migrants staying in Barcelona's Plaza Catalunya were regularised

Table 1. Regularisation programmes in Spain, 1985–2009.

Year	Population affected	No. of permits granted	Notes
1985–6	Illegally resident workers and families. Must have job offer.	23,000	Connected with 1985 Law on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners, viewing immigrants as temporary workers who need to be regulated. Total 44,000 applicants. Short-term legalisation; difficult to renew and slow bureaucratic process; 50–75% of eligible migrants did not apply (lack of infrastructure).
1991–2	Illegally resident workers and families; rejected/ pending asylum seekers.	109,135	Total 135,393 applicants. Permits restricted to economic sectors; 3 years later 26–50% estimated not to have renewed permits.
1996	Immigrants who have lost legal status (59%); family members of immigrants with permits (34%).	21,300	Total 25,000 applicants. 13,800 gained work and residence permits; 7500 gained residence permits.
2000–1	(1) Work permit or residence permit in previous 3 years.	153,463	247,598 applicants; beneficiaries worked in agriculture, domestic service or construction.
	(2) Prove settlement or 'roots' in Spain.	221,083	350,000 applicants; beneficiaries mainly in domestic service and construction.
2005	Normalisation programme.	575,000	Work permits, 1 year (renewable). 10,100 Senegalese applicants were successful.
	Registered for at least 6 months and offered work contract of at least 6 months/3 months for agriculture.	(84,027 in Barcelona)	90.6% success rate for sub-Saharan Africans in Barcelona.
2006	Illegal residents	100,000 (20,000 in Barcelona)	Work permits; must return to country to obtain visas.
2006–9	Settlement programme Labour settlement: must have lived in Spain for at least 2 years and can prove existence of a labour relationship.	2009: 79,433 (21,458 in Barcelona)	43.7% success rate for sub-Saharan Africans in Barcelona (mainly Gambian and Senegalese applicants). More than a third of these failed to change from Labour Settlement permit to ordinary work permit.
	Social settlement: has lived in Spain for 3 years, can produce a work contract and has proven links with the local community		Lapsing into illegality was found to be frequent in this programme.

Sources: Mendoza (2000, 6–7); Rius Sant (2006); Rius (2008); Levinson (2005, 48–50); Sabater and Domingo (2012, 196, 200, 207).

by agreement between the city council, the Generalitat (government of Catalonia) and the Spanish government. The cohort was living under non-enforced expulsion orders (Rius Sant 2006b). Eight months later, 120 sub-Saharan migrants were forcibly evicted from the same space in an early morning raid (Noguer and Costa-Pau 2001).

Conclusion: more than a mediated connection

> . . . the threat of starvation and the lack of alternatives compelled the 'free' labourers 'voluntarily' to sign up to the labour contract and 'spontaneously' turn up to work even under the most appalling conditions (Fine and Saad-Filho 2004, 81)

The global expansion of capitalism is a potent force in the connected processes of emigration from West Africa and immigration to Europe. The difference between free and unfree labour may be negligible for economically displaced workers, but this article's conceptualisation of *unfree labour mobility* attests to the durability of abandoned migrant labour theories and to the importance of rethinking them in a contemporary light. Capitalism does not mediate the separation of producers from their modes of production and their 'willing' entry to the labour market as comprehensively as it did in the era of primitive accumulation. This does not suggest the dissolution, or a downward trend, of imperial control. On the contrary, global capitalism and its political partners dominate modes of production and livelihoods through different channels and through an integrated system of underdevelopment, dispossession, illegalisation, control and exploitation.

In the separate but interdependent processes of economic dispossession and the utilisation of migrant labour, capitalism adopts a regulatory role. This alludes to the ongoing and expansive nature of accumulation, but the primitive accumulation that directly and strategically linked dispossession with entry to the labour market in colonial era labour systems, becomes accumulation by dispossession. The former process opened up the path to the geographical expansion of capital, yet the latter has disrupted this path that was already opened up (Harvey 2003, 164). In other words, people are thrown out of the global economy – discarded and sometimes reincorporated. Therefore, there are 'wasted lives' (Bauman 2004), people who are left behind by 'modernisation' and become unemployed, unpaid, imprisoned, destitute, lost at sea or perishing in the desert. At the same time, the creation of labour reserves persists, incorporating people in capitalist development by arbitrarily admitting members of this industrial reserve army into an institutionally racist and exploitative labour market. People struggle and mobilise against these oscillating extremes of abjection and overexploitation, which reflect the forms of exclusion and inclusion that are created by this logic.

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Notes

1. Clare Oxby documented some of the post-Qaddafi changes in her presentation: 'Individuals, families, frontiers: cross border identity shifts and the rationales of Saharan migrations (C. Niger/S. Algeria)', Canadian Association of African Studies conference held at Université Laval on 2–4 May 2012. These changes include racist reprisals against sub-Saharans in Libya, increased circulation of weapons, and reinforcement of policing and border controls.
2. Hein de Haas (2008, 9) estimated that 65,000 to 120,000 sub-Saharans enter the Maghreb annually, of which 20–38% proceed to Europe. My estimations from fieldwork in Mauritania (not included in de Haas' figures) and in Senegal and Spain concur with this broad range. It is worth noting that entry to Europe may solely consist of imprisonment and deportation, that migrants may not become wage labourers, or that they may become wage labourers for a short period of time.
3. Ghana, Nigeria and Ivory Coast attracted millions of migrants in the 1960s and 1970s, but the economic and political tensions led to major expulsions from Ghana in 1982, when it closed its border with Togo, and from Nigeria in 1983, when it expelled around one million Ghanaians and one million other West Africans. Ivory Coast's crisis in 2002 also created a large exodus (Arthur 1991; Mafukidze 2006). Mauritania expelled black Africans to Senegal in 1989–1990 after a border land dispute, with Senegal reciprocating the expulsions. Mauritanian refugees remain in Senegal (see Middle East online, 27 June 2012, http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=53069).
4. This is vis-à-vis 'Africa of the concession-owning companies' (Congo River Basin) and 'Africa of the labour reserves' (eastern and southern parts).
5. The French EU Presidency developed the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, adopted by the European Council on 15 and 16 October 2008. One element of the Pact was 'to organise legal immigration to take account of the priorities, needs and reception capabilities determined by each member state' (Ministère de l'Immigration, de l'Integration, de l'Identité Nationale et du Développement Solidaire 2008). This signifies a general trend towards restriction on forms of citizenship and the legal integration of unfree labour.

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Rural wage employment in Africa: methodological issues and emerging evidence

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This article explores the evidence on rural labour markets and wage employment in sub-Saharan Africa. The article argues that much of the official statistical evidence on rural wage employment is either scarce or unreliable, and discusses a number of hypotheses and reasons for this. A number of alternatives are discussed to overcome the most serious weaknesses of conventional data collection methods and to illustrate their usefulness with selected findings and emerging themes from field research that has attempted to overcome the shortcomings of standard household surveys in rural Africa, in order to capture the nature and dynamics of rural wage employment.

Keywords: rural labour markets; agricultural wage employment; survey methodology; Africa; poverty

[L'emploi salarié dans les zones rurales en Afrique : questions méthodologiques et nouvelles données.] Cet article examine les données sur les marchés du travail et le travail salarié dans les zones rurales en Afrique subsaharienne. L'article soutient que la plupart des données statistiques officielles sur l'emploi salarié rural est soit rare, soit non fiable, et discute d'un certain nombre d'hypothèses et raisons pour ce résultat. Un certain nombre d'alternatives sont discutées pour pallier aux faiblesses les plus sérieuses des méthodes conventionnelles de collecte de données ainsi que pour illustrer leur utilité quant aux résultats sélectionnés et aux thèmes de recherche émergents ayant tenté de pallier aux lacunes des enquêtes standards auprès des ménages dans les zones rurales africaines, afin de saisir la nature et les dynamiques de l'emploi salarié rural.

Mots-clés : marchés du travail en zone rurale ; emploi salarié agricole ; méthodologie d'enquête ; Afrique ; pauvreté

Introduction

Despite the persistent analytical, statistical and policy focus on poverty in sub-Saharan Africa over the past two decades, the linkages between poverty and employment dynamics remain under-researched and poorly understood, especially in rural areas. Economic growth, education and health are usually seen as essential for poverty reduction. As Amsden (2010) has provocatively and lucidly argued, this agenda has led to 'jobs dementia' and a grassroots approach to poverty reduction that has generated poverty reduction fantasies with little support from historical evidence (see also Wuyts 2011). A striking imbalance emerges

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between the ever-expanding agenda on rural poverty and the little attention and evidence generated on rural employment. In particular, a cursory navigation of the vast literature on poverty in Africa and the official 'poverty reduction strategies' (notably reflected in a large number of PRSPs since 1999) gives clear indication that wage employment in rural Africa is generally ignored. As a result, our knowledge of rural wage employment and how it relates to rural poverty is exceptionally limited. Conventional wisdom and official data on rural employment in sub-Saharan Africa suggest the following 'stylised facts' (see, for critical assessments, Sender 2003; Sender *et al.* 2005; Cramer *et al.* 2008; White *et al.* 2006): (a) agriculture mainly consists of small 'subsistence' peasant farmers, most of them 'poor' (usually defined with reference to a monetary threshold of poverty); (b) rural inequality and stratification is not substantial, with the exception of highly unequal Southern African societies; (c) the non-farm economy, which is growing in significance, is thought to be more heterogeneous but dominated by self-employment; (d) as a corollary of these features, rural labour markets are regarded as thin or absent and rural wage employment, especially agricultural wage employment, as uncommon; (e) besides, cooperative/reciprocal labour exchange is often seen as more common than wage labour, partly reflecting supposedly greater degrees of equality, more widespread poverty and social capital in play rather than any form of pressured activity within structured (not equal) social relations.[1]

This paper examines this gap in knowledge with a particular focus on the collection of statistics on employment in rural Africa. The article thus explores the reasons why rural (especially agricultural) *wage* employment is so poorly understood and especially inadequately measured, and provides methodological alternatives to better capture the nature and dynamics of rural/agricultural wage employment. Finally, to illustrate these methodological lessons, the article summarises key themes and evidence emerging from micro-level studies that have attempted to overcome the main methodological barriers to a better understanding of rural labour markets in Africa. The article is organised as follows. The second section following this introduction briefly documents the relative neglect of rural wage employment in the literature and its relative invisibility in available statistics. There is a sin of omission and a sin of commission in both official statistics and conventional research, as will be argued in the following section, which also underpins large discrepancies in the significance of wage employment across African countries. The third section examines some of the main reasons for the apparent lack of development of rural labour markets and the associated scarcity of evidence of rural wage employment. It will be argued that there is a serious problem with the evidence available at the micro level from official statistics, and competing explanations will be reviewed. The fourth section will then illustrate some key themes emerging from micro-level rural labour surveys (where I directly participated) in which conventional data collection deficiencies were addressed and corrected. The final section will summarise some of the main points and will draw some tentative policy and research implications.

Neglected rural wage employment

The paucity of literature on wage employment in rural Africa is reflected in illustrations from Google searches. While the keyword 'agricultural wage employment' seems more commonly used, 'rural wage employment' only yields 305 hits in Google Scholar (for all years and regional domains) and 183 if one adds 'Africa' to the search. If we restrict the keyword to its use in titles (a more accurate representation of research that focuses on this topic) we get a paltry seven hits, only three discussing evidence on sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). A similar search with terms 'rural wage labour' and 'Africa' gives similar results with a few more hits. Anyone with an interest in wage employment in rural Africa and in agriculture faces two major challenges: first, finding enough secondary material that is up to date; second, finding reliable data series at country level. This is a simple and biased illustration of a sin of omission, i.e., the neglect of a topic that should deserve much more attention. There is of course a wealth of fascinating scholarly material on social differentiation and rural labour market formation in Africa (see Sender and Smith 1986; Swindell 1985; Kitching 1980; Ghai and Radwan 1983). Unfortunately, this kind of literature has followed a remarkable decline since the mid 1980s, partly mirroring the broader decline of agrarian political economy in African studies and the growing dominance of neo-classical economics and neo-populist approaches to rural development, which have largely focused research on smallholder producers, markets and agricultural reforms (see Oya 2011).

There is also a sin of commission. In fact, much academic and institutional literature on rural Africa, and indeed official published statistics on employment, posit that rural labour markets are either absent or very thin, especially for agricultural wage employment. Even emerging mainstream literature that acknowledges the importance of livelihood diversification and the rise of off-farm income sources also emphasises the 'limited place of off-farm agricultural wage labour in rural African livelihoods' (Barrett *et al.* 2005, 15). These views are echoed by official poverty reduction policies, where the place of wage employment is sorely neglected in favour of the usual focus on smallholders' incomes and productivity. Official statistics certainly tend to reflect an image where wage employment is marginal in much of rural Africa.[2]

The very low percentages of recorded wage employment in rural areas in fact underpin the low proportions recorded by *aggregate* employment statistics compiled by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Table 1 illustrates the contrast between SSA and other regions. In the former, the median percentage of people classified as 'employees' (wage workers in terms of their 'main' employment) is 20%, compared to 58% in Latin America and around 45% in Asian MICs (see also World Bank 2007; Gindling and Newhouse 2012; Sender *et al.* 2005). These aggregate averages however mask stark contrasts between African countries, as shown by Oya (2010, 6, Table 2). Contrasts on rural wage employment incidence are even more obvious. The WDR 2008 (World Bank 2007), for example, displays a table (Table 9.2) where a strong distinction can be drawn between SSA and other developing regions in terms of the proportion of people classified as wage-employed in *rural* areas (World Bank 2007, 205). First, in terms of agricultural wage employment, only 4% of adult men and 1.4% of women are reported to 'mainly' work as *agricultural* wage labourers in rural Africa compared with 22% of men and

Table 1. Employment status – key variables for selected regional samples (latest surveys)

	Wage & salaried workers (employees) (%)		Total self-employed workers (%)		Share of vulnerable employment in total employment (%)	
	Average	*Median*	*Average*	*Median*	*Average*	*Median*
SSA (34 countries)	28	20	70	80	69	79
South Africa (data for 5 years in 2000s)	83	82	17	17	13	13
Asian Middle Income Countries	43	45	57	55	54	53
Latin America (6 countries)	57	58	42	42	37	37

Source: Author calculations from KILM (7th edition).

11.4% in South Asia, respectively, or 21% and 2.3% respectively in Latin America (the table does not allow overlaps so people are classified only with respect to a notional 'main activity'). Second, *non-agricultural rural* wage employment appears also significant in South Asia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), East Asia and Latin America (between 15% and 31% for men, and up to 12% for women), in contrast with SSA, where this type of employment only applies to 9% of men and 3% of women. So, overall, about 13% of men and 4% of women in *rural* SSA are classified as wage earners, compared with around 38% of men and 14% of women in rural Latin America.

As noted above, variations within SSA make aggregate statistics not particularly useful. Winters *et al.* (2008), one of the few recent studies focused on rural wage employment in developing countries, use information from *three* African countries: Ghana, Malawi and Nigeria. While their recorded average in the incidence of rural wage employment is also much lower than other non-African countries in their sample, there is a massive contrast between Ghana and Nigeria, on the one hand, where recorded participation in rural wage employment does not exceed 8%, and Malawi, on the other hand, where this reaches 39%.[3] Part of this contrast can be traced to differences in coverage, since Ghana and Nigeria data would suggest that only 'permanent' wage workers were captured in these surveys.

What are the reasons for this apparent African 'exceptionalism' with regard to rural wage labour and for the big variation within Africa itself? Before we focus on key methodological challenges, which are the main aim of this paper, it is worth briefly addressing the conventional explanations for the lack of recorded evidence of rural wage labour in Africa.

Why is rural wage employment underestimated and misunderstood?

Conventional hypotheses

This section addresses possible explanations of the relative neglect and invisibility of rural wage employment in much of the literature and statistics on most African countries. First, some have argued that Africa is characterised by land abundance or high land/labour ratios and therefore by processes of accumulation without dispossession (Berry 1993). In addition, according to other analyses, in arid-to-semi-arid areas, very low population density, low agricultural labour productivity and abundant land combine to reduce both supply of and demand for farm wage labour (Barrett *et al.* 2005). Indeed, this may explain why a class of 'pure proletarians' has not emerged in rural Africa, especially in arid and semi-arid areas. But this is not the point. As Lenin (1899) showed when writing about capitalist development in Russia, 'pure proletarianisation' was never rapid or an inevitable accompaniment of capitalist development, since most workers still retained some land for long time periods.[4] Available evidence on rural wage workers, as discussed in the final sections of this paper, shows indeed that most of them do have access to some land. Table 2 suggests that although labour/land ratios are lower in Africa than in Asia (see also Karshenas 2001) Africa is not distinct in terms of very low labour/land ratios as reflected by the figures for Latin America, the Middle East (North Africa and parts of Western Asia) and parts of Central Asia, where reported rural wage employment is generally much higher than in Africa. Moreover, population densities also vary within SSA, and the most densely populated countries like Rwanda or Burundi present figures of proportion of wage workers that are as low as 6–19%, of which half being farm workers (years 1996 and 2006) and 5.2% (year 2004) respectively at *national* level (Rizzo 2011, 7, for Rwanda and KILM–ILO for Burundi). Botswana, Namibia and Gabon with some of the lowest population densities, have some of the highest proportions of wage employment in Africa.

Table 2. Agricultural population per hectare of arable land, by region (persons/ha)

	1990–92	1995–97	2003–05
Developing regions	2.6	2.7	2.7
Northern Africa	1.7	1.6	1.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.9	1.9	2.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.8	0.7	0.6
Eastern Asia	6.2	6.1	5.3
Southern Asia	3.0	3.2	3.4
South-Eastern Asia	2.7	2.8	2.6
Western Asia	0.9	0.9	0.9

Source: FAOSTAT.
Note: this refers to population engaged in agriculture.

A second argument is the idea of 'uncaptured peasantry', associated with the resistance of rural people to proletarianisation and capitalism.[5] This contrasts with the historical evidence from a wide range of capitalist economies, which shows that long periods of 'resistance' have been overcome, albeit unevenly and through a variety of factors, from dispossession, to the attractions of industrial and urban employment, to social differentiation driven by market compulsion and so on (Byres 2003). As countries develop and capitalism matures self-employment loses significance as the 'standard employment relationship' of firm-based employment settles (Schaffner 1993; Schultz 1990). This is partly reflected in a strong cross-country negative relationship between the reported incidence of self-employment and levels of income per capita globally and within Africa (Figure 1, and Gindling and Newhouse 2012). It is not the intrinsic capacity of peasants to resist but the overall level and speed of development that tends to correlate strongly

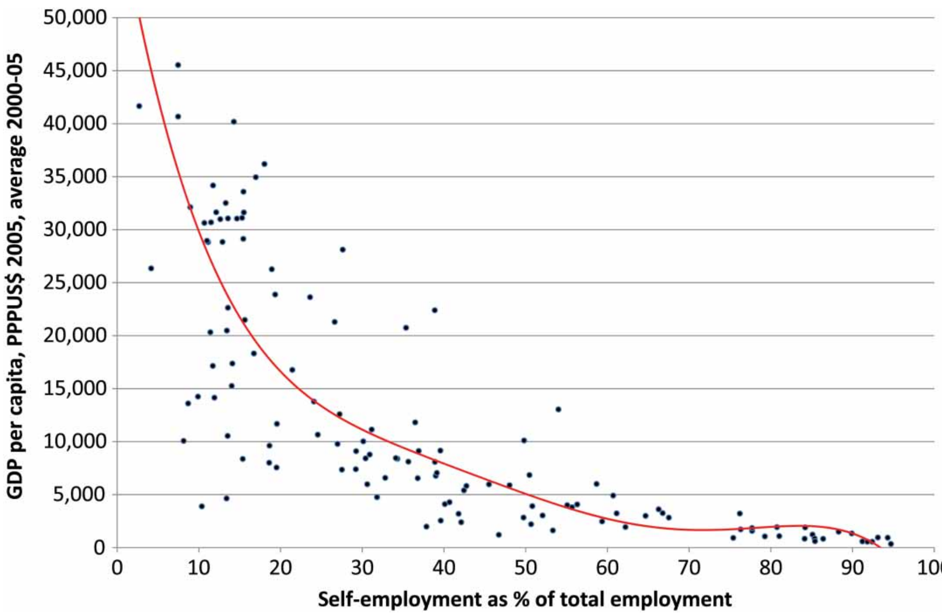

Figure 1. Self-employment and GDP per capita

with changes in employment status. There is some evidence that resistance existed and still exists, but even in the event of 'subjective' resistance (i.e., some people would prefer to be 'independent' producers), this does not necessarily translate into the possibility of total avoidance of market compulsion to work for wages (Bernstein 2010). Failure to resist the economic compulsion to work for wages may therefore be much more frequent than normally assumed, even though many poor rural Africans still cling to farming their tiny plots.

Third, very low wages (too similar to or lower than returns to family labour) could be another reason and, in contexts where poverty is pervasive and potential small-scale employers have little cash to spare, a constraint on wage labour supply. However, there is no convincing empirical evidence about this, partly because it is hard to find studies that systematically and rigorously compare wage rates with net returns to labour in own-account activities, especially farming (Kevane 1994; Sender *et al.* 2005). Research on wage employment cited below shows marked heterogeneity in wage working conditions and that, for many, even low wages are preferable to extremely volatile and low returns to self-employment in marginal small-scale farming (see also Palmer and Sender 2006).

Finally, an argument about the 'lack of employers' is common in surveys that ask overly general questions about rural employment opportunities. First, there is a problem of interpretation, i.e. that respondents frequently associate the idea of 'paid employment' (and inadequate translations of this term, as learned from our qualitative research) with *formal* sector jobs and generally stable job-holdings, while they dismiss the much more pervasive forms of casual wage employment as *not* constituting salaried/wage employment, whether it is for small or large producers. Second, while some of the casual labour performed for middle- and large-scale commercial agriculture may be underestimated despite evidence of the growing significance of these forms of production in Africa (World Bank 2007), large-scale capitalist producers are not the only employers of rural labour, since a wide range of jobs occur among smallholders and small and medium non-agricultural businesses. Therefore, the argument about weak labour demand depends much on what kind of wage labour demand is accounted for and how it is captured.

The weaknesses of conventional labour data collection

While the arguments briefly explored above may partially help us understand instances where the incidence of rural wage employment is *genuinely* low, another more plausible explanation is that, in fact, rural wage employment is poorly captured/measured by existing official data and even some micro-level research is done with inadequate, standardised methods and without sufficient attention to the peculiarities of rural labour markets in developing countries, especially in poor African economies (Cramer *et al.* 2008; Mwamadzingo 2003, 31; White *et al.* 2006). There are different reasons for the paucity and unreliability of data on rural wage employment and rural labour markets, which will be addressed in the following sub-sections. In a nutshell, the poverty of (rural) labour statistics in Africa can be traced to a combination of weaknesses and tendencies that have contributed to obscure existing realities of labour relations, namely, (a) the growing marginalisation and simplification of questions on labour and employment in nationally-representative household surveys in favour of the collection of data on consumption and other welfare indicators; (b) the problems in survey design for labour indicators, notably the inadequacy of some statistical conventions, definitions and survey practices, and the definitions and boundaries of the 'household'.[6]

Shortage of labour force surveys and neglect of labour modules

Efforts to collect systematic, detailed and context-specific labour market statistics are generally rare in sub-Saharan Africa (Backiny-Yetna 2003). The scarcity of in-depth (rural) labour force surveys in Africa is striking, especially in comparison with Latin America and Asia (Sender *et al.* 2005; Mwamadzingo 2003). The frequency of labour force surveys (LFS) in sub-Saharan Africa is very disappointing and some countries have not had an LFS since the 1970s. The situation has not improved despite recently growing emphasis on employment and jobs in international agencies and governments.[7] Labour force surveys, if carefully designed, are the main vehicle to collect reliable and sufficiently disaggregated information on employment, but have fallen off the table of priorities for statistical agencies in Africa, largely reflecting the priorities of international aid agencies that often contribute a very large proportion of budgets in African statistics agencies.

The World Bank plays a big part in this by putting most of its emphasis on income/expenditure surveys, welfare indicators and multiple integrated household surveys since the 1980s. For example, the World Bank has funded many Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS), including Household Income and Consumption Expenditure Survey (HICES), Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaires and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), and provided much of the technical assistance on data collection (see, for an example, Grosh and Glewwe, 2000 and http://go.worldbank.org/IPLXWMCNJ0). The burden of income/expenditure surveys – in themselves extremely skill-demanding and time-consuming while also potentially affected by large measurement errors – and the effects of multiple donor agendas have led the trend towards organising 'integrated' large-scale household surveys in an attempt to save time and money so that more data are collected in a single shot. These surveys have *multiple* aims and scope, and often contain lengthy modules on issues such as health, education, social capital and community development. It is hard to believe that this has not happened at the expense of quality and depth in data collection, especially on employment. It is somewhat striking that the Bank has acknowledged the paucity of data on rural wage employment in the World Development Report 2008 (World Bank 2007) and generally huge gaps in labour statistics (World Bank 2012), without a *mea culpa*. In sum, the dominant poverty and MDG agendas since the 1990s have resulted in funding for employment-focused surveys being dried up, as many statistics agency officials have told us in the course of our research in Mozambique, Mauritania, Zambia and Senegal. Agencies like the ILO simply do not have the financial muscle to fund these efforts in data collection, and perhaps it is not their mandate to do so.

Problems in employment modules and employment-related questions in conventional household surveys

The paucity of labour surveys and data is compounded by the low quality of the data actually collected. One principal reason is that employment modules in conventional household surveys in Africa are generally weak, partly for some of the reasons stated above. The integrated and income/expenditure surveys promoted by the Bank and other donor agencies use employment modules that are small, very standardised and generally not adequate to capture the complexity and specificity of rural labour relations in developing countries. In fact, even surveys following standard ILO guidelines may not be able to capture complex labour relations, which are common in developing countries. As Standing (2006) argues, the 'labour force approach' has dominated the statistical agenda for labour indicators since the 1930s–1940s, when concern over mass unemployment was paramount. The resulting 'trichotomy' of 'employed, unemployed and economically inactive', which suits industrialised labour markets in high-income societies, is problematic for analyses of labour market and employment dynamics in low-income countries where the 'standard employment relationship' is much less well established.[8] The standard dichotomy of self- *vs*. wage-employment is also very problematic. Wuyts (2011, 11) questions the significance and rise of 'self-employment' and argues that 'under conditions of low productivity in the context of the uncertain environment of informality the character of wage labour, and the variety of forms in which it occurs, does not correspond to the conventional or "formal" definition of wage labour'. Furthermore, implemented surveys do not even follow the detailed guidelines produced by the World Bank itself on labour questions (see Grosh and Glewwe 2000, volume 1, 217–250) but focus instead on the details of consumption expenditure. As a result, as. Sender clearly puts it:

> [In] most developing economies no efforts at all are made to collect time-series data on the wages of those employed in small-scale farm and non-farm rural enterprises, especially on the wages of those who are irregularly, seasonally, or casually employed. In most of these economies, in fact, there is no reliable data on the number of people or households that depend upon earnings in these types of employment; it is simply assumed that the rural poor are, or will become self-employed… (Sender 2003, 414)[9]

There are various problems with these inadequate employment modules and statistical conventions. First, and perhaps this is the most important problem, employment modules in large-scale household surveys, and even in more carefully designed labour force surveys, rely too much on problematic notions of the 'main job-holding'. The usefulness of this concept is diminished in contexts of occupation multiplicity, irregularity and strong seasonality, which may lead to respondents' and enumerators' biases. They prevent a mapping of the complete set of economic activities in which individuals engage over an extended period of time (e.g., 12 months) and the relative importance of each of them for their subsistence. This statistical category is particularly misleading in contexts where land is abundant, typically leading either respondents or enumerators to emphasise own-account farming at the expense of other more irregular but perhaps more remunerative activities.[10]

Second, the excessive reliance on standard questions with a seven-day reference period, which in contexts of strong seasonality, irregularity of activities and occupation multiplicity, introduces potentially damaging statistical biases. Asking a poor rural person what he/she has done in the last seven days is not particularly useful, given structural seasonality, occupation multiplicity and job instability.[11] This also biases the responses to questions on 'main occupation' since different occupations have very different time patterns.

Third, very crude questions and distinctions on status in employment (with the main distinction between self-employment versus paid employment) may miss out on a range of economic activities which would be classified as paid employment. This applies especially to those of a casual nature that are particularly prevalent, precisely because of their diversity, irregularity and sometimes ambiguous nature. Despite the efforts by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (that is convened by the ILO) to establish clear distinctions according to the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-93) and, independently from this under the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08), their applicability in rural areas of Africa is not always straightforward. The aim of ISCE-93 is to classify jobs 'with respect to *the type of explicit or implicit contract of employment* of the person with other persons or organisations', and the basic distinction is between paid employment and self-employment (under which employers, own-account workers and contributing family workers fall). ISCO-08, which focuses on the tasks and duties undertaken in the job, does not map occupations directly into status in employment.

However, the practice of many enumerators in large-scale data collection processes is often to assume that certain jobs/occupations 'naturally' belong to a particular status in employment (self-employment or paid employment). I have observed this in rural surveys where enumerators often assume a self-employment status to typically 'informal' occupations (e.g., in trade and transport), without the necessary probing. For example, most jobs listed in Table 3 (in rural Mauritania) were initially considered as 'self-employment' by enumerators almost automatically. Once conscientious probing was done, the proportion of paid employment within some of those categories significantly increased to the levels recorded in Table 3. Therefore, the use of supposedly well-defined standard labour statistical categories sometimes becomes a problem and a source of serious biases. Part of the problem lies in the standardisation itself, and the use of general standard questions across widely different contexts. Partly it lies in the extent to which standard labour categories reflect the labour force approach applied to data collection in the particular context of advanced capitalist countries (Standing 2006). Arguably, the notion of 'self-employment' may carry different meanings in different places unless a detailed explanation is provided in each case. In fact, as cogently argued by Wuyts (2011), many informal workers usually regarded and classified as 'self-employed' simply constitute another form of wage labour that does not conform to standard conventions (see also Breman 2006). Conceptually, they should not be seen as self-employed because they do not own the means of production, their job is highly insecure, and they earn a residual income after the entrepreneur (owner of the means of production) is paid the agreed (rather imposed) profits. This situation is very common in non-farm employment but some may argue that even smallholder contract farming often constitutes another form of 'disguised wage labour' especially for the poorest producers (Clapp 1994). Based on more than 10 years of experience in training enumerators for rural labour surveys, I come to conclude that the distinction between self-employment and wage employment in rural settings remains one of the biggest challenges in rural labour survey designs. Enumerators easily make mistakes and have an inclination to classify many

Table 3. Ambiguities in the classification of occupations and status in employment (rural Mauritania)

Activity	Monthly salaried (%)	Daily or piecework wage labour (%)	Commission or profit share (%)	Own-account with own means of production (%)
Working in palm tree/date cultivation	0	43	14	43
Mason/brick maker	0	100	0	0
Trader/shopkeeper	12	0	10	78
Small itinerant trader	0	0	5	95
Processing agricultural commodities or homemade food for sale	14	9	0	77
Teacher (koranic)	65	35	0	0
Hairdressing	0	0	0	100
Artisan (weaving, dye, tailor, etc.)	0	0	3	97
Fishing	0	14	0	86

Source: Author elaboration from Rural Labour Market Survey in Mauritania. Also GIRM and World Bank (2007).

activities as 'self-employed' without properly probing the central questions of ownership and control over means of production and labour decisions.

Fourth, in many parts of rural Africa there are stigmas associated with casual wage employment, especially the most exploitative and degrading forms, which are thus easily under-reported or unreported altogether. Many of the local words used to describe these occupations indeed reflect the social stigma associated with them. *Kibarua* in Swahili speaking countries (especially Tanzania) is in fact a derogatory term that is used for most forms of casual manual wage labour; it contains reminiscences of slave forms of labour (Mueller 2011, 33). Hill (1968) reported how men in rural Nigeria typically considered wage work for neighbours as a source of shame, as being a sign of desperation. The terms *ganho-ganho* in Mozambique and *ganyu* in Malawi, used for various forms of casual labour, are also intrinsically associated with low social status and despair (Bryceson 2006). In addition, patriarchal barriers to women's entry into local wage employment, particularly for demeaning casual jobs, may lead to important biases in reporting women's participation in rural labour markets (Sender 2003; World Bank 2007, 204). These studies show that qualitative research is very useful in helping researchers reveal and understand some of these biases and stigmas, which are hard to capture in quantitative surveys. Ignoring these stigmas and not acting upon them through careful wording and probing can introduce very substantial biases in the estimation of people in wage employment and in the correlation between poverty and status in employment. Therefore, at best, the officially recorded share of 'employees' (wage employment) is probably a very low boundary for the total number of workers who engage at least occasionally in wage labour.

Fifth, the terminology is also important. Some analytical and statistical categories may be difficult to comprehend by enumerators and respondents, especially when terms like 'salary' or 'wage' are associated with formal sector 'well remunerated' employment such as civil servant jobs, or teacher jobs. This implies that any question that uses these terms is likely to yield biased responses about participation in local wage labour markets. In general, notions of 'employment', 'gainful activity' or 'remunerated activity' are not unproblematic in rural African contexts (Bardasi *et al.* 2010, and for urban areas see Luebker 2008).[12] Many activities may not yield cash income and some forms of wage labour paid in kind (with food) may typically be regarded as a source of 'help', whereas the mention of 'salary' or 'wage' depending on the local terms may be automatically associated with regular stable wage employment. As Hussmanns *et al.* (1990, 256) argue, 'the concept [of employment] is complex and interviewers' or respondents' own subjective understanding of terms like "economic activity" or "work for pay or profit" may differ from what the concept intends to include'. Besides, there are many specific local terms for various forms of wage tasks which change from place to place. If enumerators don't use these locally recognisable terms and instead rely on literal translations, agricultural wage employment may be seriously under-reported.

Rather than just asking respondents if they have been 'employed' during the reference period, it is thus important to operationalise the concept of employment through questions that are easily understood by respondents. For example, in one of the micro-studies referred to in the next section (in Mauritania), the test of alternative methods to estimate labour force participation rates led to disparate results especially for one village. If a question about 'remunerated employment' was used (for people aged over 14), the resulting 'employment-to-population ratios' were very low: around 50% for two villages and only 26% for the most problematic village, precisely the one where *more* economic dynamism had been observed by the team. Instead, when ILO best practice was applied and respondents were asked to report and list *all* the economic activities that brought in some income or that occupied their time on the basis of an activity list ('did you do any of the following?' etc.), employment-to-population ratios increased significantly, in the more problematic village (to 70%) and the others (to 85%), more in line with reported labour force participation rates in rural Africa. The results were then triangulated with in-depth qualitative research to understand relevant concepts of labour participation and respondents' perceptions of the meaning of 'employment'. Qualitative evidence is indeed crucial to help in the design of adequate quantitative labour surveys.

Recent experimental research carried out by the World Bank has provided additional compelling evidence about the sensitivity of labour market statistics, especially labour participation rates and wage employment, to survey design (Bardasi *et al.* 2010; Dillon *et al.* 2012). Thus Bardasi *et al.* (2010), after testing designs with shorter vs longer employment modules, find significant differences across survey designs and conclude that:

> Our findings suggest that both types of survey design decisions have statistically significant effects on labor statistics. These effects are largest on the measure of labor force participation, but also exist for weekly hours of work, daily earnings, main activity, and type of work... Using the short questionnaire lowers female labor force participation and also affects the distribution of workers across sectors, *lowering the share of paid employees among the employed*. (Bardasi *et al.* 2010, 31, emphasis mine)

Defining households and their economic boundaries

Another source of bias derives from the definition of sampling units, i.e., 'households'. In a context of significant personal mobility, the definitions of 'household', its 'residents', and of the economic 'boundaries' of the village or 'community' are problematic. A residential definition of the household,[13] typical of large-scale representative household surveys, may fail to capture very relevant household members who do not reside (or only sporadically) in the main residence but who may be significant contributors to the expenses of the households or dependants from its income sources (Beaman and Dillon 2012). 'Footloose labour' constantly on the move in search of jobs, or workers sleeping in work dormitories (also known as labour camps) and temporary accommodation next to their employers' premises are routinely missed out in conventional household surveys, because of how the primary sampling units and principal respondents are defined and found (Sender *et al.* 2005; Breman 1996; Akresh and Edmonds 2010). Cramer *et al.* (2011, 18) discuss in detail the unreliability of standard sampling frames, lists of households provided by village chiefs and warn about the danger of missing out large groups of people without a fixed residence, who live in temporary accommodation and are highly dependent on casual wage labour, 'leading to a serious underestimate of the degree to which poor rural households depend on income derived from wage employment'. An alternative to this, as articulated in much of the research cited in the following section and especially in Cramer *et al.* (2011), is to rely on fresh censuses of 'residential units' where individuals (related or not) sleep (which would include 'conventional' households too) and collect information on all 'economically-liked' individuals so as not to miss out relevant household roster members who may never or only rarely reside in the observed unit. All this requires the complementary use of qualitative techniques to inform the choice of research sites and the definition of residential units in each specific context.

Empirical illustrations of rural labour markets in Africa

This section presents few key selected themes from a number of micro-level studies in which I was involved, in order to briefly illustrate how alternative survey methods and conventions help us capture the incidence, complexity and various dimensions of rural wage employment.[14] Due to space constraints, findings are selected on analytical and methodological grounds following issues discussed in previous sections. In particular, the findings presented here concern: (a) the nature and incidence of rural wage labour relations in diverse African contexts; (b) the diversity of forms of rural wage employment; (c) the significance of fragmentation and segmentation in rural labour markets in Africa, as well as the effects of migration on segmentation; and (d) the gendered nature of rural labour relations.[15] The studies in question include:[16]

- A very large *rural wage employment* survey of over 2600 wage workers and their households in rural Mozambique in 2002–2003, designed to have an over-representation of female labour (almost half the sample) to capture gender aspects of rural labour market participation and to cover a wide range of farm and non-farm activities in rural areas in three populous provinces of Mozambique (see Cramer *et al.* 2008; Oya and Sender 2009; Sender *et al.* 2006).
- A study done in rural Mauritania in 2004–2005 with the Government of Mauritania to examine in greater depth the nature of village labour markets and rural livelihood diversification. This work was based on three in-depth village studies, representing three of the most distinct agro-ecological and socio-economic contexts in semi-arid Africa (GIRM and World Bank 2007; Oya 2007; Pontara 2010).

A key feature of these studies was their use of mixed methods and their avoidance of the key biases discussed in the previous section. While the focus was on the design and implementation of quantitative sample surveys, in-depth qualitative research was carried out both *before* and *after* running the employment surveys. Careful qualitative scoping research was critical to better design the survey instruments (questionnaires and notebooks) and the sampling process. Then ex-post qualitative research shed light on aspects that could not be captured through the quantitative surveys, particularly on barriers to women's participation in the labour market (Oya and Sender 2009), employment histories, abuses at the workplace and in the household, and various aspects of labour market segmentation.

Absent/thin rural labour markets? The significance of wage labour in rural Africa

A key lesson from years of field research on rural wage employment is that methodologically innovative, context-sensitive surveys of rural employment with a specific focus on rural labour markets and aided by qualitative research manage to capture a variety of forms of rural wage employment – including the most demeaning and oppressive forms – relatively accurately. In the studies listed above, there was direct and indirect evidence of the quantitative and qualitative significance of rural wage employment and rural labour markets in different agro-ecological and socio-economic contexts. The studies were not designed to obtain nationally representative data but sampling was relevant to the research questions and carefully justified according to clear analytical criteria (see Cramer *et al.* 2008 and 2011 for more elaboration); and qualitative evidence corroborated the significance of wage employment and tendencies towards greater reliance on rural labour markets among generally very poor respondents.

So, do rural/village labour markets exist? Is labour hiring common or only a marginal occurrence? Perhaps one of the toughest tests was provided by the study of villages in remote parts of Mauritania where conditions are similar to those usually associated with absent or thin labour markets in the view of Barrett *et al.* (2005) and Binswanger *et al.* (1989). And the test showed that in fact even in such contexts labour hiring is much

Table 4. Wage labour demand and socio-economic status by occupation and employment status (rural Mauritania)

	Socio-economic group	Percentage of sample (%)	Socio-economic status – ratio to *average* asset index	Percentage of households hiring in labour (%)
1	Landlord or prosperous farmer, employer	3	1.86	100
2	Middle peasant farmer (mostly hiring in labour)	12	1.55	92
3	Small peasant farmer (both hire-out and hire-in or no hire at all)	32	0.70	29
4a	Agric wage labourer and some farming, mainly wage employed (poorest)	7	0.68	14
4b	Landless agricultural labourer, only wage employed	5	0.86	0
5a	Trader/transport/artisan, employer (wealthier)	6	1.56	100
5b	Trader/artisan/transport petty, self-employed (poorer)	12	0.82	13
6a	Salaried (non-agriculture), wage employed and employer	5	1.45	48
6b	Non farming, non-agricultural wage employed	6	0.91	50
6c	Farming, self-employed and non agricultural wage employed	12	1.01	48
	'Capitalist' classes (1, 2 and 5a)	21	1.60	98
	'Labouring' classes (3, 4, 5b and 6)	79	0.84	49
	of which, mostly self-employed (3 and 5b)	*44 (of total)*	*0.73*	*25*
	of which, mostly wage-employed (4 and 6)	*35 (of total)*	*0.97*	*35*
	Total	100	1.00	41

Source: Author elaboration from Rural Labour Market Survey in Mauritania. Also Oya and Pontara (2008) and GIRM and World Bank (2007).

Technical note: Total sample of 200 households in three villages representative of three different rural contexts in Mauritania.

more common than expected, a finding that is consistent with previous studies of labour relations in other parts of rural semi-arid Africa (see Kevane 1994, for example; GIRM and World Bank 2007; and Table 4). Moreover, the implication is that labour hiring in rural Africa is not simply limited to rare instances of large-scale commercial plantation agriculture (only one case in the Mauritania study), but rather a fairly common phenomenon in smallholder farming and across different socio-economic groups engaged in a variety of activities, as Table 4 shows. As a result, the diversity of forms of wage employment in rural areas is striking (Cramer *et al.* 2008; Oya 2007).

Data on participation in rural labour markets in the Mauritanian and Mozambican studies (both through questions on hire-in and hire-out) therefore suggested that official statistics on rural wage employment underestimate its extent for many of the reasons explored in the sections above (GIRM and World Bank 2007; Pontara 2010; Cramer *et al.* 2008; O'Laughlin 2002; Wuyts 2011).

Diversity in rural wage employment, segmentation and power

Quite apart from the quantitative significance of rural wage labour, especially for some of the poorest segments of rural Africans, exploring the observed heterogeneity of rural labour markets and wage employment patterns across and within countries was a central aspect of these studies. Despite the generally irregular and poorly remunerated nature of most rural wage jobs, wage workers in rural Africa undergo a wide range of experiences and situations, so, for example, a clear-cut relationship between poverty and participation in rural labour markets cannot be easily established (see also Winters *et al.* 2008 and Table 4 in this article). One reason is the very fact that a 'pure' landless proletariat only dependent on wages is hard to find. Most rural people hold a variety of jobs, including own-account farming, though a majority of wage earners are more dependent on food purchased in the market than on own production. Relative dependence on wages is thus consistent with a range of self-employment activities. These activities are always common especially in contexts of strong seasonality, risk and where jobs are usually available on an irregular basis. For very poor wage-earning workers self-employment is often 'residual' and a reflection of remnants of resistance to proletarianisation and the unpredictability of employment.

Another important reason and indeed a stylised fact emerging from the studies mentioned above is the high degree of *labour market segmentation*, manifested in the diversity of rural and village labour markets in Africa and variation in working conditions. The studies covered very different regions, from arid to semi-arid to sub-tropical, spanning a wide range of crops (groundnuts, cereals, tea, cotton, tobacco, horticulture, etc.) and activities (farming, trade, artisanal crafts, transport, domestic service, construction, etc.). Evidently some of the differences found in working conditions and wages have much to do with the specific activity, task and crop involved. In other words, sector/activity segmentation is an important feature of rural labour markets. In agriculture, significant differences in wages and working conditions (including forms of payment) between crops and by task, were observed particularly in Mozambique, but also in Mauritania, where labour-intensive crops, especially in horticulture, normally commanded higher wages for equivalent tasks than staple cereals. Reasons for these crop-specific features could be the type of employer involved in each crop and the significant differences in productivity across crops, locations and among employers, which result in differential ability to pay higher wages.

Of course, segmentation along activities and tasks partly emerged because of a range of barriers to entry into these different activities, often defined in terms of skills and 'aptitude' (as in the frequently mentioned superiority of women in doing 'careful' work like tea plucking), but frequently also socially and culturally determined, especially for what regards specialisation along gender lines. Barriers to entry and skill specificities also correlated with class 'locations' (of the kind proposed in Table 4), in the sense that the poorest rural wage workers were often restricted to a narrower range of low-skill, very poorly paid and casual manual occupations. In fact, domestic workers, casual (especially female widowed) agricultural workers, and petty vendors working for other traders were among the poorest workers in our samples in Mozambique and also in Mauritania.

The studies also highlighted the importance of *employers' discretion* and *power relations* at the workplace as correlates of varying working conditions. For similar occupations and tasks, the Mozambique survey found significant differences in payment methods and wage rates across employers. Strikingly, some of this evidence pointed at discretion used by a single employer to discriminate among his own workers (see Table 9 in Cramer *et al.* 2008), but, overall, a pattern emerged whereby smaller, resource-poorer employers (e.g., small-scale farmers and small traders) would offer worse working conditions in comparison with larger-scale, more technologically dynamic and productive employers (usually large plantations, sometimes foreign-owned, featuring greater crop specialisation and strong links with global markets).[17] Therefore, a scale bias operates in rural labour markets, and especially agricultural wage workers seem better off in larger-scale, more organised faming units (Cramer *et al.* 2008; Sender *et al.* 2006). This is far from surprising since the levels of productivity of these farms are often superior to smaller-scale counterparts so they can afford to pay higher wages. They are not inherently 'nicer' to their workers. Moreover, larger-scale, especially foreign-owned, agribusinesses are much more exposed to monitoring and inspection by local authorities, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and different advocacy groups with an interest in labour conditions and globalisation. They have more to lose if working conditions in their business are intolerable. In contrast, smaller-scale farmer–employers often fall out of the radar of agencies and institutions that monitor conditions of wage employment. In fact, the assumption that small farmers only use family labour often precludes any serious consideration of what is happening to their casual workers.

The studies described in this section were not limited to workers with *similar* characteristics (i.e., very poor, low-skilled and performing manual agricultural tasks), but surveyed a range of occupations and jobs, which allowed to consider a wide continuum of working conditions – from very bad to relatively good (or 'decent') jobs – in rural areas. At the heart of this continuum of heterogeneity is the extent to which rural jobs are more determined by either pull (incentives) or push (distress) factors. Not all rural jobs are examples or manifestations of 'trickle-down' in a simple virtuous sense. Nor are all coping mechanisms of last resort. In all the studies the poorest workers, who normally also corresponded to the poorest quintiles in the national household representative surveys in terms of simple asset or other welfare indices (see Sender *et al.* 2006; Cramer *et al.* 2008), generally depended on casual wages in jobs performed for local neighbours, either in farming or personal services. Many of these jobs were objectively and subjectively (i.e., in workers' perceptions) purely 'distress' activities. They were seen as 'last resort' and partly contributing to growing local inequalities and acceleration of differentiation (see also Bryceson, 2006, on similar occupations in Malawi). Some of the worst jobs could also be found in non-agricultural occupations. Reardon (1997) finds that for a range of micro-studies, non-farm incomes can be five times higher than farm wage incomes, but fails to offer more detailed disaggregation *within* non-farm occupations. Cramer *et al.* (2008), in contrast with Reardon's (1997) findings that on average non-agricultural jobs are much better paid than agricultural employment, generally disaggregate non-agricultural jobs and find examples in the rural non-farm economy that are reserved to the poorest segments of the rural population, with a strong gender and age bias (i.e., mostly girls and sometimes young boys). These include domestic workers, hairdressing apprentices, market porters, street vendors, fare collectors and so on.

At the other end of the continuum, some of the better agricultural and non-agricultural jobs could be seen as mechanisms of livelihood improvement and ultimately escape from poverty. This is particularly the case for some women wage workers in Mozambique (see below). Workers, particularly women, with access to better jobs were indeed also more 'empowered' and confident in joining collective action (strikes) and unions wherever these were present (Sender *et al.* 2006). Sometimes the availability of better job opportunities in their local area meant an opportunity to delink from highly exploitative relations with other local employers who hitherto effectively exerted their monopsonistic power to impose very bad working conditions.[18] Overall, however, much of the research undertaken in these countries showed the weakness of collective action and organisation for poor rural wage workers, both in terms of the lack of presence of unions and the weakness of government institutions dealing with the monitoring of labour law implementation (e.g., the General Inspectorate of Labour in Mozambique).

More generally, access to 'better' jobs in agriculture and non-agriculture (on longer contracts, with higher wage rates and generally more non-wage benefits) was mildly correlated with supply-side characteristics, such as education levels and skills acquired through previous employment experience (see Cramer *et al.* 2008, especially Tables 12–14). However, the fact of being in an area characterised by more dynamic agriculture, more investment and tighter labour markets made a crucial difference. In other words, favourable individual and household characteristics are not enough. *Labour demand* is a key factor, which underscores the critical importance of incentives to create nodes of accumulation to increase labour demand especially for better jobs that may be accessible to poorer workers (Oya and Sender 2009). In any case, even the scope for improving the quality of 'good' rural jobs in Mozambique was significant. In fact, median wage rates for 'better' jobs in Mozambique were still *below* the national statutory minimum wage and most of these jobs were of an irregular or seasonal nature.[19] Very few rural wage workers were employed on a permanent basis and most, therefore, were not protected by existing labour legislation, as employers often manipulated the length of contracts to avoid applying labour laws (this included many of the foreign large-scale employers). In sum, the heterogeneity of rural wage jobs reflects context-specific patterns of employer–worker relationships, and result in a continuum between distress and livelihood improvements, which can be best captured with a lot of fine-tuning in survey design and judicious use of qualitative evidence.

Rural labour market fragmentation and migration

As noted above, an important form of segmentation is *location*, which is also due to the uneven distribution of wage labour demand in agriculture and non-farm activities. The literature on rural labour markets suggests that the village is indeed a relevant unit of analysis, i.e., that rural labour markets are fragmented by village, because high transaction and mobility costs, exacerbated by poor transport infrastructure, impede a smooth articulation of rural labour markets and constrain labour flows (Mduma and Wobst 2005; Kevane 1994; Rao 1988). This feature is likely to be more common in poorer rural areas than those where agricultural commercialisation and modernisation have proceeded more rapidly. Our research in Mauritania offered some evidence in support to this hypothesis. Wages and working conditions varied, especially *between* villages – wage rates acting as local 'norms' regardless of relative labour abundance or shortages or how competitive rural labour markets may seem at first glance, as reported in many contexts worldwide (Turnham 1993).[20] These local village-specific 'norms' often applied to the poorest segments of the wage-earning classes, indicating collusive behaviour among the few, more powerful, village employers who offered some occasional employment on their farms, houses and petty businesses. The compliance with these 'norms', especially in rural Mauritania, also reflected the entrenched personalised power relations at village level, where these payments were often portrayed by their employers as 'help' or even as alms, part of their duties towards the local poor, in a typical manifestation of employers' paternalistic practices and discourses, and often not far from forms of labour bondage.

However, in more dynamic contexts, especially where linkages with markets were stronger and where 'outside' investors, national or transnational, appear, there can be a breakdown of local wage 'norms'. This was observed in rural Mozambique in 2003, where the typical wage rate paid by local farmers to casual workers for various agricultural tasks (MZM 10,000 per day – US$ 0.43) was below that offered by newcomers (around MZM 21,000 or US$ 0.90, i.e., more than double the conventional local rate), more preoccupied with attracting sufficient workers than with respecting local wage 'norms'.

The presence of *migrant labour* also contributes to segmentation by creating fractions of working classes paid and treated differently despite not being very different in terms of skills, experience and productivity. Migrant labour is often used by agricultural employers as a tool to depress wages and create different classes of workers, thereby undermining collective action (Breman 1996; Standing 2006).[21] This can happen for a wide range of employers, including large-scale agribusiness, as the history of sugar plantations in Mozambique shows (O'Laughlin 2002; Head 1980). The fast development of tobacco farming in Central Mozambique also owed much to inward-migration, this time of both employers and former farm workers from Zimbabwe (Hammar 2010), with the irony, as it was found in our research, that many of the latter were actually Mozambican return migrants, having previously moved to Zimbabwe during the Mozambican civil war.

In Mauritania, the effects of migration on rural labour markets were nonetheless contradictory. Whereas in one of the villages, close to the border with Senegal, it was usually reported that migrant workers from Senegal worked for lower wages and depressed wages below local 'norms', especially in rice production and horticulture, in the oasis-farming environment of another very different village, daily wages increased with the seasonal wave of migrants coming to work on date harvesting (GIRM and World Bank 2007). Most of these migrants were coming from other regions and sometimes from towns, so their reservation wages were higher than those of local, very poor workers. Their skills and the importance of timing in these operations meant that local employers would compete for migrant labour and offer higher rates or better conditions (e.g., better meals and accommodation in what is normally a very hostile environment, especially during the *Guetna* season, devoted to date harvesting). In addition, the Mauritanian study also gave evidence of a virtuous circle of causation between out-migration and employment creation, which in turn fuelled the use of migrant labour in agriculture, particularly in areas with access to irrigation and more labour intensive crops. Thus remittances from urban-based relatives were often used to expand agricultural operations, irrigate fields and therefore increase the demand for labour, which, interestingly, often originated from different villages or even across the border from Senegal.[22] In sum, migration does contribute to rural labour markets segmentation, albeit in a somewhat contradictory variety of ways, depending on local circumstances, relative labour shortages, local power relations and the scale of migrant labour.

Gendered rural labour markets

Perhaps more straightforward is the segmentation produced by gender relations and the nature of women's participation in rural labour markets. The research in Mozambique (see Oya and Sender 2009) paid particular attention to rural women wage workers. A striking, but perhaps not surprising finding was that a large purposive sample of rural wage workers (especially agricultural workers) found that a very high proportion (around 40%) of women workers were divorced/separated or widowed, i.e., living in de facto female-headed or female-dominated households. This finding is consistent with research in other parts of the world (see Dreze and Srinivasan 1988; Kabeer 1997) and previous research in Tanzania (Sender and Smith 1990). The interpretations of such findings relate to the dichotomy distress vs. emancipation mentioned above and point to the complexity of gender relations, patriarchy and labour market participation in developing countries. In the research carried out in Mozambique, it was clear that patriarchy and paternalistic control were significant determinants of women labour supply in rural labour markets. This happened in two ways. First, husbands and fathers were preventing women from engaging in any form of wage labour outside the household in an imposed form of resistance to 'proletarianisation'. Second, they prevent access to particular types of jobs, especially in large-scale workplaces where contact with many other men was particularly feared. In other words, women's labour market participation and access to particular jobs were constrained and shaped by patriarchal power and by the bargaining of women within existing 'patriarchal bargains' (see Kandiyoti 1988).

Reproductive stories, and especially childlessness or lack of sons, could also be determinants of relationship break-up and consequent women's engagement in wage employment to survive. However, one should avoid excessive determinism about these relations as a variety of patterns was observed that could defy generalisations. In a similar vein, despite the fact that women workers were generally discriminated against in terms of the type of job and working conditions in comparison with men after controlling for education and age, it is also true that the sample of women wage workers was quite heterogeneous and reflected the extent to which women in rural Mozambique were not necessarily locked into low-quality highly exploitative agricultural jobs (Oya and Sender 2009). As noted above, the particular location patterns of rural wage labour demand determined the opportunities available and provided options for women to emancipate through access to more regular and better paid wage jobs. This underscores the importance of macroeconomic and sector policies to boost demand for unskilled (female) rural labour.[23]

Conclusions

This article has explored the gap in knowledge and statistical evidence about rural wage employment in Africa. It has been argued that evidence on rural wage employment is extremely scarce, fragmented and of dubious quality for most of sub-Saharan Africa. The article has presented some arguments and hypotheses as to why this is the case and suggested ways of overcoming the methodological challenges of collecting data on rural labour markets, based on extensive field research experience in several African countries. The last section presented illustrative evidence of the kinds of findings and themes that arise from carefully designed and context-sensitive rural labour surveys based on mixed methods, but primarily on quantitative sample surveys. These themes and data are critical for an understanding of the political economy of poverty, accumulation and employment in rural Africa. Understanding rural poverty and agrarian change requires an understanding of labour dynamics, the complexity of which can only be captured with serious attention to the quality of survey design, in terms of sampling procedures, definitions, coverage and questionnaire design. The research experiences described in this article demonstrate that the use of qualitative research to improve quantitative data collection in this field is essential. Lessons from the micro-studies briefly presented here and many other attempts to capture the complexity of rural labour market dynamics should be taken seriously by statistics agencies and funding bodies. The World Bank's own work with survey experiments (e.g., Bardasi *et al.* 2010; Dillon *et al.* 2012; Beaman and Dillon 2012) is a good step in this regard. In fact, more survey experiments are needed to help improve labour market statistics in developing countries and adapt conventional categories to the needs and constraints faced in those contexts. A challenge is whether ideological fetters will continue to obstruct a pro-poor statistical agenda that centres on labour. The myth of self-employment and independent agricultural producers is so generalised and entrenched among academics, practitioners and aid officials (Wuyts 2011) that it is hard to envisage a dramatic change in focus. In an era still dominated by a mixture of market neo-liberalism and pro-peasant neo-populism, the place of rural wage labour in African studies and statistical agendas remains in doubt. Nevertheless, political economists interested in rural and agrarian dynamics in Africa are urged to contribute to boost the hitherto marginal(ised) work on employment and rural labour relations.

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Notes

1. The conventional wisdom is being increasingly qualified, nuanced or even questioned by mainstream empirical work and institutional reports. For example, see Barrett *et al.* (2005), Reardon (1997) and Jayne *et al.* (2003) on the heterogeneity of rural Africa and the smallholding population, and the significance of off-farm or non-agricultural sources of income. The influential World Bank's 2008 World Development Report (World Bank 2007) contains a chapter devoted to stress the significance of rural labour markets and acknowledges that '[as] agriculture intensifies and diversifies, and economies develop, well-functioning rural labor markets and migration are crucial in reducing rural poverty and dampening rural–urban income disparities. But stunningly little policy attention has been given to the structure, conduct, and performance of rural labor markets' (World Bank 2007, 202, 204, 221).
2. As an example of studies making claims concerning the absence of rural labour markets, see Binswanger *et al.* (1989).
3. Their definition does not refer to 'main occupation' only. Rather, they define wage labour participation in terms of individuals having responded to 'questions in wage employment modules of the corresponding survey' (Winters *et al.* 2008, 5). It is striking that the authors do not comment on this marked difference and barely consider issues of data quality and definitions across these African countries.
4. Sender and Smith (1986) also make this important point in relation to the development of capitalism in Africa.
5. See Hyden (2006, 138–160). For criticisms of this position see classics like Kautsky (1988) and Kitching (1989), Wuyts (1978), Sender and Smith (1990) and more recent field-based work in Tanzania like Mueller (2011).
6. Due to space limitations not all methodological challenges are discussed. For example, an obvious problem in the study of rural labour markets is the definition of 'rural' itself, especially in cases of substantial mobility and variation in conventions across countries (see Winters *et al.* 2008).
7. The WDR 2013 (World Bank 2012, 379), which focuses on employment, includes a list of micro-data sources for all countries on labour statistics. Labour force surveys were the main source for only three SSA countries, Tanzania, South Africa and Mauritius, whereas for the rest of African countries labour statistics were either non-existent or extracted from LSMS-type surveys.
8. The recent WDR 2013 (World Bank 2012) acknowledges that statistical efforts centred on indicators like unemployment are not very productive in countries where this indicator is not so relevant.
9. This view is echoed by few international agencies in documents like FAO *et al.* (2005, 21).
10. LFS and some HICES and MICS include questions on 'secondary' job holding, but virtually all headline statistics refer to the 'main' job. While it is best practice to use a detailed activity list to determine whether somebody was employed and the nature of each job, this is not systematically applied or analysed (M. Luebker, ILO, personal communication, 11 May 2010).
11. Increasingly, questions referring to 30 days and 12 months are being used, in an effort to reduce the biases imposed by the seven-day question. For example, countries like India routinely

collect information on both current (short reference period) and usual (12-month) employment situation (for labour participation and status in employment). In Africa, countries like Tanzania also collect both the current and usual labour force status (though only every five years or so) but most other countries continue to rely on the standard weekly status.

12. For example, in Harare, almost one half of those considered employed by ILO definition thought of themselves as unemployed (Luebker 2008).
13. Typically, a residential definition of the household includes members who have eaten and slept in the house at the time of interviewing or at least for six months or 'regularly' (depending on the survey, but the first definition is quite common) (Akresh and Edmonds 2010). Another problem with this definition is that 'domestic helpers' who are in fact cheap domestic workers (paid in kind – accommodation and food – and sometimes partly with a very low cash wage) may be considered as members of the household/family, obscuring the labour relation involved in their permanent presence.
14. Some of the findings are already published (see Cramer *et al.* 2008; Oya and Sender 2009) and some are in the form of working papers or work in progress (Oya 2007).
15. There are other important themes like the place of generation and life cycles in accounts of rural labour market participation, which, while important in the available literature, are left out of this paper due to space constraints and insufficient relevant evidence from the case studies reviewed. See Chayanov (1986) for a classic exposition of developmental–family cycles and the peasant household and Johnston (1997) for a very useful critical discussion in the context of Lesotho.
16. Multiple methods were used in all these studies, in a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to various research questions. Therefore, quantitative sample surveys, based on relatively detailed and long questionnaires, key informant semi-structured interviews, focus groups, life histories and direct observation were all applied in the three studies mentioned.
17. Maertens *et al.* (2011) also find evidence of these contrasts between smallholder employers and larger agribusiness in Senegal.
18. On relevant conceptual issues here see Rao (1988) and for a very good illustration of these processes in Latin America see Selwyn (2012).
19. The median agricultural wage per month for 'better' jobs was Meticais (MZM) 450,000, approximately US$19 (monthly), below the national minimum wage for agriculture then set at MZM560,000 per month (in 2002/2003), approximately US$24 at the ongoing exchange rate at the time of the survey.
20. This is in contrast with evidence in other parts of rural Africa of competitive rural labour markets where wage rates vary responding to seasonal variations in labour demand and supply as well as to differences in labour productivity by gender or age (see Byerlee *et al.* 1977; Kevane 1994).
21. There is a rich literature on these migration–rural labour market linkages in South Africa. See, for example, Rutherford and Addison (2007) for the case of Zimbabwean farm workers in Limpopo province, and Sender and Johnston (1996) on Mozambican workers in Mpumalanga.
22. There is also evidence of this phenomenon in other countries, such as Mali (de Haan *et al.* 2002) and Ghana (Austin 2005).
23. Generally rural labour markets and local employment dynamics cannot be analyzed in isolation of economy-wide processes (Bharadwaj 1989).

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Informalisation and the end of trade unionism as we knew it? Dissenting remarks from a Tanzanian case study

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This paper analyses the political organisation by informal transport workers, and their partial achievements in claiming rights at work from employers in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city, from 1995 to the present. The paper takes issue with the influential view that, due to widespread economic informalisation, trade unionism and workplace labourism are no longer a viable option for defending workers' interests. From less despondent approaches to the possibilities for labour(ism), it borrows the insight that making sense of workers' unrest requires a political economy approach. This entails, first and foremost, locating workers within their economic structure, and understanding their relationship to capital. The paper thus starts by sketching out the state of public transport in Dar es Salaam, the predominant employment relationship in the sector, and the balance of power between bus owners and workers. It then analyses workers' organisation since 1997, workers' strategies to achieve (in conjunction with the Tanzania transport workers union) the formalisation of the employment relationship with bus owners, and their progress towards it. The conclusion reflects on the broader lessons that can be learned from this case study.

Keywords: trade unions; informal economy; labour rights; urban transport; urban governance; Tanzania

[Informalisation et fin du syndicalisme traditionnel? Réflexions dissidentes à partir d'une étude de cas en Tanzanie.] Cet article analyse l'organisation politique des travailleurs informels du secteur des transports, et les résultats de leurs revendications pour faire valoir leurs droits fondamentaux au travail auprès des employeurs à Dar es Salaam, première ville de Tanzanie, de 1995 à maintenant. L'article conteste l'opinion influente selon laquelle, en raison de la généralisation du travail informel économique, le syndicalisme et le *labourism* ou « travaillisme » sur le poste de travail ne sont plus une option viable pour défendre les intérêts des travailleurs. À partir d'approches moins pessimistes sur le potentiel du « travail(lisme) », l'article suit l'idée selon laquelle la compréhension des conflits sociaux nécessite une approche en terme d'économie politique. Ceci implique, avant toute chose, de placer les travailleurs au sein de leur structure économique, et comprendre leur relation au capital. L'article commence donc par esquisser l'état du transport public à Dar es Salaam, les relations d'emploi prédominantes dans le secteur, et le partage du pouvoir entre les propriétaires des bus et les travailleurs. L'article analyse ensuite l'organisation des travailleurs depuis 1997, les stratégies des travailleurs pour arriver (en conjonction avec le syndicat des travailleurs du transport de Tanzanie) à la formalisation des relations d'emploi avec les propriétaires des bus, et les progrès accomplis. La conclusion se penche sur les leçons plus larges pouvant être tirées de cette étude de cas.

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Mots-clés : syndicats ; économie informelle ; droits du travail ; transport urbain ; gouvernance urbaine ; Tanzanie

Introduction

This paper analyses the political organisation by informal passenger transport workers in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city. It focuses on the modalities, goals and outcomes of workers' mobilisation, in partnership with the Tanzanian transport union, since 1995. The general interest of this case study, and the wider debates to which it aims to contribute, is twofold. It stems from (a) *the actors* who are its protagonists, namely African workers in the informal economy in partnership with a trade union; and (b) *the goals* which workers' political mobilisation can (or cannot) achieve in increasingly liberalised and informalised economies.

Starting with the latter, the pervasive informalisation of work since the 1970s, a phenomenon which occurred across the world but more intensely in developing countries, has hit trade unionism hard. Trade unions have seen their membership shrink, and by and large have been unable to reach substantial numbers of informal workers, prompting a debate on whether globalisation signals the end of trade unionism. As the majority of workers today operate in the informal economy, central to this debate is the role trade unions might play in organising informal workers, quite apart from embracing broader goals.

A view now widely held argues that, due to increasingly informal employment relationships that do not conform to any direct employer–employee relationship, workplace labourism is no longer viable. Take, for instance, Standing's (2011) highly influential voice in the study of labour under globalisation. He is a leading advocate of the need to 're-embed the economy in society', arguing that although 'In principle trade unions could be reformed to represent precariat interest', in practice they cannot reasonably be expected to play any central role in this process. In his words, 'Trade unions lobby and struggle for more jobs and a larger share of output; they want the economic pie to be bigger. They are necessarily adversarial and economistic' (*Ibid*., 168). As 'who or what was the enemy' (*Ibid*., 2) is no longer clear, trade unions are deemed to be institutions whose role has been made redundant by the informalisation of employment.

Others, while less pessimistic about the relevance of unions to workers in the informal economy, share a negative view on the place that rights at work might play in their future agenda. Gallin (2001, 536), for example, suggests that 'only by organising the informal sector can the trade union movement maintain the critical mass in terms of membership, and representatively it needs to be a credible social and political force'. However, as for the goals around which organising will take place, Gallin concurs with Standing in suggesting that workplace claims and the formalisation of precarious forms of employment cannot be the bread and butter of unions. The observation that the 'direct employee/employer relationship' has given way to 'more diffuse and indirect relationships' – including self-employment, paid work in informal enterprises and casual work without fixed employers, often in combination – leads Gallin to conclude that 'trade union organising can no longer focus primarily on the employment relationship' (*Ibid*., 537). What is at stake instead is 'not formalising the informal but protecting the unprotected' (*Ibid*., 537).

These contributions capture well the current trends that have been disadvantageous to traditional labour organisation in developed and developing countries alike. However, the increasing pervasiveness of unclear and informal employment relationships should not lead to the presumption that new forms of organisation cannot emerge and cannot be successful at challenging the status quo at work. Such a dismissive stance sits at odds with, and fails to explain, the *ongoing* occurrence and diversity of labour unrest across the world. In this light, a broader goal of this paper is to contribute to the debate on the possible goals for organised labour by analysing one instance of workers' mobilisation, and partial success, in formalising their employment relationship. To do so, the paper draws on three analytical insights from existing work on the patterns of ongoing labour unrest and on the sources of workers' power.

The first insight is from Silver (2003), who has mapped labour unrest on a global scale from 1870 to 1996, its *geographical* shift with 'the relocation of production *within* industries', and its shift across sectors *over time*, to argue that the impact of globalisation and of its distinctive restructuring of production and of labour relations 'is less unidirectional than normally thought' (Silver 2003, 6). While labour pessimists have well understood the way in which the ease of mobility of capital has translated into new types of vulnerability for workers (such as the loss of jobs due to capital reinvestment in more labour-friendly countries and/or workers' reduced bargaining power due to the capitalists' threats of relocating their investment), they have failed to appreciate how it has also generated new types of capital's vulnerability to labour resistance. Making sense of *ongoing* labour unrest, of why and where it takes place, and how it has changed over the years, requires a political economy approach to the labour relations which mediate workers' participation in the economy and of the balance of power between those who own capital and those who work for it, no matter how indirect the relationship between the two appears to be. This provides a powerful insight into labour unrest that this paper will apply to the context of Dar es Salaam's bus transport workers.

A second viewpoint central to this paper's narrative is Wright's widely adopted (Kabeer *et al.* 2013; Selwyn 2007; Silver 2003) conceptualisation of the sources of workers' power. According to Wright, workers' power can be schematised as deriving from two possible sources. First is the *structural* power that (some) workers command. This derives from workers' specific 'location... within the economic system'. Following this argument some economies, and some industries within them, have more potential to generate labour unrest than others.[1] Whether workers take advantage of their structural power rests in turn on their second source of power, which is *associational*. This derives from the political organisation of workers along trade union lines or other institutional forms. Drawing on such a conceptualisation, this paper will identify the sources of power that bus transport workers in Dar es Salaam command.

The third insight that this paper will deploy is that there is no straightforward correlation 'between workers' bargaining power and the actual use by workers of that power... to struggle for better working and living conditions' (Silver 2003, 15). Whether the socioeconomic position occupied by workers translates into political consciousness and a shared identity, depends on a number of complex factors (see Bernstein 2010, 115–117 for a synthesis). Most notably, workers do not automatically experience (and make sense of) exploitation 'self-evidently or exclusively' along class lines, either in an unmediated or direct fashion. Active efforts (by outsider activists or by workers themselves) at constructing a shared notion of injustice and exploitation, play an important role in successful instances of workers' political mobilisation.

Exploring the complexities of constructing common ground between trade unions and the 'informals' is the main strength of much recent work on the politics of organising informal labour in Africa, the further general theme to which this case study aims to contribute. The study of efforts to realise this common ground, both successful and unsuccessful, has stressed the importance of a contextualised understanding of practical activity to this end, focusing on the agendas of both informal workers and trade unions and their relationship to the state. It has cautioned against generalising 'about the possibilities or impossibilities for alliances on the basis of structural differences or innate affinities' (Lindell 2010, 19–22, 22 for the quotation).

Empirical studies of organising efforts in the informal economy have been at their most insightful when attention to the political behaviour of 'informals' has been rooted in an understanding of the structural position occupied by them in a given economy (Meagher 2010; Andrae and Beckmann 2010; Boampong 2010). Other studies on the politics of informality in contrast suffer from a political economy blindness (Brown and Lyons 2010; Jason 2008; Jimu 2010). Fundamental questions such as how an economic activity is organised, who owns what in it, and its social relations of production, go either totally unaddressed or are skirted around. As the location of the informal workers within the broader economic system, and their potential material interests, are not spelled out in this work, its contribution to understanding the political behaviour by informal actors is limited. By contrast, this paper investigates the way in which a common ground between a group of informal workers and a trade union was built by firmly locating workers' political actions within their economic structures and against the challenges that these structures pose to workers' agency.

The paper is part of a broader study on the political economy of passenger public transport in Dar es Salaam from 1983 (the year in which the public sector monopoly over urban transport formally ended) to the present.[2] Work on the earlier period focused on the factors that prevented workers from making demands on employers or on the state (Rizzo 2011). The establishment, in the late 1990s, of an association of transport workers in Dar es Salaam and its efforts to claim labour rights in the mid 2000s, marked a shift in the political attitude of workers. In response to these events, later rounds of fieldwork in 2009 and 2011, on which this paper is based, explored the reasons behind workers' more assertive attitude towards the state and employers.

A variety of sources inform this paper. The Tanzania Communication and Transport Workers Union (COTWUT) kindly allowed the author to consult its files on Dar es Salaam passenger transport workers. The correspondence between the transport workers' association (UWAMADAR) and COTWUT provides first-hand and unusual insights into the process of how two distinct institutions developed an understanding of one another and how they went about 'building' the interests of Dar es Salaam transport workers and making demands to promote them. The correspondence between UWAMADAR and COTWUT (hereafter the Coalition) and the bus owners' association provides glimpses into how the workers and bus owners related to one other over time. Newspaper articles on the subject were used as sources of further background information on the activities of the Coalition and their relationship with employers and the state. Interviews with workers, leaders from the transport trade union and the workers' association, employers as well as relevant state officers, were carried out to probe and expand the key findings emerging from newspapers and archival files on transport workers in Dar es Salaam.[3]

The paper is divided into five sections. The following section sketches the nature of public transport in Dar es Salaam, and the employment relationships predominant in the sector. Its main focus is the balance of power between bus owners and employers, the sources of workers' power and the reasons for workers' political quiescence up until the mid 1990s. The next section analyses the political organisation by workers since 1995, its goals and the strategy that workers developed in conjunction with the Tanzania transport workers union. Particular attention is paid both to the process through which the union and the association constructed a shared meaning of 'the *daladala* worker', and to the division of labour between the two parties. The paper then goes on to document the Coalition's partial achievement of its main goal: the establishment of rights at work through the formalisation of the employment relationship between bus owners and workers. It analyses how the Coalition changed its strategy by responding to the challenges raised in negotiating and implementing a workers' contract within a previously informal labour market. The conclusion summarises the main arguments of the paper and reflects on how they relate to the broad themes to which it aims to contribute.

The context: Dar es Salaam, public transport and its employment relationship

In order to analyse the strategy of bus transport workers in Dar es Salaam to claim labour rights, it is necessary to understand the context in which they operated and the sources of power and vulnerability that workers derived from it. Dar es Salaam is today a city with approximately three million people and a virtually defunct public sector transport company.[4] In the region of 10,000 privately owned minibuses, also known as *daladala*, provide the cheapest means of motorised public transport to its population. Kin or own-account employment, so central to mainstream conceptualisations of economic informality (de Soto 1989), are the exception to the rule in this sector. The operations of *daladala* are characterised by a clear division between a class of bus owners and a class of transport workers. Over 9 out 10 of these workers, the total number of which is estimated to be between 20,000 and 30,000, earn a living by selling their labour power to bus owners.

The ownership of buses is not significantly concentrated. A variety of sources, including surveys and discussion with workers, consistently suggest that the 'average' bus owner owns one or two buses. Owners are organised through the Dar es Salaam Commuter Bus Owners Association (DARCOBOA).

Workers lack a precise employment relationship with employers. They are casual workers operating buses that they do not own. To some degree, they are neither waged nor piece-workers. Bus owners demand a daily rent (*hesabu* in Swahili) from workers for operating the bus. The daily return for workers will consist of whatever remains after the daily rent to bus owners, and petrol costs, have been deducted from gross income. Should the lack of a direct employment link between workers and employers lead us to understand these workers as self-employed micro-entrepreneurs, as is widely held? Not really, because as Wuyts points out, commenting on these very workers, 'they are entrepreneurs only in the sense that they have become managers of two sets of risks under adverse conditions of extreme competition: the daily insecurity that results from an uncertain income, on the one hand, and the ever-present chance of job loss, on the other' (Wuyts 2011, 12). In other words, the modalities of remuneration by employers transfer business risks onto the workforce. At the beginning of each working day, the profit for bus owners is known, the return for the workforce, if any, is uncertain.

Daladala workers have low *marketplace* power. The existence of an oversupply of unskilled job seekers significantly tilts the balance of power between bus owners and bus workers in the former's favour. The daily rent expected for a day of work is imposed by owners on workers and is not negotiable. Meagre returns, harsh working conditions (the average working day lasts 15 hours and the working week more than 6.5 days), and occupational uncertainty (as work on a given bus lasts less than eight months on average) are the familiar litany of exploitation that transport workers in Dar es Salaam share with workers at the lower end of the informal economy (Meagher 1995). Financially squeezed by bus owners, workers' compulsion to speed, to overload the buses and to deny boarding to passengers entitled to social fares can all be explained as actions aimed at maximising return from work on a given day. The infamous unruly conduct of *daladala* workers thus has its roots in the lack of regulation of labour relations in the sector. To make matters worse for workers, economic exploitation goes hand-in-hand with, and is fuelled by, a discourse of criminalisation of the workforce by the state and by bus owners. Such a discourse frames the main cause of *daladala* workers' 'unruly' behaviour as their greed and bad manners, rather than their struggle to make ends meet.

While these workers command low *marketplace* power, the urban public transport sector in which they work confers on them, at least potentially, *workplace power* (the other sub-type of *structural* power). Silver noted that 'transportation workers have had, and continue to have, a strategic position within the world capitalist economy and within the labour movement' (Silver 2003, xv). Such an empirical finding is explained not so much by the 'direct impact of their actions on (often public) employers' but rather by the 'upstream/downstream impact of the failure to deliver goods, services, and people to their destination' (*Ibid*., 100). Such insight arguably applies to the Dar es Salaam case. As private buses have long constituted the only means of (barely affordable) motorised public transport available to the public, unrest by its workforce would seriously affect the mobility of the vast majority of Dar es Salaam's population. However, their inability to take advantage of their *structural* power was caused by their lack of *associational* power. This was evident in the absence, up until 1997, of an institution representing workers in urban transport policy-making. The oversupply of workers, the fragmentation amongst different types of transport workers sub-categories (with different roles and stakes at 'work'), and their spatial dispersion across thousands of atomised units of labour (buses) were in turn barriers inhibiting workers' political organisation.

During fieldwork in 2001–2002, it could be observed that, while falling short of making demands on employers or on the state, workers' behaviour did show signs of collective consciousness. The initiative, by some groups of workers clustered around some routes and/or stations across the city, of establishing informal associations shows awareness of their common plight. Through these associations, workers generated collective savings which were spent to provide members with an informal source of social wage and welfare protection. Important as such initiatives were in helping workers to *manage* the effects of precarious employment, they did not aim to *challenge* its causes.

Since the late 1990s, however, the political landscape of passengers transport in Dar es Salaam experienced a change with the establishment of a transport workers' organisation. At least formally, the very presence of an institution, founded by transport workers for transport workers, reversed the political asymmetry that had characterised urban transport policy making until then. The analysis now investigates the events that led to its foundation, the goals that it set itself, the strategy to achieve them, and the extent to which it succeeded.

From political quiescence to political organisation: early days

A handful of drivers and conductors, who would later become the first leaders of the *daladala* workers' association, first began to think of establishing an organisation to defend their interests in 1995, but 'had no idea where to start'.[5] As such, the plan lay dormant until the summer of 1997, when a group of *daladala* workers organised a meeting to that purpose. The 42 drivers and conductors in attendance agreed to investigate the steps involved in establishing an association. The most significant finding was that, according to Tanzanian law, trade unions rather than associations have the right to represent workers vis-à-vis employers or the government. In response to this, the workers' delegation visited the Dar es Salaam branch of COTWUT. Their visit ultimately resulted in the Union Dar es

Salaam Secretary agreeing to return the visit to a larger group of members of the would-be association.

Heavy on formal protocol, the first visit of the Union City Secretary was nonetheless notable for the way in which both parties made substantial efforts, from the outset, to build common ground. Such efforts initially centred on achieving a shared understanding of the occupational problems faced by *daladala* workers and on identifying a strategy to address them. The welcoming speech by one of the *daladala* workers, having emphatically stated his ' joy for meeting [the union] today as we did not expect to have an institution that listens to our cries',[6] introduced the unionists to the reality of working on *daladalas*. He did so by illustrating some of the main problems faced by its workers: the possibility of being killed by students 'hungry for school', in retaliation against workers' refusal to ferry them at the discounted rate that the government had set but not funded; the lack of sympathy for workers by the general public, whose expectation that ill people and pregnant women should travel for free overlooked the financial implications of this for the workforce. The speaker also emphasised how the lack of *associational power* was at the root of workers' plight when he added that 'all these problems came from not having anyone to protect us and by not knowing where to take our complaints'.[6] Now that the group had potentially found an institutional partner to voice workers' grievances, it put forward the key goals towards which they wanted to work:

(1) To lead us to claim rights from rich people. [We want] employment like in other sectors. If a worker is fired, his employer should look after him.
(2) To oversee owners and protect us from them legally, so that the government can benefit from the existence of formal employment.[6]

A labourist goal was thus put forward by workers from the outset. The first meeting ended with the workers' request to meet the union's General Secretary to take the agenda forward. The Union City Secretary, in forwarding their request to his superior, strongly endorsed it. As he put it, 'you will remember that for a long time we have been trying to find a way to get these workers involved in our union but it was very difficult to get them'.[7] *Daladala* workers in Dar es Salaam constituted a highly visible constituency, counting between 20,000 and 30,000 potential members. The request for a partnership with their prospective association was thus met with interest by COTWUT.

Such interest in turn reflected the new landscape in which Tanzanian unions found themselves, following political liberalisation in the mid 1990s. A key force in the anti-colonial struggle in the 1950s, the Tanzanian trade union movement became heavily controlled by the one party state shortly after independence (1961). In Shivji's words, the way in which TANU reorganised trade unions was 'contrary to virtually every principle of voluntary organization of workers or trade unions' (Shivji 1986, 233) and this fundamentally curtailed the autonomy of unions from the party and their capacity to represent workers' interests. The control of the ruling party over organised labour eased 'as a side effect of multiparty democracy' (Fisher 2011, 128). New legislation, first in 1998 and then in 2004, went some way to cutting the umbilical cord between the ruling party and unions. Most notably, membership in unions became voluntary and unions' budgets were no longer part of the ruling party budget. Instead they now depended on their capacity to secure membership fees.

Such formal changes have resulted in a contradictory scenario. On the one hand, the detachment of unions from the ruling party is widely perceived as far from complete; on the other hand, there is an increased occurrence of strikes, negotiations, go-slows and use of workers' votes as part of new 'repertoires' of unions in Tanzania following political liberalisation (*Ibid.*, 141). Within this context, a new element of trade union activities is their increased attention to the 'informals', albeit with limited success in reaching them at national level and with important differences in the degree of interest in informal workers across unions. Amongst them, COTWUT appears to be at the forefront of the struggle to engage with informal workers. It has attempted to organise lorry and taxi workers, in addition to *daladala* workers, to whom the analysis now returns.[8]

The meeting between the union General Secretary and *daladala* workers marked the beginning of the partnership between COTWUT and the association of *daladala* workers. It was also another step forward in refining the strategy to fight the cause of the association's members. The two parties agreed that priority should initially be given to meeting the legal requirements for the workers' association to exist. This was no small task, especially in light of the fact that in Tanzania the government Registrar of Societies 'possesses excessive powers' (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions 2006, 3). Furthermore, *daladala* workers had no legal expertise. It thus fell on COTWUT to support the would-be association in navigating the Tanzanian legal system. Almost single-handedly, the union drafted the constitution of the association so that it could comply with the regulations of the Registrar. This process took nearly three years. As the association's chairman recalled, gratefully, 'the draft constitution was sent back with requests for revisions nine times, COTWUT did not lose hope and took care of these revisions'.[9] The association was formally registered on 7 April 2000. According to its constitution, and reflecting the mutual interest in each other, UWAMADAR was an association in itself but also a branch of COTWUT.

The registration of the workers' association laid the legal foundations on which the transport labour coalition rested. Shortly after, the two institutions intensified their efforts to 'construct' further a shared understanding of the coalition's objectives, and of their respective roles in achieving them. The correspondence between the two, whose members were very different by education and working conditions, provides some insightful glimpses into this process. Along these lines, in June 2000 the union's Dar es Salaam Secretary warned his General Secretary, ahead of his meeting with UWAMADAR members, that the people with whom he was going to meet 'are not used to leaders of the workforce [i.e., trade unions]'.[10] The union was not used to *daladalamen* either, and needed educating about the reality of being a casual worker within the Dar es Salaam passenger transport system. A meeting, called for that purpose, still left the Union's General Secretary unclear about the working environment of *daladala* workers. He therefore asked UWAMADAR to put in writing the issues mentioned at the meeting. Two weeks later he received a letter, from UWAMADAR's General Secretary, entitled, 'The problems that drivers and conductors get at work'. He was bringing to his attention 'some of the problems faced by drivers and conductors'. The synopsis that he gave is worth quoting extensively, for it allows an unusual glimpse into one instance of constructing a shared meaning of workers' exploitation.

> First of all, a bus driver in town wakes up as early as 3 am to go and get the bus wherever it slept, as many buses sleep at the owners' place.[11] After this he will start work which will end between 10 and 12 pm. Many things usually happen to him, such as to be attacked by thieves, and escaping that, there is no escaping from being stopped by Traffic Police at least three times a day. But the owner does not want to know all these things. He only cares that his daily sum (*hesabu*) does not decrease. There are days in which it rains a lot, and there is no business. But the owner does not want to know this; if he gets a flat tyre, the owner does not want to know the hours that he struggled to fix the tyre.
>
> The daily sum that owners demand, for example for a DCM bus, is 45,000 to 40,000 shillings...

> Think about a DCM bus operating from Gongo la Mboto to Kivukoni [one of the longest routes in Dar es Salaam]. It consumes 80 litres of diesel per day. At 506 shillings per litre this makes 40,800 shillings per day. Now driver and conductors, if they pay for breakfast, it is 1,000 shillings per day, if they eat lunch, it is 1,000 shillings. If you add this up you will see what is left for workers to divide from the day. 40,000 (owner) + 40,800 (diesel) + 2,000 (food)= 82,800. The money you can get from a DCM is between 80,000 and, for a very good day, 85,000. Will there be a shortage of mess on the streets if you bear in mind that these people have no salary? . . .
>
> Imagine that at times owners even tell you that work uniforms, you need to buy them yourself . . .
>
> Given these circumstances will the driver avoid creating a mess in the streets? Will he avoid refusing to ferry students? Will he avoid shortening the route so that he can get many trips to earn enough money?[12]

The letter went on to list the costs incurred by bus owners, to conclude that:

> Taking into account all the expenses, taxes and maintenance, there is still a need for owners to establish a salary for workers, drivers and conductors. . .
>
> It is hard to explain thing after thing but these are the conditions . . .
>
> In light of the above we ask COTWUT to sympathize with the workers so that it can help us so that owners give out salaries for workers. I hope that you will appreciate the importance of the problem and work on it.[12]

The reference in the letter to the struggle to 'explain thing after thing' emphasises the centrality that getting to know each other played in the early days of the coalition. Two further aspects – its wealth of detail on the economics of passenger transport in Dar es Salaam and the repeated (and rhetorical) question on workers' incapacity to avoid 'creating a mess' – provide clues of the Coalition's division of labour and strategy to promote transport workers' rights. The union was intended to support the cause of *daladala* workers 'from above'. This entailed drawing on its technical expertise in labour law and on its political connections. The details of *daladala* operations and costs were presented in response to a precise request by the Union. It foresaw that their lobbying efforts with key state officers for employment contracts would be objected to on the grounds that the business of passenger transport was not profitable enough, and hence contracts were not affordable for employers. Thus, similarly to other instances of organising efforts by informal workers (Narayan and Chikarmame 2013), information – such as details quantifying the economic reality faced by *daladalamen* and the uneven distribution of the wealth created in transport – was used to support the Coalition's demands for a fairer redistribution. As for the letter's reference to workers' economic compulsion to 'create a mess', this formed part of a broader strategy in response to the discourse criminalising transport workers. It emphasised that the financial pressures faced by transport workers lay behind their 'misbehaviour', and subsequently argued that a less chaotic and more secure transport system necessitated a more secure and better remunerated workforce (see Barrett 2003 for a similar strategy in the context of South Africa). Thus, in exploiting the public nature of the service provided by transport workers, the strategy was to frame their interests as part of a wider societal 'common good'. Trade unions do not therefore necessarily frame their demand for rights at work in narrow and economistic terms. The nature of the economic sector in which their members operate clearly affects their discursive options.

In order to be politically credible such lobbying 'from above' had to go hand in hand with the adhesion of workers to the cause – and to COTWUT and UWAMADAR as the institutions promoting it – 'from below'. As noted by Fisher (2011, 140) with reference to Tanzania, trade unionists face the 'fundamental question of how union power is backed up. You may have the authority to speak on behalf of your members or to represent labour matters in general, but is there a supporting majority behind you, the official asks' (Fisher 2011, 140; see also Adu-Amankwah *et al.* 1999). Reaching a critical mass of members amongst *daladala* workers was UWAMADAR's responsibility within the coalition. It was a goal in and of itself but also an essential prerequisite for any Union's lobbying 'from above'.

This left the ball in UWAMADAR's court. However, reaching *daladala* workers amounted to an enormous challenge, common to organising efforts by 'vulnerable groups' (Lindell 2010, 9), that had to be delivered within serious financial constraints. '[There was] no money to promote the issue in newspapers, or for organizing attractive events to promote the issue. [The only way was] talking to drivers and conductors, one by one, "You have been doing this job for many years. Tomorrow, the day after tomorrow how will it look like?"' (Author interview, 2009a.) So there was an element of sensitising workers to the importance of employment contracts, and of trying to break the short-term time horizon of *daladala* workers' attitude to work that was both an effect and a cause of workers' occupational precariousness (Wood 2003). The albeit small financial support by the Union, to hold events at which UWAMADAR could advertise its agenda, is worth noting here, as it suggests that the Union was prepared to invest some of its funds to promote the organisation of informal workers. This helped, in a small but significant way, to partly address UWAMADAR's lack of funds and the lack of visibility that came with it.[13]

Having gained legal status, and some resources to act, the focus turned to UWAMADAR's recruitment strategy. Ending the unregulated nature of the employment relationship in the sector, which from the outset was the ultimate goal of the organising drive, could not be reasonably achieved in the short term. As with other instances of organising vulnerable (women) workers in the informal economy, shorter-term 'forms of practical support which had more immediate and visible returns' (Kabeer *et al.* 2013) were often essential to attract/retain members who were daily pressed by their precariousness. However, this was not without risks as promising short-term support measures beyond capacity to deliver has the potential to undermine the credibility of any organisation. Different institutions have responded in different ways to this dilemma. The choice of explicitly avoiding promises of financial and other benefits is not unheard of (Barrett 2003 on transport workers in South Africa). However, the choice by workers' organisations to provide services to their members is more common (Bonner and Spooner 2011; von Holdt and Webster 2008; Workers' Education Association of Zambia 2006).

A letter entitled 'The way to run UWAMADAR', circulated in March 2001 to its prospective local leaders, both to recruit them and to guide their efforts to bring more workers on board, documents the strategy adopted by this workers' association. UWAMADAR leaders did not shy away from ambitious promises. In return for a small fee, UWAMADAR pledged the following package to its members: support of a lawyer's services for work-related legal cases; to pay for the cost of the renewal of driving licences and to cover the cost of members' funerals, as well as health care expenditure for members and their families. Last, but not least, the letter stated that 'the employment issue is a very important one', and promised efforts to end the lack of regulation of employment in the industry.[14]

In making sense of UWAMADAR's strategy, another important element to consider is who was to promote its agenda at street level. The association opted for transport workers themselves. It identified its leaders at individual stations/routes, and it educated them about the association's broad mission and more discrete goals. It was then the branch leaders' task to recruit more members. Such a strategy provided workers with some leadership over the recruitment drive. Evidence suggests this approach raises the chances of success in organising informal sector workers (Gallin 2001; Bonner and Spooner 2011; Barrett 2003).

The strategy adopted by UWAMADAR was a risky one, especially because the limited resources of the organisation could not reasonably finance the provision of the range of promised services. Unsurprisingly, as learned during fieldwork in 2009, there are people who consider UWAMADAR as 'cunning thieves' or 'useless' (author interview, 2009b). However, UWAMADAR's remarkable success in recruiting members suggests that its strategy paid dividends with a significant number of workers. In 2003, UWAMADAR had 5236 members, approximately 44% of the total (estimated) workforce (UWAMADAR, Konrad Stiftung, DDI 2003, 23).[15] With the legitimacy 'from below' that such membership conferred on the Coalition, the time was right to begin lobbying for employment contracts for *daladala* workers.

Labour rights through collective bargaining

As argued earlier, the unclear nature of the employer–employee relationship in the informal economy, and the frequent presence of many (uneasily identified) intermediaries amongst them, is central to the argument that demand-making by organised workers around labourist goals belongs to the past. As the employer–employee relationship is not obvious, the argument goes, collective bargaining over working terms and conditions, the main weapon traditionally deployed by organised workers to confront employers, is no longer a realistic option (Gallin 2001; Standing 2011; Devenish and Skinner 2004). While this argument accurately describes the main *challenge* faced by workers, it fails to explain why such a challenge cannot be overcome in some instances, as well as why labour unrest around labourist goals still occurs.

In the case of passenger transport in Dar es Salaam, the workers' goal was to spell out the employment relationship between bus owners and workers. It has been argued, in a study of the same sector in urban South Africa, that the existence of an organisation of bus owners helps the process of collective bargaining with employers (Barret 2003, x). The Coalition's primary counterpart was DARCOBOA, the association of bus owners/employers, and it was with them that the transport labour Coalition aimed to negotiate a collective agreement. As such, a way to force employers to the negotiating table had to be found.

To understand the strategy adopted by the Coalition, it is worth recalling the 'structural power' commanded by *daladala* workers in a city in which privately owned buses constitute the only means of (barely affordable) motorised public transport available to the public. A strike would seriously affect the mobility of the vast majority of Dar es Salaam commuters with immediate knock-on effects on virtually every economic activity in the city, and beyond. At the same time, this 'structural power' had limits. The possibility of a strike was constrained in a context of oversupply of unskilled labourers (low *marketplace power*) since workers on strike without contracts could be easily victimised by employers and lose their job. Therefore, the Coalition had to rely on a less confrontational form of pressure on employers in order to encourage the state involvement and mediation between the two parties, just as has proven crucial in other contexts (Barrett 2003; von Holdt and Webster 2008; Kabeer *et al.* 2013). Time and again, rumours, occasionally reported in the press (*Nipashe*, 9 June 2008; *The Citizen*, 7 December 2009; *Tanzania Daima*, 29 March 2010; *Habari Leo*, 6 April 2011), would spread about a forthcoming strike by *daladala* workers. The Coalition would promptly deny any involvement with it – or were unavailable for comment – and yet on the day of the strike buses on *some* routes, or some buses on several routes, would be withdrawn from transport service provision for part of the day, causing disruption to passengers who would in turn complain to public authorities. Workers also resorted to violence, using stones to attack the buses of those workers who did not adhere to the protest (*The Citizen*, 10 December 2009). In the words of COTWUT General Secretary, 'workers were stopping work when they wanted to complain about something. And the government mediated, called a meeting with DARCOBOA, UWAMADAR, COTWUT, to solve the problem' (author interview, 2011).

As Silver has pointed out, there is much to be understood by studying 'anonymous or hidden forms of struggle… where strikes are illegal and open confrontation difficult or impossible' (Silver 2003, 35). In this instance, wild-cat strikes and localised walk-outs were an effective strategy in that they exploited the structural power commanded by workers. On the one hand, they were insufficiently confrontational to trigger retaliation by employers; on the other hand, they were assertive enough to establish the demands of workers on the political landscape and to attract the attention of Dar es Salaam transport policy-makers. Public officials' desire to deal with transport workers' unrest with haste, led to their gentle but firm pressure on DARCOBOA to negotiate a solution to their grievances with the Coalition.

Forced to sit at the negotiating table, the *daladala* owners' association reacted ambiguously to the issue of contracts. As its chairman wrote to UWAMADAR, 'DARCOBOA has no employees. Drivers and conductors are employed by private owners of individual buses'. The guidance that the association prepared was thus to be seen as no more than 'advice to owners, who will decide themselves, not DARCOBOA'.[16] At the same time, DARCOBOA also played an active role in the process of collective bargaining, and succeeded in including in the contracts elements that rendered its adoption difficult (see below). On one occasion DARCOBOA's chairman even falsely claimed that owners were 'the ones who proposed this [i.e., employment contracts] to the government as a way of reducing accidents' (*The Guardian*, 5 August 2009).[17]

For all the bus owners' delaying tactics, the negotiation over workers' employment contracts proceeded slowly but surely. A collective agreement became legally binding on 26 March 2004, following the seal of approval by the Tanzania Labour Court. As Mr Semvua, the Union Deputy General Secretary, recalls, the collective agreement:

> … had three things, big ones. It spelled out the employer–employee relationship which was not there until then. That contract mentions that the driver and conductors of such a bus are such and such and makes them employees. It established a wage level and the working hours per day. It established the right to holiday for employees. (Author interview, 2009c)

The contract legally brought to an end the unregulated nature of the employment relationship in the Dar es Salaam passenger transport sector that was central to bus owners' squeeze on workers. Seven years after the first meeting between *daladala* workers and the Union, the Coalition had therefore scored a significant achievement in advancing the cause for which it was set up.

Barriers to the enforcement of employment contracts

As is often the case, *daladala* workers' entitlement to labour rights *de jure* did not smoothly translate into their enforcement. The reasons why the vast majority of workers did not enjoy employment contracts de facto were hotly contested by the political actors involved in bringing them about. The relationship between UWAMADAR and the Union turned tense over the matter, with the City Secretary of the Union blaming UWAMADAR for its failure 'to organise its members'. As he put it, 'The power of the Union is in the hands of its members. It is now up to the members to organize and start demanding the contracts'. He further added that the bus owners 'have deliberately been neglecting the legal contract, knowing that the drivers are not sufficiently organized to take actions'.[18]

UWAMADAR, on the other hand, stressed that the characteristics of the workforce and of the labour market were a major obstacle to the mobilisation of *daladala* workers to claim their right to contracts. First, from the initiative of the association of bus owners, the collective agreement established specific skills as prerequisite for drivers and conductors to qualify for a contract. These included, for drivers, possession of class C driving licences. Given the low level of education of the vast majority of *daladala* workers, and the fact that many amongst the workforce held class B licences, such conditions proved to be a spanner in the works for the Coalition (*HabariLeo*, 30 June 2007). If this was not enough, then the extremely rapid turnover of labour, a structural characteristic of the *daladala* labour market, also negatively impacted on the workers' association's capacity to reach out to members. As its chairman put it, 'You find a good branch leader, but before you know it work has taken him to another route. End of the story' (author interview, 2009a).

While the lack of education of the workforce and its occupational fluidity were the proximate causes of the slow enforcement of contracts, above all, as UWAMADAR reflected, 'the problem with contracts is that the government did not get involved'. While the role of the government in steering the process of collective bargaining between employers and workers had been fundamental, the contract had no built-in mechanism to ensure that the state oversaw its enforcement. From the ashes of their bitter exchanges in the press, the union and UWAMADAR found new common ground in concluding that the widespread adoption of contracts required stronger support from the state.

Labour rights: bringing the state back in

This is not to say that the Coalition had overlooked the central role to be played by the state. Given DARCOBOA's uncooperative attitude throughout the negotiations, only three days after the collective agreement had been approved, the Union General Secretary, in writing to the Chairman of the Dar es Salaam Transport Licensing Authority (DRTLA), underlined that the DRTLA [was] relied upon 'as a very important connection' in making this happen.[19]

But once a collective agreement on contracts was legally signed, a more focused effort at strengthening its relations with the state apparatus became the main activity of the Coalition. The choice of who was invited as the guest of honour at UWAMADAR's annual meeting illustrates this shift in strategy. Up till 2004 the invitation went to the General Secretary of the Union, reflecting UWAMADAR's primarily inward-looking focus on consolidating its alliance with its trade union partner. In 2004, for the first time, and subsequently, the invitation was extended to state officers. The first 'outsider' to be invited as guest of honour to celebrate the anniversary of UWAMADAR foundation was Lieutenant Makamba, at that time Regional Commissioner of Dar es Salaam.[20] Such moves were not just symbolic. It was to Makamba that the Union leader wrote four months later, to complain that DARCOBOA did not attempt to influence their members to issue contracts for their workers, and that even DARCOBOA leaders did not issue contracts for the workforce of their own buses. The Union City Secretary also informed the

Regional Commissioner that a strike was becoming unavoidable. To avoid this, he called on the local government, 'the one who steers us all in this region',[21] to organise a meeting with DARCOBOA, UWAMADAR and the Transport Licensing Authority to discuss the issue further. Guests of honour were therefore also key ports of call for the Coalition and, as such, the choice of who they were was strategic.

Over time, the Coalition broadened its goals. It did so by forging alliances with other groups with whom it shared strategic interests. Three instances of organised workers' increased ambition illustrate this. First, joining hands with the Tanzania Drivers Association, the Coalition held meetings to publicise the 'problems faced by *daladala* drivers'.[22] A new goal was to challenge the ambiguity of the law and its negative implications on the workforce (see also Barrett 2003, on a similar effort by South African transport workers). The party took issue with drivers being held exclusively responsible for violations of road safety rules, whereas it argued that there were 'violations which are obviously the responsibility of the owner. For example, the bad condition of the vehicle; not owning a transport licence; not having insurance; not having a vehicle inspection report'. It asked that 'the Road Traffic Act would be modified to openly distinguish the violations for which owners or drivers are responsible'.[22] Second, the pressure on the issue of employment contracts continued, but it now included a vision on changes required in the private sector to ease the enforcement of workers' employment rights. The coalition thus urged the government to ensure that passenger transport was 'provided by companies instead of individual owners. This will make it easier to adopt contracts'.[22] In response to the adoption of doctored contracts, it called the Ministry of Work, Employment and Development to prepare a blueprint of employment contract. Third, it pushed for a stronger intermediary role by the state, and demanded that the newly-established Sea and Maritime Transport Regulating Authority (SUMATRA) make the depositing of workers' contracts a condition of issuing bus owners with a passenger transport licence[22] (see also *HabariLeo*, 30 June 2007).

The attitude of public authorities to these demands was rarely one of cooperation at the outset. For instance, the state's initial response to workers' requests to address the ambiguity of the law amounted to a firm rebuttal couched in techno-legalist terms. The Permanent Secretary claimed that 'although these faults apparently are the sin of the owner, the driver is the temporary owner when he operates a vehicle. Furthermore the law prevents the driver from operating a vehicle when it is not roadworthy or without important documents'.[22] Such words suggest that the key state officers had no appreciation of the way in which the 'temporary ownership' of vehicles by drivers reflected employers' strategy to transfer the uncertainty of returns from work onto the workforce. The concession that 'fear of losing their job' forced workers 'to drive the vehicle according to the preferences of the owner and against the law', shows that although there was some awareness about the uneven balance of power between workers and bus owners, it did not translate into any commitment by the state to meet workers' demands.

The state's position often softened over time, due to continual pressure by workers.[23] It was in response to another threat of strike, in 2010, that the Minister of Transport declared that the sins of drivers, conductors and poor quality of the vehicle would carry 'their own weight' (*DarLeo*, 3 December 2010). There was now a commitment to accept workers' previous requests to make the law less disadvantageous to workers. Similarly, in 2009, workers' call for a stronger intermediary role for the state in enforcing contracts was met and registering contracts for workers, inclusive of workers' photos and signatures, became one of the requirements for the issuing of passenger licences. This was no small victory. As the Union General Secretary put it, 'at least workers now had a place to start.

Unlike the first collective agreement between owners and workers, the issue of contracts is now a role of SUMATRA, a government office, under the Ministry of Transport' (author interview, 2009c).

At the same time, leaders of UWAMADAR and of the Union were under no illusion that making the enforcement of contracts a reality would be a straightforward process. As the COTWUT Deputy General Secretary put it, 'the biggest challenge in implementing the rule is the fact that *daladala* owners are accustomed to exploit workers without contract, so they will try everything they can to avoid this change' (*ibid*.). Expected tactics by employers to avoid the regulation of labour relations included enclosing with the contract the photo of a person who is not the actual driver, or the wrong signature. But even taking these likely strategies by employers into account, the Union leader emphasised the significance of the further marginal gains made by the Coalition. As Semvua put it, bus owners' room for manoeuvre in avoiding labour regulations was progressively shrinking: 'the day that an owner gets into an argument with his driver, and is asked to produce the contract, he will be in trouble' (*ibid*.).

Conclusion

This paper has analysed the political organisation by *daladala* workers since the late 1990s, its alliance with the transport trade union and how it evolved over time. It has outlined the goals that the Coalition set for itself, the strategy to achieve them and the slow but incremental advances against them in the period 1997–2010. The events analysed in this paper are context-specific. They are also open-ended as they reflect the outcome of a political battle between different groups with conflicting interests over labour rights for Dar es Salaam transport workers. While these characteristics do not make the case study replicable, a number of general considerations can be derived around *the actors* involved, African workers in the informal economy in partnership with a trade union, and *the goals* which workers' political mobilisation can (or cannot) achieve in increasingly liberalised and informalised economies.

What can be learned on the relationship between trade unions and workers in the informal economy from this instance of a partly successful partnership between the two? The first insight is about process: realising 'associational power' by workers entailed a slow effort at constructing a common ground between informal workers and their union counterpart. The complex nature of this process partly explains the very slow pace at which change took place and underlines the need to allow adequate time frames when studying the politics of informality (Kabeer *et al.* 2013). The paper also shows the importance of informal workers' leadership to the success of their political organisation. While the union provided its political connections and know-how to support lobbying on behalf of transport workers, workers themselves were the initial trigger to form the Coalition, its key outreach workers, and the leading partner to set the Coalition's goals.

Furthermore, the Transport Union's attitude towards minibus workers and their association sits uneasily with the characterisation of unions' attitudes towards organising informal actors as ineluctably uninterested or opportunistic. In this case, notwithstanding some tension between the two organisations, the Union was prepared to invest resources and energy in supporting the organisation of precarious workers, the success of which was of significant importance to both the Union and workers themselves. The contrast between this relatively positive story and less positive instances suggests the need to move away from overgeneralisations, towards nuanced and contextualised approaches to the study of trade unions and their relationship to economic informality and precarious workers within it.

The second general insight that can be derived from this case study on the politics of organising in the informal economy is methodological, as the paper shows the pay-offs of political economy as an analytical approach. Far too often studies on economic informality skirt around the questions of who owns what, and with what outcomes, in the informal economy. By contrast, this paper demonstrates that understanding the way in which the workers are linked to (capitalist) employers, locating workers within their economic contexts, and mapping the sources of both their precariousness and power, is essential in making sense of why and how workers mobilise politically.

The last general insight to be learned from this case study stems from the fact that its findings sit uneasily with, and raise questions about, the widely held belief that collective action by organised (or organising) labour along labourist goals belongs to the past, and that social protection is a more realistic and strategic target in tackling workers' precariousness.[24] The workers on whom this paper has focused shared the lack of a clear employment relationship to their employers: the main characteristic that is argued to cause the impossibility of workers' mobilisation for a 'rights at work' agenda in the informal economy. This was indeed the main source of workers' precariousness at work, but also the very stimulus and goal of their mobilisation. Drawing on the work of Wright and Silver, this paper has argued that Dar es Salaam minibus' workers, when challenging the unclear nature of employment relations in the sector, drew on the significant 'structural power' which they commanded by virtue of working in a transport system in which they provided labour to the cheapest form of available public transport. While the circumstances and context in which these workers' mobilisation took place are necessarily specific, that such workers could command a degree of structural power stresses the importance of disaggregating the realm of possible for different groups of workers in different economic sectors and countries and, above all, of putting ongoing labour struggles at the centre of the reflection on the possibilities for action by precarious workers.

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Note on contributor

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Notes

1. Two further sub-types of *structural power* are to be considered. By *marketplace bargaining* power Wright means the power that workers command due to conditions in the labour market across economic industries. A tight labour market will lead to workers' high *marketplace power*. The second subtype, the *workplace bargaining* power, results (or not) from the specific industrial location of workers, e.g., minibus workers operating in Dar es Salaam, horticulture estate workers in Brazil, etc.

2. This will be published as a forthcoming monograph entitled *Taken for a ride: Neoliberalism, informal labour and public transport in an African metropolis*. Oxford: Blackwell Wiley, Antipode Book Series.
3. The author shared a draft of this paper with UWAMADAR's leaders, who provided useful comments and corrected some of its inaccuracies. The author also plans to deliver a paper copy of this article to COTWUT as email communication with its deputy secretary proved impossible.
4. UDA, Dar es Salaam public transport company, was operating about 20 buses in 2010. Unless otherwise stated, this section draws on Rizzo (2011, 1183–1200).
5. The history of the relationship between UWAMADAR and COTWUT is recalled in 'UWAMADAR speech before COTWUT General Secretary', 9 November 2000. Titles and contents of the Swahili documents quoted in this paper have been translated by the author.
6. 'Temeke, Tandika, Mbagala, shule ya uhuru branch', handwritten speech, signed by Mlawa and Kayombo (both UWAMADAR's leaders later on) 13 July 1997.
7. Dar es Salaam Zonal Secretary, COTWUT to General Secretary COTWUT, 'The establishment of the *daladala* workers organization', 8 September 1997.
8. It should also be pointed out that efforts by COTWUT to recruit members from new (sub-)sectors go alongside its struggle to retain some of its current membership. For example, the Telecommunication Workers Union of Tanzania (TEWUTA) was formed in 2004 as a breakaway from COTWUT. Its founders were a group of retrenched Tanzanian Telecommunication Company workers who felt betrayed by the redundancy package negotiated by COTWUT on their behalf. In response to this, they started a new union (McQuinn, personal communication, based on his interview with TEWUTA's Head of Research, Loans and Economy, 15 August 2006). Furthermore, post office staff recently shifted their membership from COTWUT to TEWUTA (Babeiya 2011, 128).
9. 'UWAMADAR speech'.
10. From Dar es Salaam Zonal Secretary COTWUT to General Secretary COTWUT, 'Request from the association of drivers and conductors of urban buses (UWAMADAR) to meet with you', 7 June 2000.
11. This is a literal translation which aims to reflect the broken Swahili in which this document was written.
12. Secretary UWAMADAR to General Secretary COTWUT, 'The problems that driver and conductors get a work', 5 July 2000.
13. This can be discerned from a number of letters documenting the trade union's positive response to UWAMADAR's requests of financial support from the Union for events to be held.
14. 'The way to run UWAMADAR', 10 March 2001. The same document outlined the financial plan to make UWAMADAR financially sustainable. This entailed the payment of a daily sum (2000 shillings) from each branch and the payment of fees from individual members (2000 shillings to join in and 250 shillings monthly) and proactively looking for sponsors – including UNDP, JICA, and the Nyerere Foundation who had shown an interest in supporting the organisation.
15. Such a percentage was based on the estimate that there were 6000 private buses operating in Dar es Salaam at that time.
16. Chairman DARCOBOA to Jimmy Mnkeni UWAMADAR, 'The contract for decent work', 31 March 2003.
17. General Secretary DARCOBOA to Zonal Secretary COTWUT, 'Seminar of *daladala* owners', 9 February 2004. Both UWAMADAR leaders and transport public officers suggested that such claims were false and had to be interpreted as an attempt by employers to downplay the strength of the labour coalition. See author interviews (2009a) and (2009d).
18. 'Contracts yet to materialise', unknown day and month in 2004, *The Express*, http://www.theexpress.com/express%20367/news/news2.htm#5 (accessed on 30 August 2011).
19. Dar es Salaam Secretary CotwuT to Chairman DRTLA, 29 March 2004.
20. General Secretary UWAMADAR to Regional Commissioner Dar es Salaam, 19 April 2004.
21. Dar es Salaam Secretary COTWUT to Regional Commissioner Dar es Salaam, 'Complaints against DAR(CO)BOA on the implementation of decent work contracts for drivers and conductors of *daladala*', around 29 July 2004.
22. 'Minutes of a meeting on the conditions and problems of drivers with the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Infrastructural Development called by the Tanzania Drivers Association', no earlier than 13 July 2006.

23. It is fascinating to note the way in which these negotiations disappear from the radar of newspapers and from the Coalition's correspondence, only to remerge years later.
24. Doubts have been raised on the strategic superiority of a focus on social protection over and above rights at work as a measure to tackle precarity. As the political momentum behind universal social protection is nowhere to be seen in many developing countries, calls for it lack the necessary pressure that is likely to result in its adoption (see Lerche 2012).

Author interviews (all in Dar es Salaam)

2009a. S. Mlawa (UWAMADAR General Secretary) and J. Mnkeni (Treasurer), September 10.

2009b. Kizito (a *daladala* worker), September 4.

2009c and 2011. B. Semvua (currently COTWUT Deputy General Secretary), September 10. Semvua was Assistant to COTWUT Dar es Salaam Secretary until June 2000, when he became t6he City Secretary himself.

2009d. A. Sulemani (former Director of Road Transport Regulation, SUMATRA), September 8.

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The rise and fall of trade unionism in Zimbabwe, Part I: 1990–1995

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This article is the first of a two-part study on the evolution of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) in the 1990s. This first part covers the period 1990–1995, when the labour centre was in its most radical mode. This is demonstrated by tracing its interventions in the public debate, its mobilisation and democratisation campaign, and its escalating strike action. It is argued, however, that the weaknesses of the ZCTU, especially its lack of organic roots outside the formal sector and its dependence on foreign donors, set the stage for a significant change in its ideology and strategy.

Keywords: Africa; Zimbabwe; labour relations; trade unionism; democratisation; development

[La montée et la chute du syndicalisme au Zimbabwe, Part I: 1990–1995.] Cet article est le premier d'une étude en deux parties sur l'évolution du Congrès des syndicats du Zimbabwe (*Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions*, ZCTU) dans les années 90. La première partie couvre la période 1990–1995, époque à laquelle le mouvement des travailleurs était le plus radical. Les interventions de la ZCTU dans le débat public, ses campagnes de mobilisation et de démocratisation ainsi que ses actions de grève qui dégénéraient, nous montrent cette radicalité. Cependant, les faiblesses du ZCTU, en particulier son manque de liens en dehors du secteur formel et sa dépendance envers les bailleurs de fonds étrangers, ont été déterminant dans le changement significatif opéré par après dans son idéologie et sa stratégie.

Mots-clés : Afrique ; Zimbabwe ; relations de travail ; syndicalisme ; démocratisation ; développement

Introduction

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) emerged from under the wing of the ruling party in the second half of the 1980s to become the epicentre of organised oppositional politics in Zimbabwe. This was the time in which the ZCTU was in its most radical mode, professing Marxism-Leninism, and bucking both the state and imperialism. But its radicalism stood on weak organisational legs: it lacked solid links to the shop floor; it had no organic links to small farmers and informal workers; formal workers themselves lacked familiarity with trade union affairs in their occupational sectors; and both trade unions and membership were poor. The transformation of the labour centre into a worker-controlled and viable force would be pursued over the following years under difficult conditions: at the national level, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) was being set into motion, and state coercion was being deployed against the

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disenfranchised; at the global level, the Soviet Union was collapsing and international trade unionism was being reduced to the virtually uncontested 'market friendly' social democracy professed by the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU).

In this two-part study, it will be argued that the ZCTU emerged as a political force to be reckoned with, but that in the process it underwent a significant identity change. This trajectory of rise and fall can be traced through three phases: that of radical political unionism (1990–1995);[1] social democratic strategic unionism (1995–1997); and social democratic political unionism (1998–2000). The identity change touched every aspect of the centre's teachings, from its understanding of national sovereignty, to worker participation, to who are the 'natural' allies of the working class, which in the early phase consisted in the peasantry. The first part of this study will focus on the first half of the decade, corresponding to the 'rise' of trade union radicalism against a neoliberal state, while the second will be devoted to the second half of the decade, corresponding to its 'fall'.

Despite the political importance that the labour movement attained in post-colonial Zimbabwe, there is less work published on it than it deserves.[2] This is especially true for the labour centre itself in its most crucial decade, the 1990s, for which there is virtually no systematic empirical work published. This lacuna is a real handicap in our understanding of Zimbabwe's subsequent polarisation.[3]

Confronting neoliberalism

In a 1988 statement, the new leadership of the ZCTU highlighted the multiple problems confronting the movement and proposed that the centre adopt a five-year development plan (SG 1988). The Secretary General, Morgan Tsvangirai, identified a long list of urgent tasks: the improvement of the administrative capacity and efficiency of the national centre; the mobilisation of workers and the democratisation of the movement; the amalgamation of unions; the establishment of full-time information/publicity and international departments; the achievement of financial self-sufficiency; the establishment of a labour college; the regaining of control of the annual May Day celebrations; and the revival of the labour movement's newspaper, *The Worker*, which had been out of circulation since 1987. In all, the project of the ZCTU was one of prying itself away from the grip of the state and gaining an independent capacity and voice in the affairs of the nation.

The 1990 Congress of the ZCTU launched the movement into the 'global' world (ZCTU 1990, 2):

> In the past ten years the ideals of the liberation struggle to bring economic and political power to the people have been increasingly shelved. Real democracy and strong worker/peasant representation in political leadership has been traded in for peace with the capitalists and a leadership that has joined the wealthy in spirit and in flesh.

The Congress furthermore warned of the known dangers of structural adjustment (ZCTU 1990, 3):

> The Government strategy of staking the people's hopes on World Bank structural adjustment policies, on foreign investment, on privatisation and on trade liberalisation ignores the evidence of the devastating effects of these policies on working people across the globe and dooms a vast section of the society to permanent joblessness, hopelessness and economic insecurity. It further mortgages the economy to foreigners and leaves the nation economically powerless and without control over its future.

The Congress proceeded to issue a number of resolutions, affirming its non-affiliation to any political parties, its commitment to mobilisation, gender equality, democratisation, and amalgamation of unions, and the imperative of gaining control of its voice by taking over May Day, relaunching *The Worker*, and establishing an information department.

ESAP was formally launched in 1991 and it began to pinch soon after, with retrenchments in the clothing, textile, leather, and agricultural sectors, and the introduction of cost recovery measures in schooling and health provision. By 1992, inflation was galloping at 50%, wiping out pay increments of 24% that had been won during the collective bargaining season. 1992 was also the year in which the Labour Relations Act was amended. The ZCTU responded by protesting both the content of the amended LRA and the procedures by which it was enacted, pointing out that the labour movement had been effectively sidelined from the review of the LRA of 1985. While in 1987, in the spirit of tripartism, a tripartite committee had been composed to review the LRA, the set of changes agreed in that committee did not enter into the Bill that was eventually presented to Parliament. As in the case of the Investment Code and ESAP itself, the labour movement was denied a voice. Lack of consultation 'creates a climate of adversarial industrial relations', noted the ZCTU, 'that will undermine our ability to meet the economic challenges we face in the 1990s... We are led to perceive the Labour Relations Amendment (LRA) Act as a symptom of a deeper issue related to ESAP' (*TW* 1: March 1993). The ZCTU further protested by withdrawing its delegation from the 1992 ILO conference in Geneva and by holding peaceful marches in seven centres in the country. The government, in its turn, did not show signs of relenting. In 1992, President Mugabe for the first time refused to attend the May Day celebrations, in a symbolic message to the working class. And in June of the same year, government invoked the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act to ban a march in Harare against ESAP and the LRA Bill and to arrest six members of the ZCTU.

The widespread mobilisation against ESAP that was being spearheaded by the ZCTU raised suspicions among the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) that the labour centre was following the footsteps of its Zambian counterpart to form a political party – in Zambia this had led to the removal of UNIP from power after almost three decades at the helm. In 1992, however, the ZCTU affirmed its commitment made at its 1990 Congress to remain unaffiliated to any political party and to focus instead on building a strong labour movement with solid roots in the shop floor. But the ZCTU did not also shy away from seeking political involvement in national dialogue and from taking the government to task on the broad political issues that affected workers. Tsvangirai pointed out that:

> ... once the union starts calling for better living conditions for workers in terms of wages, health, safety or even pay increases, labour laws and economic policies, it has already entered into politics. There is no running away from that. The labour movement cannot therefore afford to shy away from politics since by its very nature it has to fight both government policies and employers' actions... What the unions are fighting for is political involvement. (*TW* 1: March 1993)

Gibson Sibanda, President of the ZCTU, reaffirmed the labour centre's political role:

> ... our mandate is to make sure that workers are fairly treated, in and beyond the workplace. In this age of ESAP we have learned as unions, that we cannot be silent in any area affecting workers because our silence is our loss. (*TW* 4: June 1993)

These positions hardly assuaged the fears of government. In late 1992, John Nkomo, the Minister of Labour, refused to attend the ZCTU's bi-annual meeting in Chinhoyi. And in

1993, President Mugabe for the second consecutive year refused to attend the May Day celebrations, declaring that 'the moment you turn yourself into a political party I will tell you I am ZANU–PF. I cannot go to May Day celebrations to be a subject of ridicule by school children like students at the University of Zimbabwe' (*TW* 4: June 1993).

Snubbing May Day and identifying workers as non-adults were part of the struggle over the meaning of national liberation at the time of its 'liberalisation'. The ZCTU did not shun national debate. The theme and slogan of its May Day celebration in 1991 was focused precisely on the same meanings: 'Liberalisation or Liberation?'. In 1993, Tsvangirai reaffirmed the importance of this political struggle. 'The slogan', Tsvangirai (1993) argued, 'summarised exactly what we understand about the Structural Adjustment Programme – an offensive recolonisation of Zimbabwe, rolling back the spirit and achievement of our liberation'. And, in revaluing the experiences of the besieged working class that government sought to belittle, he continued:

> . . . today we know clearly what that recolonisation means. The child who has dropped out of the school that was built after independence knows it. The mother who cannot afford to deliver her second baby at the clinic where she delivered the first one knows it. The worker who has lost his job knows it. The unionist who met the batons of the riot police for staging a peaceful march knows it.

The nationalism of the labour centre in these early years was also anti-imperialist – even if more populist in tone than Marxist-Leninist – expressly rejecting the authority of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the 'developmental' pretensions of structural adjustment. At an international symposium of trade unionists in Harare in April 1993, Sibanda accused the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of imposing liberalisation on African economies while Northern countries continued to protect their own. 'In international trade', he added, 'there is no love, there are no permanent friends, but there are permanent interests' (*TW* 3: May 1993). In the same vein, the labour centre accused the government of serving foreign interests. 'Suddenly, in the middle of this', wrote Tsvangirai (1993) in reference to the tripartite consultations of the late 1980s:

> . . . we heard from London that Zimbabwe was introducing a new Investment Code. Later, we realised that this was the first step towards our so-called homegrown Economic Structural Adjustment Programme. This was in fact a classical Washington hatched World Bank/IMF package (even with American spelling in the government document).

He proceeded to dispute the validity of the debt-service 'imperative' to which the government was subscribing:

> . . . political independence is a shallow victory when one's own economy cannot serve the fundamental interests of the population. World Bank SAP's do not build economies that serve the interests of African people. They build economies that pay and service debt.

'One of the fundamentals of democracy', Tsvangirai added, 'is the right to determine one's own priorities. Is servicing the foreign debt really our economic priority in Africa?'

The priorities which the labour centre emphasised were structural in nature, with land reform occupying centre stage, along with promotion of non-farm and informal activities. As articulated in the critique of the 1989 Investment Code (ZCTU 1989) and in the *Workers' Participation and Development* manual (ZCTU 1993), Sibanda reiterated that land reform remained a priority, for only this could ensure food security in the future and higher rural incomes:

> . . . unless subsistence agriculture is transformed into a thriving industry that offers rural people a promise of rising incomes and new opportunities, the rural–urban exodus will continue thus compounding the open unemployment problem in the urban areas.

'African governments', he concluded, 'should not measure the success of the adjustment programme by looking at their balance of payments, but the well-being of suffering of their people because at the end of the day that is all that matters' (*TW* 8: October 1993). The labour centre, furthermore, made a number of recommendations to the Land Tenure Commission in session at the time, stressing the importance of egalitarianism in redistribution, the need for caution on the issue of title deeds, recognition of the predicament of farm workers, and the participation of trade union representatives in the Commission (*TW* 16: August 1994).

The government continued to fend off accusations that ESAP was 'imposed from the outside', and sought to affirm its liberation credentials with reference to the land question. 'For the benefit of those ambassadors or high commissioners', President Mugabe told his audience on Heroes Day 1993, 'who have taken up the cause of the white farmer as their cause merely because those farmers are white and the rest of the people who are suffering are black, when we fought the struggle for liberation, we fought for the sovereign right to rule ourselves. And that right gives us ways and means of determining how the imbalances of the past can be corrected' (*TW* 7: September 1993). Both, in fact, the government and the labour movement employed 'anti-imperialist' language. The difference between the two was that the government's nationalism steered clear of class analysis to defend an elitist nationalism, while the labour centre accused the government of making peace with capital, but especially its promotion of black capitalism. 'Black advancement started as a noble thing', Tsvangirai recalled in mid-decade on occasion of a flurry of industrial action in parastatals; he went on to indicate that black managers had themselves become as oppressive as 'colonial masters' (*TW* 12: April 1994). In the same spirit, labour leaders in the clothing, construction, banking, and commercial farming industries jointly condemned the indigenous employers who were undermining supervision by NECs by evading registration of their businesses with the relevant authorities. The labour leaders further pointed out that indigenous employers were engaged in unfair labour practices, such as the victimisation of unionised workers, non-payment of deducted union fees, non-payment of deducted pensions, and payment of low wages (*TW* 38: August 1996).

The early-decade victories of the labour movement must be seen in the context of the liberal assault on existing rights and living standards. The labour movement was firmly on the defensive and struggling to gain a position from which to bargain. In 1993, the average wage increase of 12.5% fell far below the cost of living index, while in 1994 the labour demand for a 25% increment during collective bargaining was itself appearing doomed. Meanwhile, despite the institutionalisation of collective bargaining, Labour Minister John Nkomo continued to intervene in wage-setting by issuing warnings that wage increments must not derail the economic reform programme and giving employers the green light to fire striking workers. Nonetheless, in early 1994, Post and Telecommunication (PTC) workers went on strike demanding payment of a 12.5% increment that, after dispute, had been awarded to them by the Labour Relations Tribunal, but that the employer was still refusing to pay. The industrial action started as a go-slow but turned into a fully-fledged strike by mid February, finally compelling the PTC to abide by the ruling. On a different front, the ZCTU was challenging the constitutionality of the government's use of the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act against the striking workers in 1992. In March 1994, after the PTC success, another victory was scored in this parallel front. The Supreme Court ruled against the government and for amendment of the Act, in a landmark ruling that opened the way for less inhibited political activity. In the process, the labour movement confirmed its leading role in the democratisation movement.

Suggesting a possible reopening of dialogue in light of impending elections in 1995, Labour Minister Florence Chitauro attended May Day celebrations in 1994, but without taking the platform, and also without stemming the momentum of the labour movement. In August 1994, the bank workers' union (ZIBAWU), inspired by the PTC workers' success and the Supreme Court ruling, went on a week-long strike of its own, gaining credibility among the workforce in the process and adding 600 new members to its roster. This action was followed by construction workers and security guards. The tide finally compelled President Mugabe to address labour issues publicly for the first time since the freezing of relations. Thus, on Heroes Day 1994, President Mugabe issued a call on employers to meet the pay demands of workers.

Despite such victories, workers in both public and private sectors were awarded increments below the 25% that had been demanded by the ZCTU in May 1994. Moreover, formal sector job cuts continued to take a toll on working people. Between January 1991 and March 1994, job losses amounted to 20,710 (*TW* 17: September 1994). Significantly, the textile industry was one of the biggest casualties of the early 1990s, on account of both ESAP and the expiry of the 1964 trade agreement with South Africa; Cone Textiles liquidated in 1994, shedding 6000 workers. Adding to the predicament of the industry, the government denied ZCTU participation in the negotiations with South Africa on a new trade agreement, while the South African side did include the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) (which, in turn, made common cause with the ZCTU on a social clause). Economic prospects continued to worsen into 1995, with increases in the price of petrol (7.3%) and diesel (20%) in January; with the government announcing its intention to introduce a Drought Levy of 5% with effect from April; and with the ZCTU threatening, in turn, to carry out a national strike. This sequence of events was finally to bring President Mugabe and the labour leaders together in a landmark meeting in March 1995, signalling a possible thawing of relations between state and labour.

Mobilisation and democratisation

The ability of the trade unions to represent workers in national life was undermined by the perennial organisational problems inherent in a semi-proletarianised, migrant, and poor workforce. In the early 1990s, two surveys were conducted within the labour movement to assess the status of union organisation and to devise strategies for mobilisation and democratisation (Gregory *et al.* 1991; Chibatwa *et al.* 1993). As one of the survey reports acknowledged in the outset, 'trade unions are grass-roots movements', and thus, 'their strength is derived from the confidence and support they enjoy from the ordinary workers who labour in the factories, mines, plantations and other enterprises' (Gregory *et al.* 1991, 11). The assessment of this confidence and support confirmed the magnitude of the organisational task at hand. Two more evaluations of the movement were conducted in 1996–1997 (Sibanda 1996; Mihyo and Powel 1997).

Taken together, the early surveys found that workers generally lacked information on the unions in their sectors and the work that these carry out. Workers had a low level of understanding of how wages were determined and also a low level of awareness of their legal rights and what constituted 'unfair labour practices'. Workers who were members of workers' committees were more aware of such matters, but workers' committees were themselves weak. The committees often lacked constitutions, or workers were simply not aware of them, held general meetings infrequently, and also met infrequently with union officials. Although general meetings organised by the committees tended to be well attended, the question of wages, as expected, monopolised the agenda, but without further issues gaining sufficient hearing, and without workers' concerns more generally being linked to broader macro-level issues. Worker representatives, furthermore, were ineffectively representing workers' concerns to management, acting instead as a vehicle of information from management to workers. Gender discrimination was found to be total, insofar as women were absent from executive positions on the committees. Thus, workers' representatives and committees were not playing the requisite role on matters of conscientisation, recruitment, democratisation, representation to management, and communication with unions. Meetings organised by unions themselves at branch level were less effective, as they were poorly attended. In this case, impediments to attendance included lack of notification of workers, lack of time, fear of victimisation by employers, and lack of confidence in the ability of unions to increase wages.

Thus, the strengthening of shop floor structures, as well as their incorporation into union structures, was recognised as an organisational imperative. A parallel task was the broadening of the membership and economic base of the movement in order to gain self-sufficiency and a self-sustaining mobilisational and educational effort. The precise strategy at the turn of the decade, as announced by the Secretary General, was twofold, involving, on the one hand, a comprehensive education and mobilisation campaign with the stated aim of increasing the unionisation rate to 50%, and, on the other hand, the administrative enforcement of subscription payments by affiliate unions to the national centre (*TW* 1: March 1993).

Towards the first end, a workers' education (APADEP) programme that had been ongoing since 1984 – with the support of the Dutch FNV and the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague – was honed, after 1987, to the specific needs of Zimbabwean workers. Course materials began to be developed by the ZCTU in 1989, and by 1990 the first edition of the home-grown *Workers' Participation and Education* manual was produced. This became the main guide in seminars and instructors' courses. Union branch officials, workers' committee representatives, and trade union activists were recruited into the education programme in this period. An evaluation of the programme conducted in 1997 noted that between 1991 and 1996, 569 persons were trained, 25% of whom were women, further noting that attendance had been lower than projected, especially that of women (Mihyo and Powel 1997). Nonetheless, the evaluation noted that the centre and its affiliate network had built considerable education capacity and capacity-building potential. The specialised training of trade union cadres was also undertaken with a view to improve skills in collective bargaining, grievance handling, basic economic and legal issues, and financial administration. This arose as a pressing need when the movement began to distance itself from the state in the late 1980s. By 1992, however, only 25 paralegals had been trained in the movement, with 4% of these being at the shop floor, 32% at branch level, 8% at the regional, and 56% at the national; on the economic side, 21 cadres had been trained, most of them at national level (Chibatwa *et al.* 1993, 31–32).

Building stronger links between the unions and the shop floor also entailed an active policy of incorporating workers' committees into union structures by supporting the placement of union members into the committees. The 1996 survey noted that 93% of enterprises had workers' committees, up from 90% in 1991/92, but that there unionisation of committee members was not yet total (Sibanda 1996). The survey also noted that the victimisation of committee members continued to be extensive, rendering the unionisation of committees all the more urgent (Sibanda 1996: 14). Alongside the tapping of committees, the labour centre decentralised its organisation in 1992 by creating six regional offices (in Mutare, Masvingo, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi, and Harare) and district committees below them to coordinate activities and to improve communication with the grassroots. The educational programme itself contributed to the process, by conscientising non-unionised workers and by building organisational capacity among affiliates and between affiliates and the centre.

Nonetheless, unions continued to find themselves in a low-membership/low-resource trap, hindering their educational and organisational efforts, and creating foreign dependence. Figures on membership in this period are generally elusive. One of the surveys above stated that, in 1993, one-third of men and less than one-tenth of women were unionised, while the overall unionisation level stood at 41% of the work force (Chibatwa *et al.* 1993, 26). The latter figure is not convincing, however, as it would suggest that the Zimbabwean labour movement had already attained the organisational status of much more established movements (both in Africa and Europe). A more realistic figure was provided in 1993 by *The Worker* which reported that total membership amounted to 201,800 workers (*TW* 2: April 1993). This figure was likely to be an underestimation of the real membership, however, given that unions routinely under-reported their memberships in order to evade the subscription fees that they owed to the national centre. The real unionisation rate was likely to be around 20%. Despite retrenchments throughout the ESAP period, during which the unionisation numbers ebbed and flowed, the unions managed to close the decade again with a 20% real unionisation rate, according to the Accounts Department, with 196,200 members actually declared by unions, but possibly twice as many workers in reality belonging to unions.[4] Notwithstanding the realities of membership, the financial constraints associated with a declared membership of 196,200 were enormous. The union centre remained underfunded and dependent on foreign donors. In 1997, only one-third of the centre's budget derived from subscription fees, while as much as two-thirds derived from donors, thereby exposing the labour centre to external interference (Kudenga and Co. 1997).

Relations between the national centre and its affiliates were not devoid of acrimony. The non-payment of subscription fees by affiliate unions to the national centre was a source of ongoing conflict. In 1992, less than one-third of the affiliates (10 of 35) were paid up, with a total of Z$270,000 owed to the centre. Among the non-compliant unions were those which rejected the increase in fees (from 5 to 15 cents per member) that had been legislated at the 1990 Congress, on the grounds of economic hardship. Such claims, however, were not entirely convincing to the national centre. While the centre appreciated that under the harsh economic climate some unions would face financial difficulties, which in turn it would take into consideration, it also believed that some unionists had ulterior motives. The dispute reached a low point when dissenting unionists sought the intervention of the Ministry of Labour on their behalf – and giving the state the opportunity to pursue divide-and-rule policies. The labour centre responded by issuing ultimatums to the non-compliant unions to pay up or face suspension. The problem was not to have an easy resolution. By 1933, only two more affiliates had met their obligations, bringing the number to 12, while no suspensions had been carried out. In January 1994, the General Council convened a special meeting at which it renewed its ultimatum, giving unions three more months to pay up. Clearly, the non-compliance of unions, combined with the underdeclaration of membership, was jeopardising the viability of the centre. In fact, the latter was resorting to borrowing funds from its donor-funded and earmarked project accounts. By 1995, the financial position of the centre was in trouble, with almost Z$500,000 owed to its project accounts and Z$78,998 owed to the AFL-CIO's African American Labor Centre (*TW* 29: October 1995).

While under-reporting, evasion, and more genuine economic distress on the part of affiliates were at the crux of the financial problem, it is also true that the problem was compounded by the excessive number of unions in existence and the failure of the centre itself to promote amalgamations in allied industries. There had been well over 30 unions in existence throughout the decade, some of which gained recognition despite their being too small and weak to operate effectively. At its 1990 Congress the labour movement resolved to pursue mergers as a matter of urgency, yet by the close of the decade the national centre continued to be excessively segmented, with 38 unions on its roster. The multiplicity of unions has detracted from the ability of the movement to reap economies of scale across allied industries, reduce administrative costs, and meet obligations to the national centre – and not least from the ability to mobilise workers in larger numbers and represent them more effectively. The fragmentation owed partly to the lack of resolve on the part of the national leadership in desisting from registering splintering and non-credible unions (Editorial comment, *TW* 27: August 1995). It owed also to the lack of sufficient authority on the part of the centre to push through mergers without fear of unions going it alone or, worse, defecting to the state-endorsed Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU). This also suggests that the patronage motive within the movement had not been eradicated.

Given such internal divisions, financial matters came to occupy the top of the centre's agenda at its 1995 Congress. Besides being the 'Beyond ESAP' Congress, it was also dubbed the 'make or break' Congress, and coincided with negotiations between the ZCTU and the large and well-organised civil servants' unions, ZIMTA and PSA, for the possible affiliation of the latter two. The ZCTU had thus to put its house in order. The tone was set at a General Council meeting prior to the Congress, where it was agreed that five particularly non-complaint affiliates would be only be accorded observer status at the Congress. The tone was set, furthermore, with a prior report issued by the General Council's on the challenges to be confronted (*TW* 29: October 1995):

> Disrupted coordination and communication between the ZCTU and affiliates diverted attention, work and time away from more serious issues confronting workers and deprived the ZCTU of the financial viability needed to meet those serious issues. It produced uncomradely, undemocratic and unprincipled behaviour resulting in some persons using outside parties to resolve disputes before the internal, democratic organs of the ZCTU had been used or exhausted.

In the event, Congress resolved to increase subscriptions to 40 cents, with effect from January 1996. It was also acknowledged that no progress had been made on the issue of amalgamations; however, inadequate time and dialogue was spent on the issue. It was only agreed that small unions should be induced into mergers by making them pay a minimum of Z$500 per month to the national centre (*TW* 29: October 1995).

Despite the new measures, as well as the eventual affiliation of PSA in August 1996, financial difficulties continued to haunt the labour centre throughout the remainder of the decade. In March 1996, *The Worker* reported that 11 non-complaint affiliates were no longer being invited to partake in activities organised by the centre (*TW* 33: March 1996). In June 1996, labour leaders convened a meeting in Nyanga to map out a five-year strategy on, *inter alia*, achieving self-sufficiency. In January 1997, dues were again increased from 40 cents to Z$1 under the pressure of inflation. And, in August 1997, Tsvangirai was once again threatening defaulters with expulsion, but with the exception of those with 'genuine' financial problems, including the PSA (*TW* 43: February 1997 and *TW* 49: August 1997). With regards to amalgamations, the inducement mechanism proved insufficient to the task, as the centre closed the decade with 38 affiliates. In the context of liberalisation, more resolve would have been required to stem the splintering of unions and actually reverse their proliferation. One notable victim of the decade was the National Union of Clothing Industry (NUCI), which splintered after a combination of massive job losses (13,000) in the industry in 1997, loss of faith by the workers in the ability of NUCI to represent them, and infighting within the leadership. NUCI splintered in 1999, giving rise to the Clothing Industry Workers Union (CIWU), which, however, was not recognised.

Internal divisions between the centre and its affiliates were not confined to one-way grievances by the centre against affiliates. Affiliates had grievances of their own, and these related to the perceived heavy-handed tactics of the leadership and the aloofness of the centre's staff. Grievances against the leadership surfaced at the 1995 Congress, when the General Council sought to expand the number of vice-presidents from three to five, with a view to accommodate the powerful ZIMTA and PSA within the ZCTU. After heated debate, over one-third of the delegates (the number required to arrest a Constitutional amendment) rejected the proposal. The dissenting delegates went on to call on the leadership to revamp itself and become more efficient, rather than bloating its structures for purposes of political accommodation. At the same Congress, the office of First Assistant Secretary General was won by a newcomer, Isidore Zindoga (of the Leather, Shoe and Allied Workers Union) prevailing over the incumbent, Nicholas Mudzengerere, in a victory seen as providing a check on the leadership. Finally, grievances were again voiced at a meeting of labour leaders in Nyanga in June 1996, when certain among the centre's staff were accused of being uncooperative, even 'untouchable' (*TW* 37: July 1996).

One of the major weaknesses of the movement was the gross under-representation of women in the membership and the leadership. This was first acknowledged in 1985, when the ZCTU adopted a resolution to establish a Women's Desk, mandated with the promotion of gender equity within the movement. In 1986, the Women's Desk organised a workshop with women representatives from each trade union to map a way forward. The delegates recommended that branch committees be formed and educational and training programmes be established. The recommendations were accepted by the General Council and 16 committees were established around the country soon after. In 1987, a ZCTU Women's Council was formed from the 16 committees, and this met for the first time in Masvingo to issue the Masvingo Declaration of Women's Activities, which set the terms of reference of the Council and its programmes. Also in 1987, a 10-year education programme was initiated with funding from Norway; by 1992, some 4500 women from all affiliates had received training in seminars and workshops on a range of matters, including trade union functions, ESAP, collective bargaining, grievance handling, women and leadership, and fundamental rights (Pswarai 1992).

In 1992, women representatives from affiliates met in Chinhoyi to map out the further strategy for conscientisation and mobilisation. In the same year, the Women's Advisory Council (WAC), which had been created by constitutional amendment at the 1990 Congress, was established as an integral part of the ZCTU's executive with a mandate to ensure that women were represented at all levels of the organisation. In 1998, a Gender Perspective Team was established which comprised of an equal number of men and women and which was tasked with developing training material and accelerating gender balance.

In January 1999, finally, the Education and Women's Departments were merged, under the logic that, by this time, much of the gender programme had been incorporated satisfactorily into union structures.

While the centre was indeed moving in the right direction on gender issues, real progress on the ground was much slower. On the one hand, there existed an ongoing education and mobilisation programme that reached out to mobilise and sensitise the rank and file. This received, furthermore, an institutional boost by the formation of WAC and the Gender Perspective Team. On the other hand, the culture of male dominance had been hard to break. As the 1997 evaluation later concluded, 'unions generally tend to project that unions are for men. The culture of union organisation and mobilisation centres around the ideology of brotherhood as opposed to comradeship' (Mihyo and Powell 1997, 28). Women continued to be grossly under-represented in leadership structures and in the membership. By 1997, there were only two women in leadership positions at the union level, as president and vice-president of unions; and only one woman at the national level, as Third Vice President, elected at the 1995 Congress. Furthermore, it was pointed out that women had not actually been receiving equal access to workshops and seminars. This had been the case either because the courses had often been conducted outside working hours, thereby overlooking the needs of working mothers and preventing women from gaining the necessary education to move up through the structures (Mutambanengwe 1997); or because they had not focused sufficiently on the sectors where women workers are concentrated, as in agriculture (Mihyo and Powell 1997, 27). Finally, by decade's end, there were no statistics on women's membership.[5] The Economics Department itself had been slow to produce research on gender, devoting a paper to gender issues in 1998 (Kanyenze 1998) and planning to include a chapter on gender in its *Beyond ESAP II* study prepared for 2000. And the ZCTU-sponsored book, *Keep on Knocking*, on the history of the labour movement did not bring out the gender dimension sufficiently. The generally slow progress on the status of women in the ZCTU became an issue, in fact, during the affiliation negotiations with the public service associations, when the President of the Zimbabwe Nurses Association, predominantly composed of women, voiced concern and called for more favourable policies on women's issues (*TW* 34: April 1996).

Much less of an issue in the labour movement had been the ethnic dimension of Zimbabwean politics. Ethnic politics had been neutralised to a large extent by the fact that the national leadership for over a decade had a president of Ndebele origin and a general secretary of Shona origin. Nonetheless, the issue was not entirely laid to rest. While ethnic politics within the labour movement may not have held much sway since the independence of the labour centre from the ruling party, the question of ethnic representation did arise in relation to the leadership of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) (*The Zimbabwe Mirror*, January 21–27), the opposition party spearheaded by the ZCTU in 1999, suggesting that, in times of power restructuring, issues of ethnicity were capable of resurfacing.

Finally, it is important to round off the mobilisation/democratisation profile by indicating that the labour centre confronted the ongoing challenges of ESAP by adopting non-conventional strategies and reaching out to new constituencies. One of the new strategies was to reach out to youth, both employed and unemployed, and to organise youth structures within the labour movement so as to conscientise them and give them a voice in the working class. To this end, in February 1995 in Chitungwiza, a conference was organised jointly by ZCTU and ICFTU/AFRO on issues facing young workers. This was a follow-up conference on the World Youth Rally held in Kingston, Jamaica in 1992, which the ZCTU had attended. The Chitungwiza conference called for the creation of structures and representation at all levels and for an educational programme on a broad array of issues, including gender, unemployment, training opportunities, alcohol and drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS. Thereafter, workshops were organised nationwide with the support of ICFTU/AFRO, drawing participants from affiliates and between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

Another strategy, which was of longer lineage but which began to bear fruit in the late 1990s, was the unification of workers across public and private sectors. One approach was to intervene in the labour law deliberations and demand the harmonisation of private and public sector labour laws. The other was to go ahead and affiliate civil servants in spite of the legal segregation. At the union level, the first such unification occurred in 1994 when the Zimbabwe Construction and Allied Trade Workers' Union (ZCATWU), whose membership had dropped from an all-time high of 43,000 in 1993 to 15,000 in 1995, succeeded in incorporating workers in the Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing (*TW* 28: September 1995). This was followed in August 1996, at the height of the public servants' strike, by the full-scale incorporation of the PSA into the ZCTU, which boosted the labour movement in both numbers (47,000 PSA members in 1999) and confidence.

Finally, the ZCTU sought to build solidarity with the unemployed and workers in the informal sector, by engaging the Zimbabwe Unemployed and Retrenchees Organisation (ZURO) and the Informal Traders Association of Zimbabwe (ITAZ). The labour centre's constitution allowed for these organisations to join as associate members and with observer status on the General Council. Progress in this regard had been lacking, however. The ZCTU devoted some funds towards organising these constituencies but found it very difficult, due to leadership problems and lack of consistency on the part of the latter. Moreover, with the advent of MDC and the reorientation of the ZCTU towards the political cause, the prospects of refocusing energies on organising informal sector workers and the unemployed were abandoned.

Conclusion

The emergence of the labour movement in the first half of the 1990s established a new relation of forces in the country. The ZCTU was the most formidable organised force to challenge neoliberalism. Yet, the centre continued to have crippling weaknesses. The tables began to turn when these weaknesses prevailed, at the same time as a new radical force emerged from among the war veterans and the rural-based semi-proletariat to challenge neoliberalism on the basis of a re-radicalised nationalism and a strategy of direct action on the farms (Moyo 2001; Moyo and Yeros 2005; Sadomba 2011).

The radical political unionism of the labour centre was essentially voluntarist, if we were to judge by its structural weaknesses. It has been argued that:

> … while the imagining of a socialist alternative was never an *organic part* of the ZCTU's agenda and probably occupied the strategic thinking of only a small section of the leadership in the early 1990s, it provided the organisational space for criticism of the dominant state nationalism. (Raftopoulos and Sachikonye 2001b, xxi–xxii, italics added)

But the question is what would have made it more 'organic'? The labour centre clearly acknowledged and devoted itself to internal democratisation and broader mobilisation. Yet, two mitigating factors intervened. First, the severe dependence of the labour centre on US and European funding to carry out capacity-building programmes was bound to undermine a radical project. Second, the almost exclusive focus of the labour centre on formal sector workers, at a time of increasing unemployment, at the expense of mobilisation outside formal employment sectors, imprisoned the labour centre in a logic of action which was not congruent with the semi-proletarianised nature of peripheral capitalism. Its spectacular rise against neoliberalism, to be self-sustaining, would have to have incorporated, programmatically, the informal urban sector and smallholder farmers. It was only in 1999 that the centre engaged the rural areas (outside commercial farming), and then under the banner of MDC.

In the meantime, the centre underwent deep transformation, as it was increasingly absorbed into a limiting ‘democratisation’ critique, within the parameters promoted by foreign donors.

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Notes

1. See Lambert and Webster (1988) for use of the term in the South African context.
2. For the most important works on the 1980s and 1990s, see Sachikonye (1986), Wood (1988), Cheater (1992), Shadur (1994), Amanor-Wilks (1995), Raftopoulos and Phimister (1997), Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999), Sylvester (2000), Raftopoulos and Sachinonye (2001a), and Rutherford (2001).
3. The foregoing research traces the evolution of the ZCTU largely through *The Worker*, the official monthly newspaper of the ZCTU. Citations to the newspaper are denoted by *TW*, followed by the issue number, month, and year (e.g., *TW* 1: January 1987).
4. ZCTU Subscription Roster for 1999. The ZCTU was considering changing its methods of revenue collection so that union fees would be deducted from salaries and allocated directly to unions and the union centre.
5. The problem was that union rosters did not indicate full first names but only initials, thus making it impossible to derive a gender breakdown of the membership; there was a plan in progress to rectify this.

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STATEMENT

Yes to egalitarian 'open access', no to 'pay to publish': a *ROAPE* position statement on open access

Recent policy changes, by research funding agencies and government, have forced journals such as *ROAPE* to reconsider the ways in which their readers access their content and researchers publish their work. A system of 'gold open access', in which authors or their institutions pay for immediate online publication, is being foisted upon us. In a rapidly changing context, as funders, publishers, authors and journals debate how to respond, this statement sets out the principles that *ROAPE*'s Editorial Working Group wishes to see reflected in this new environment.

Technological changes have in recent years permanently revolutionised the ways in which readers access journals. Electronic distribution means the readership of journals has multiplied enormously. For a journal such as *ROAPE*, which sees its role as political as well as academic, the widening of its audience is welcome. Our African readership, within and outside universities, is strongly supportive of genuine 'open access' (OA).

It is recognised that such a system profoundly challenges the commercial basis of current publishing models and the financial basis on which most journals, including *ROAPE,* currently depend. A period of consultation and transition will therefore be necessary to establish a workable model of genuine open access. So-called 'green' OA in which free access is ensured through self-archiving or in public repositories must at the same time enable journals to maintain the practices that are their *raison d'être*: assembling material according to collectively agreed goals (in our case a radical analysis of African society and political economy), together with anonymised peer review exclusively on the basis of intellectual excellence. Any resultant system must be based on these criteria, not on the self-interested defence of current journal or publisher income bases. Consultation must involve the active participation of non-Western researchers and stakeholders, whose concerns have hitherto been ignored.

The potential gains of OA are fatally undermined by the 'pay to publish' principle that underlies 'gold' models of open access, recommended by the Finch Report in 2012 and endorsed by the UK government and its research councils. Gold models, while claiming to achieve open access to academic research, serve in practice to entrench academic inequality between and within nations; squander research funding on new publishing fees; and prop up an archaic and ultimately unsustainable model of academic publishing.

The disastrous potential effects of gold OA have been identified by its many critics. First, some of the Creative Commons licences associated with gold OA threaten the ownership by intellectuals of their ideas and work. Second, gold models establish inequalities of access to journals, for both researchers and readers. Authors whose institutions are able to pay (a tiny minority of research-intensive Western-based universities) will enable some academics in their employ to make their work freely available to all readers, while those who cannot pay will have their work imprisoned behind paywalls for lengthy periods, rendering it inherently second-class. Readers, the supposed beneficiaries of OA, will be denied open access to research which is not paid for in this way. Third, gold OA threatens to take the power over whether, where and how to publish away from academics and places it in the hands of university bureaucrats and research funders.

For *ROAPE* and other African studies journals, a primary concern is to ensure accessibility for both readers and researchers on the continent. While we welcome efforts by publishers to introduce 'fee waivers' for non-Western researchers, the very need for such a scheme demonstrates that gold-based OA will increase existing inequalities between resource-poor African researchers and their Western counterparts, divisions which we are committed to overcome. We will reject any form of OA that does not ensure equal access to all researchers, wherever they are based.

ROAPE has therefore determined that, for the time being, it will not support gold or other OA initiatives currently being launched by its publisher Taylor & Francis and other academic publishers. *ROAPE* will join other Africanist journals, the African Studies Association of the UK and other allied organisations to promote egalitarian access for both readers and researchers, and to reject the iniquitous gold model of OA, which threatens to commodify intellectual activity and to sow divisions between African and Western researchers engaged in the common goal of understanding and critically analysing society and political economy.

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EDITORIAL

Neo-imperialism and African development

As this issue was being planned, news came of 'Operation Serval', by which French forces intervened in Mali in order to expel Al-Qaeda sympathisers, who had brought widespread violence, destruction and fear to the northern half of the country. As we shall see presently, military intervention is only one feature of imperialist strategy in Africa. Indeed, direct military intervention is not the main modus operandi of imperialist strategy in Africa. Imperialist subjugation of the continent in the post-colonial era has been less overt, occurring through the sphere of market subjugation, transfer pricing, profits repatriation and asymmetrical economic partnership agreements leading to deep integration, which may become too restrictive for African government. Nkrumah has referred to these forms of capital and surplus labour transfer as 'neo-colonialism: the last stage of imperialism' (Nkrumah 1965).

In a recent article, Jeremy Keenan (2013) has argued that both the Bush and Bouteflika (in Algeria) administrations 'needed "a little more terrorism" in the region'; in the case of Algeria, this was to satisfy the need for modern weaponry. In the case of the Bush administration, Keenan has suggested that such terrorism may act as 'justification for launching a new Saharan front in the Global War on Terror'. Furthermore, Keenan maintains that a 'second front' would legitimise America's increased militarisation of Africa, in order to better secure the continent's natural resources, in particular oil, a concern, which in 2008 led to the setting up of AFRICOM, the United States Africa Command. Imperialist military intervention has taken several forms in Africa, including: raids to release hostages (Israel in Uganda), invasion to remove leaders who would not serve the demands of imperialism (Patrice Lumumba in the current Democratic Republic of Congo), and intervention designed to protect protégés, such as various French forays into Zaire to protect a kleptocratic ruler, Mobutu Sese Seko. In 1978, there was a joint Franco-Moroccan expedition to save Mobutu from his people.

There are three main epochs of Imperialist intrusion in Africa.[1] First, the period Harvey has referred to as 'the rise of bourgeois imperialism', 1875–1945 (2005, 42). This was characterised by monopoly capital and the outflow of capital from the capitalist centres to open up the interior of Africa to trade, through the construction of railways, harbours, roads and mines for manufacturing interests at the imperialist centre. Kemp observes that trade at this time was characterised by plunder and the use of force in order to subordinate pre-capitalist formations 'into the circuit of exchange dominated by merchant capital' (1967, 19). This period was also marked by formal control of African territories, in order to minimise inter-imperialist rivalry.

The end of World War II ushered in a new dawn (Harvey 2005), with rising African nationalism and a shift of the imperialist centre from Britain to the US, leading to the phenomenon of 'imperialism without colonies' (Magdof 1972). This new epoch lasted until the triumph of neoliberalism in late 1980s and the institutionalisation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in virtually all African economies in the 1980s and 1990s. This period was one of continuity in change, with the essential features of the previous epoch intensified as capital increasingly became globalised with the proliferation of multinational corporations; and in Africa there were green shoots of industrial capitalism (Zack-Williams 1985), though sparsely distributed across the continent. The emergence of African sovereign states did not affect the ability and audacity of the imperialist powers to intervene in African domestic affairs. For many imperialist powers, African sovereignty was a sham, to be trampled upon when their interests were threatened. France, apart from her military bases on the continent, has intervened in Africa on more than 50 occasions since 1960,[2] in areas as far apart as Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Libya, Chad, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon. Apart from the dominance of the French currency in francophone Africa, France's overdependence on nuclear energy (for 80% of her electricity) has created special interest for France in her former colonies such as Mali and Niger, both major exporters of uranium (Global Research 2013). No surprise, then, that criticism of 'Operation Serval' was muted as French troops flew into Bamako, the Malian capital, at the invitation of the Malian government. William Hague, the British Foreign Secretary, conceded in a broadcast over BBC Radio that West Africa was a job for the French in their sphere of influence. He insisted that there would be no British troops on the ground, though logistical support would be provided. East Africa, specifically Kenya and Somalia, were treated as a British military concern because of historical connections. One wonders how he sees Nigeria, a member of the Commonwealth, where another radical Islamist group, Boko Haram, has brought misery to millions of Nigerians by suicide bombings, amputation and decapitation. That the French action drew little criticism can be partly explained by the 'business as usual' factor for the French, as they answered the call for help from a member of the 'French Commonwealth'. It seems that a post-Cold War *nouvelle entente cordiale* has emerged among the major powers, as epitomised by Prime Minister Tony Blair's interventions in Sierra Leone's civil war to support the 'good guys' against the dishonourable Revolutionary United Front. In their view, failed states provide fertile ground for terrorism and a threat to Western interests and world peace. As Ellis (2011) has argued, most observers of the African scene have been slow to link state fragility with a wider problem of international governance of an ageing system that emerged in the immediate post-World War II years. However, 'it was the realisation that small conflicts could spread that led the United Kingdom to send troops to Sierra Leone in 2000 and afterwards to maintain political and financial support for a restored government' (*Ibid*., 162)

The third phase of imperialist intervention is marked by the advent of the New World Order announced by President George Bush in 1990: one in which American military superiority is unchallenged, in what became known as a 'unipolar world'. Economically, there was the rise of China, a new economic player in Africa, but with little or no concern about human rights, giving comfort and succour to Africa's dictators, who now find themselves (in what Henning Melber [2009] has called multi-polarity) unburdened by human rights concerns in dealing with the opposition forces. To many African leaders, China presents an alternative to Western diktats when it comes to the value of African resources and sources of loans for investments. While China's arrival offers African leaders new opportunities and alternatives to Western aid, yet Ovadia (in this volume) has warned in the case of Angola that: 'China represents a potential solution to many of Angola's most pressing needs while it reinforces some of the most objectionable practices of its elites'.

If China's arrival on the African scene offers new opportunities for African leaders, then the rise of radical Islam and the accompanying Global War on Terror presents them with major security challenges, especially for those African leaders, who treat their citizens as subjects without rights and a voice. Given the fact that Islam is a major religion in most

African states and we have seen above how easy it is to link local disputes to this global religion, it is imperative on African leadership to pay attention to the specific issue of rights of citizenship. African leaders with few exceptions have failed to mobilise the people for the task of nation building. Indeed, their spurious attachment to the Westphalia project (nation state without citizens) fosters further instability, alienation and anomie leading to widespread instability and conflicts. Fanon's Manichaeism is no longer an artefact of colonial social structures; the failure to extend rights of citizenship to the mass of the people has transformed postcolonial states in Africa into decentralised despotism (Mamdani 1996). 'Citizens' who are not protected by the state, who do not have usufructuary right to land outside of their villages, who can work only in the district of their birth and are treated as foreigners in the rest of the country, are subjects, not citizens. Given this state of mass abandonment, the African masses are now predisposed to centrifugal ideologies, which provide fertile ground for social movements threatening national unity and progress. In many of Africa's conflicts, it is not difficult to identify links from the local (the concern and legitimate grievances of the people) to the global, including primordial loyalties with roots that are external to the society, such as religion, diasporan politics and irredentism. In no time, the local legitimate grievance is subsumed into the global concerns as external groups hijack the cause as theirs.

Articles in this issue

There are seven main articles in this volume dealing with various issues, such as China's new engagement with Africa and the lessons to be learnt from such cooperations (Ovadia); and North–South relations, the case of the EU and South Africa (Claar and Nölke). Gray's article is an analysis of state-led industrialisation in Tanzania, and Cross examines labour migration in Senegal. Both Yeros and Rizzo chronicle labour struggles in Zimbabwe and Tanzania respectively, and Oya's contribution addresses the issue of the absence of wages in the study of rural economic life in Africa.

The first article, by Hazel Gray, examines Tanzania's post-independence industrial experience, in particular the assertion that the higher growth in manufacturing since 1996 has been a vindication of neoliberal policies of market liberalisation. In their haste to decry *dirigisme*, neoliberals have failed to see how critical aspects of the country's political settlement relate to state–capital relations and the distribution of power between contending factions of intermediate classes within the state. She draws attention to the fact that the initial 'socialist' measures of nationalisation led to the collapse of manufacturing and severe deindustrialisation. However, by 1996 there was a return to growth and expansion in manufacturing. She argues that this conclusion stems from the fact that the neoliberal accounts tend to understate the historical role of the state in industrial development in the country by ignoring critical aspects of the legacy of socialist industrial policy. Gray goes on to argue that: 'by rolling back the state and conflating an industrial strategy with trade liberalisation, industrial policy under liberalisation failed to address the critical political constraints on industrialisation'. She goes on to challenge a number of theses about the developmental state in Africa, including the claim that neo-patrimonial politics will engulf industrial policy in clientelistic redistribution relations, thereby reducing industrial efficiency. In rejecting this assertion Gray points to the fact that neo-patrimonialism in Asia has not inhibited industrialisation, and warns that this superficial analysis of state institutions does not take into consideration the wider distribution of state power.

In a thought-provoking article, Hannah Cross has reminded us of the fate of thousands of would-be African migrants who aim for household survival by working in southern

Europe, risking their lives at sea or on the equally arduous route through the Sahara to North African ports. She recalls the destructive effects of SAPs on the Senegalese governing classes, driving them to 'abandon their ambition for development', with the result that the youth of that country fossilised in the informal sector were impelled 'increasingly to head abroad'. By atrophying development in Senegal, SAPS destabilised the pre-existing migration strategies upon which communities were already dependent, only to be confronted by 'Fortress Europe' beyond the Mediterranean Sea. Cross is able to show how emigration was triggered by the crisis in the local fishing industry caused by agreements signed between European fishing companies and the Senegalese government, which meant that fishing was no longer profitable for artisans. She identifies the crisis in pelagic resources as the product of an asymmetrical agreement with the EU and the rising cost of SAPs as a result of devaluation. These effects impelled migration, as families sold their possessions to fund the perilous voyage to Europe, where these workers (as illegal immigrants) are remunerated well below the minimum wage, leaving the sending communities to struggle to eke a living.

Paris Yeros' article, which is the first of a two-part contribution on the trade union movement in post-independence Zimbabwe, draws attention to the impact of neoliberalism on the workers' movement. The implementation of structural adjustment programmes demands an authoritarian political environment as political leaders have to confront organised labour whose members have to cope with increasing unemployment and deterioration in their standard of living. In Zimbabwe, Yeros points out that though the programme was home-grown, yet the labour movement remained voiceless, and that the lack of consultation created a climate of adversarial industrial relations forcing the then union leader Morgan Tsvangirai (now Mugabe's prime minister) to describe structural adjustment as: 'an offensive recolonisation of Zimbabwe, rolling back the spirit and achievement of our liberation'. In his view:

> Political independence is a shallow victory when one's own economy cannot serve the fundamental interests of the population. World Bank SAP's do not build economies that serve the interests of African people. They build economies that pay and service debt.

Ovadia's paper looks at Africa (specifically Angola) at the most recent stage of imperialist strategy with the rise of China. Ovadia wants to ascertain 'whether or not the theorised "Beijing Consensus" can produce different outcomes for Africa than the neoliberal orthodoxy of the Washington Consensus'. Using Angola as a case study, Ovadia concludes that China's arrival in Africa represents both a new imperialism and a new model for development, that the Beijing model constitutes a project of 'recolonisation and appropriation of surplus'. Nonetheless, it offers African states a compromise and 'the prospect for sustained economic growth and improvement to the quality of everyday life'. There is a clear warning to African policy-makers: 'China's actions in Africa are in general no different from what western countries have done and are doing, though there may be potentially more advantages to China's relations with Africa'.

Carlos Oya's paper draws attention to an important symptom of the crisis of citizenship in Africa, namely the neglect of the rural areas and in particular the dearth of linkages between poverty and employment dynamics in rural communities, in particular that of wage employment. The rural sector is often bereft of social citizenship with the majority of welfare provisions concentrated in the urban areas, the habitat of the governing classes. Oya goes on to analyse some of the methodological reasons for this neglect of wage employment in studies of rural employment in Africa.

The article by Simone Claar and Andreas Nölke examines North–South trade relations, in particular the relationship between South Africa and the European Union. They are concerned with looking at what they call 'Deep Integration' or 'behind the border trade restrictions', which they warn have the potential to become 'a dangerous restriction for the economic policy space of the South African government'. According to the authors, Deep Integration goes beyond the removal of border barriers to include the removal of restrictions on trade that hinder investment across borders, and more recently, the focus has moved towards harmonisation of national economic regulation to accelerate Deep Integration and trade services. For Claar and Nölke, the worrying point from South Africa's point of view is that the Deep Trade agenda goes beyond normal tariff reduction to include political practices embedded in multilateral trading system with firms and states in the South having to adopt norms of the US and the EU in order to be able to gain access the markets of these Northern giants.

In conclusion, Claar and Nölke warn that Deep Integration may lead to problems of 'severe compatibility conflicts in South Africa and in other Southern economies' because the domestic institutions could not be adequately protected. Furthermore, Claar and Nölke observe that the situation is exacerbated because 'Northern economies frequently use Deep Integration to implement Anglo-Saxon forms of capitalism in the Global South, while the supporting institutions framework is often absent'.

Finally, Matteo Rizzo's article examines the struggle to unionise informal transport workers in the Tanzania capital Dar es Salaam. The article challenges the view that trade unionism and workplace labourism are antithetical to workers' aspirations. He goes on to argue that in order to make sense of the workers' struggle, it is imperative to utilise a political economy approach, by 'locating workers within their economic structure and understanding their relationship to capital'. The paper offers a structure of the public transport sector and a history of the workers' struggle since 1995, drawing attention to their partial victory at unionising their members, in the face of stiff opposition from bus owners. In conclusion, Rizzo, drawing on the work of Wright (2000), identified four important theoretical concepts that could determine the outcome of an industrial conflict: marketplace bargaining power, meaning 'power that workers command due to conditions in the labour market across economic industries'; 'workplace bargaining power' – power that may be realised from specific location of workers; structural power, which is derived from the specific vantage position within the economic system. However, for structural power to be realised, it is argued that this will depend on another source, associational power, which in turn is derived from the political organisation of workers alongside trades union or other institutional forms.

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Notes

1. This does not include the pre-capitalist era of mercantilism, which was marked by the removal of up to twenty million Africans from the continent.
2. See various online responses to the question 'How many times has France intervened in Africa since 1960?' Available at: http://www.google.co.uk/search?source=ig&rlz=1G1ACAW_ENUK408&q=how+many+times+have+france+intervened+in+africa+since+1960&oq=how+many+times+have+france+intervened+in+africa+since+1960&gs_l=igoogle.3...463193.482917.0.484218.58.10.0.48.48.0.98.739.10.10.0...0.0...1ac.1.FMPdv8RuZ6I. Accessed 30 January 2013.

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BRIEFING

How unstable is the Horn of Africa?

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Introduction

How can one explain the apparent stability that has prevailed in the Horn since 1991? The overthrow of the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia and the de facto independence of Eritrea paved the way for a period of stable government that had been absent for the many years. Stability is not peace, but one is struck by the fact that for more than two decades the key countries in the Horn have remained essentially under the same administrations or forms of government. The fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 left Somalia without a centralised, effective government. Despite the best efforts of the international community and a number of costly conferences and mediations Somalis still are without a central government worthy of the name. Ethiopia has remained under the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and Eritrea under the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) (even if the parties now have different names) while Somalis still live in a patchwork of administrations. For more than 20 years now this has been the prevailing reality across the most important countries in the Horn.

If one compares this situation to the previous two decades one sees a very different picture, with major rebel groups overthrowing the Emperor and then the Dergue, while Eritrea broke away from Ethiopian rule. So why are these upheavals no longer taking place?

It is not because the governments are more just or any less repressive, as one can observe by reading the many reports of Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch. Why did movements come into being after 1960 which finally dismembered the Ethiopian empire, yet no similar forces have arisen in the last two decades to challenge the governments in both Eritrea and Ethiopia? Equally one can ask why no unitary state structure has been found for Somalia. After more than 20 years without an effective central administration one has to conclude that this acephalous state of affairs may suit the Somali people. Somalia has remained without a stable administration, yet its people have survived – even if they have paid a terrible price for the absence of most state structures.

The current state of affairs cannot be considered permanent. Human rights abuses abound, famine continues to plague the peoples of all three countries and there are constant tensions between them. All have attempted to undermine each other. Ethiopia and Eritrea are in a state of near-conflict along their common border. Ethiopian troops are inside Somalia, attacking al-Shabab, while Eritrea is accused of putting resources behind rebel movements operating in Ethiopia and Somalia.

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The apparent stability is held in place, at least in part, by foreign actors. Without American aid, the Ethiopian government would be routinely incapable of feeding millions of its own people. Without international backing the Somali government would have been swept from Mogadishu. Even Eritrea could not have survived without support from Libya, China, Iran and some Gulf states. For outside powers (from the United States to al-Qaeda) the Horn has been an arena of intensifying contest since the War on Terror erupted with the attacks on American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Yet international assistance alone is not a sufficient explanation for the current state of affairs.

Even the most cursory trawl through the literature on the Horn provides a rich vein of material detailing the instability of the region. The article by the former US Ambassador in Ethiopia, David Shinn, entitled: 'Challenges to peace and stability in the Horn of Africa' was just one example of this line of argument.

> In the post-World War II era, the Horn of Africa has consistently been the most conflicted corner of the world. That is a bold assertion, but hear me out and then tell me if there is another region of the world that has consistently been more conflicted. (Shinn 2010)

It would be hard to disagree with the ambassador, were it not for the suggestion that the region was facing 'challenges' to its stability. I would suggest that this is a misperception. For all its conflict and despite the misery inflicted on so many of its citizens, the Horn appears to have been a zone of some stability in recent years. This is not to suggest that it is not beset by tensions and conflicts but rather that since 1991 these have been contained, with or without the help of formal state structures. I will look at a number of elements of this thesis.

Somalia: no 'failed state'

For the international community there is little dispute that Somalia is the epitome of the failed state. It ranks first in the listing produced by the authoritative *Foreign Policy* magazine for 2011, as it has done for several years.[1] The magazine defines the failed state in this way:[2]

> A state that is failing has several attributes. One of the most common is the loss of physical control of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Other attributes of state failure include the erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions, an inability to provide reasonable public services, and the inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community. The 12 indicators cover a wide range of elements of the risk of state failure, such as extensive corruption and criminal behavior, inability to collect taxes or otherwise draw on citizen support, large-scale involuntary dislocation of the population, sharp economic decline, group-based inequality, institutionalized persecution or discrimination, severe demographic pressures, brain drain, and environmental decay. States can fail at varying rates through explosion, implosion, erosion, or invasion over different time periods.

Somalia appears to fit the bill perfectly. The Somali government certainly has no monopoly of legitimate force and provides few services for the public. The country displays large-scale involuntary dislocation of the population, a brain drain, and environmental decay. Yet by other measures this is a skewed perception. As my former colleague at the BBC, Mary Harper, pointed out in her recent book, 'Somalia does not fit into any particular paradigm of "statehood" but this does not mean that it is in a state of total disintegration' (Harper 2012, 108). She goes on to argue that there are, in effect, many Somali states ranging from Somaliland (now effectively independent and almost fully functioning) to almost fictive mini-states, like Azania, close to the Kenyan border, with its capital in Kismayo.

This perspective is supported by the findings of the UN Sanctions Committee Monitoring Group. In its latest report its experts found that:

> More than half of Somali territory is controlled by responsible, comparatively stable authorities that have demonstrated, to varying degrees, their capacity to provide relative peace and security to their populations. Without exception, the administrations of Somaliland, Puntland, Gaalmudug, and 'Himan iyo Heeb' evolved independently of centralized State-building initiatives, from painstaking, organic local political processes. Much of Galguduud region is controlled by anti-Al-Shabaab clan militias loosely unified under the umbrella of Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a (ASWJ), but lacks a functional authority. (UN Monitoring Group 2011)

Harper quotes the Independent Institute to indicate that the Somali economy is also not the disaster many assume it to be (Powell *et al.* 2008, 665). This study was carried out prior to the emergence of al-Shabaab as a major force, but anecdotal evidence indicates that it still has some validity. If this is the case then it would appear that Somalia is more prosperous and more governed than the international community would generally surmise. It may be more appropriate to suggest that attempts to establish a centralised state have, at least in part, been responsible for upsurges in violence. This argument has some support from Peter Haldén:

> A great deal of violence is generated by projects to capture the state or by counter-projects to resist the establishment of a state, either by groups who fear that they would be left outside its exploitative system (e.g., rival clans) or by groups who oppose any state since they are not interested in being neither outside nor inside an exploitative state (e.g. the business community). (Haldén 2008, 51)

A Somali businessman whom I interviewed reflected this view. I asked him whether he would feel more secure if there was a national police force. He pondered this for a while before asking: 'but who will own it?' For him, as for many other Somalis, a return to a centralised state might reduce rather than increase his freedom. If this is correct then Somalia is at least a partially functioning political system, with a partially effective economy. Although this semi-formal system of states has been associated with immense suffering for many of its inhabitants, who have either died or fled abroad, it is not unique in inflicting this misery on its people. One only needs think of Rwanda, which has a powerful, unitary state with a functioning government to see that this is the case.

There was something special about the highland rebels in both Ethiopia and Eritrea

When considering Ethiopia and Eritrea it is possible that the two dominant movements, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Tigray People's Liberation Front were, in the true sense of the term, peculiar. Did they possess unique characteristics that other movements have been unable to replicate? Or was there something about the era in which they were formed which was unique? If this was true, it might explain why other rebel groups in both countries have been incapable of building sufficient support or momentum to threaten either regime.

Certainly the period in which these movements came into being was extraordinary – even in the complex history of both countries. The movements were shaped by the revolution that overthrew the Ethiopian empire, whose roots stretched back into the mists of time. This is not the place to revisit these events in detail, which were traced by the late Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux (Halliday and Molyneux 1981, 51 ff.). They portrayed a student movement, radicalised by the international protests of 1960s, which brought these debates from Europe and North America and attempted to apply them to Ethiopian realities. By the early 1970s their ideas had been taken up by sections of the military and played a key role in the formation of the Dergue and the rise of Haile Mengistu Mariam in September 1974. There then followed the bloodbath of the Red Terror, in which thousands were killed, but the seeds of revolution had been planted and with them concepts of Marxism-Leninism, which continues to shape the policies of Ethiopia and Eritrea to this day.

Without tracing the development of the TPLF and EPLF in detail, it is worth noting that Isaias Afeworki attended the Haile Selassie University in Addis Ababa in late 1965 and early 1966, prior to the most radical period of student politics. Other key early members of the EPLF were at university in Addis during the late 1960s and early 1970s. These included Mesfin Hagos, Hailemariam Woldetensae and Haile Menkarios.[3] The TPLF's subsequently leader, Meles Zenawi, joined the Medical Faculty of Addis Ababa University after completing his schooling in 1972 and remained at the university for two years, during the height of the radical period.

Marxist concepts and Leninist practices became embedded in both movements giving them both intellectual steel and a ruthless belief in the legitimacy of the use of force to reach their goals. The radical impulse, which swept across the student world of the 1960s and 1970s, has long passed. In its place have come other intellectual movements, but few – apart from radical Islam – have so successfully attempted to reshape the world.

It must, of course, be recognised that it was not just Tigrayans or Eritreans who were caught up in these events; other Ethiopian nationalities were swept along as well. However, there are suggestions that the nature of Ethiopian society was such that they were not involved to the same extent. John Young wrote: 'While Oromos and others more recently incorporated into the Ethiopian empire suffered the greatest oppression under the imperial regime, it was the Tigrinya speakers of Eritrea and Tigray who were the most ethnically conscious: Tigrayans, who inhabited the heartland of the historic Ethiopian state were resentful of their subordination to an Amhara-dominated state, and Tigrayan students increasingly embraced the view that the best approach would be to engage in a national liberation struggle' (Young 1998, 37).

Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux pointed to the 'geographical extension and fragmentation of Oromo areas' to explain the obstacles to successful mobilisation against the Ethiopian state (Halliday and Molyneux 1981, 198). Certainly the Oromo, Ethiopia's most numerous people, are diffuse and complex. They are spread from the far west through the centre of the country and down to the Kenyan border. Attempts by the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) to confront the Ethiopian state have met with only limited success. While the Ethiopian government has failed to eradicate the movement, it has managed to contain the OLF's operations. The same can be said of other opposition movements in Ethiopia, like the Somali-based Ogaden National Liberation Front, which came to international attention after its troops killed Chinese oil workers in 2007 (*New York Times* 2007), and then in December 2011, when two Swedish journalists travelling with the rebels were jailed for entering Ethiopia illegally (*Reuters* 2011).

None of these movements appear to currently pose any real threat to the Ethiopian government. Indeed, the Ethiopian government appears well entrenched, having survived the potentially destabilising death of its charismatic but dictatorial Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi. Much the same can be said of the groups attempting to overthrow Eritrea's President Isaias Afeworki. Both governments appear capable of meeting the threats posed by rebel movements and opposition parties. A mixture of covert surveillance, ruthless repression and fragmentation has rendered these movements incapable of mounting a real challenge to either government. While it is impossible to predict coups or assassinations, since they involve such small, covert groups, there are few indications that either government is about to be removed.

What about the Sudans?

Sudan (North and South) is an integral part of the Horn of Africa. Anyone who has travelled across its vast territory can be left in no doubt about the interconnections between its peoples. In the past the Sudanese played critical roles in the lives of their neighbours, allowing both the Eritreans and Tigrayan rebels to operate from their soil, while Ethiopia played host to the South Sudanese rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Today, by contrast, Sudan and South Sudan are less involved with the rest of the Horn. Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Kenya in 2005 and the independence of the South in 2011 the two countries have focused on their relations with each other, rather than on playing a role in the region. Relations between Addis Ababa and Khartoum appear to be on a more even keel. Ethiopia is keen to export electricity to Sudan and recently completed a power transmission line that links its grid with neighbouring Sudan (*Sudan Tribune* [online], 19 February 2012). Funded by the World Bank, the $41 million dollar power project will enable Ethiopia to export electricity to Sudan. This could be substantially increased once Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam on the Nile is completed.

Sudan's relations with Eritrea have also improved. Although Asmara used to host Darfur groups like the Justice and Equality Movement, this is a thing of the past. With Eritrea having lost its ally in Colonel Gaddafi, President Isaias has had to mend fences with President Omar al Bashir. In October 2011 the Eritrean leader paid a three-day visit to Sudan in an attempt to cement ties (*Sudan Tribune* [online], 21 October 2011). South Sudan is focusing on the enormously difficult task of building a new state and finding a modus operandi with its northern neighbour. As a result, Khartoum and Juba are keener to woo their neighbours than undermine them.

Is the real problem Eritrea?

It is not difficult to construct a narrative that suggests that Eritrea is the major source of instability in the Horn. This case is eloquently made by the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea established under the United Nations Sanctions Committee. Since 2002 the Monitoring Group have spelled out in extraordinary detail the complex web of links that tie Eritrea to the major rebel movements operating in the Horn, and to al-Shabaab in particular:

> In the course of the current mandate, the Monitoring Group obtained firm evidence of Eritrean support for armed opposition groups throughout the region, including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan. Support for these groups also involves Eritrean diplomatic, intelligence and PFDJ-affiliated networks in Kenya, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates and elsewhere. (UN Monitoring Group 2011, paras. 258–259)

In addition to al Shabaab, the report provides a list of other movements being supported by the Eritrea authorities in violation of Security Council resolutions 1844 (2008) and 1907 (2009) (*ibid*., para. 278). These groups include the:

- Ogaden National Liberation Front
- Oromo Liberation Front
- Afar Liberation Front
- Afar Revolutionary People's Democratic Front (also known as Ugugumo)
- Sidamo Liberation Front
- Tigrayan People's Democratic Movement
- Unidentified fighters from the Amhara and Gambella regions of Ethiopia

The report implicates Libya, Iran and a number of Gulf states in assisting Eritrea in financing these operations, while arms are imported and equipment serviced by Russia, Ukraine and Romania in violation of a UN arms embargo against Eritrea that has been in place since 2009. UN Security Council resolution 1907 should have resulted in sanctions being imposed against the violators. However, as the

Monitoring Report notes, this has not taken place.[4]

Perhaps most tellingly of all, the UN Monitoring Group found that these operations are controlled by President Isaias Afeworki's office (UN Monitoring Group 2011, para. 261). 'Eritrean support for armed opposition groups is directed by a small but efficient team of officers from the National Security Office, the Eritrean military and the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) leadership under the direct supervision of the President's Office'.

This evidence of Eritrean involvement in, and support for, rebel movements operating across the Horn is compelling. What it does not indicate is how effective these measures have been. The movements President Isaias has backed are generally weak and ineffective. This is not to suggest that they could not be destructive. There is evidence that Eritrea attempted to bomb targets around Addis Ababa during the African Union summit in January 2011 by training and supporting members of the OLF (*ibid*., paras. 286 ff.). The attacks were halted through the vigilance of the Ethiopian police and intelligence services. But elsewhere there is little evidence that the groups working out of Asmara pose a real threat to the governments of the region. The exception is al-Shabaab, which still controls large swathes of central and southern Somalia. Yet even here the Islamist group is on the retreat, with Kenya, Ethiopia and the African Union force removing them from many of their strongholds. At least as important has been the gradual development of movements inside Somalia itself that oppose al-Shabaab. Of these, Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a – supported by Ethiopia – is the most powerful (*ibid*., para. 15).

If Eritrean supported movements are generally ineffective or on the back foot, what can be said of movements backed by the Ethiopians? Here the evidence is less compelling, but this is at least in part because there is no counterpart to the UN Monitoring Group probing Addis Ababa's activities with a fine-tooth comb. There is certainly support for Eritrean opposition groups from Ethiopia, which regularly allows these movements to meet and plot against the government in Asmara. There have also been attacks across the border by Ethiopian forces, even though these have been relatively small scale (*BBC News* 2012).

This is not to suggest that Ethiopia is not attempting to destabilise Eritrea. Addis Ababa has repeatedly refused to implement the Boundary Commission report on the disputed border between the two countries, following their war of 1998–2000. The Commission issued its finding on the border on 13 April 2002.[5] For the next four years it attempted to place concrete pillars along the newly designated border. Although Eritrea accepted the ruling as final and binding (as both countries were required to do by the Algiers Peace Treaty that ended the border war) Ethiopia has consistently said it will not do so (UN Security Council 2008).

Ethiopia has insisted that further discussions on the border should take place with Eritrea before implementation of the ruling. Eritrea is equally determined that the demarcation is final and binding in international law and that demands for further discussions are an Ethiopian ploy to reopen the issue. In an attempt to put pressure on the United Nations to ensure the implementation of the Boundary Commission's ruling, Eritrea put in place a series of increasingly severe restrictions on the UN monitoring force along the border (UNMEE). The troops finally had their mandate terminated in July 2008 (*ibid*., paras. 10–14). While Eritrea has played its cards ineptly, Ethiopia must carry most of the blame for the border impasse. Eritrea complains continually that it has abided by its legal requirements and that Addis Ababa would not take this stand without Washington's support – a complaint that has considerable justification.

From the evidence cited above it is clear that Eritrea is a force for instability in the

Horn. At the same time Ethiopia is also ready to meddle in its neighbour's affairs and blocks progress on the border with Eritrea. It is the key issue dividing the two countries, resulting in continual tension between them. It is a conflict that is played out across the Horn through proxies and if Asmara must take the blame for this, then so too must Addis Ababa.

Real change takes place outside of the political sphere

While this paper has looked at the political changes that have caused instability in the Horn it may be that this overlooks the real area of change: the economic situation in countries in the region. Here the story is clear. Ethiopia has enjoyed rapid economic growth in excess of 10% a year since 2004.

This summary of growth is also reflected in GDP per capita growth. Ethiopia is among the top four African states in the period 2009–2012 (UNECA 2012, Figure 1.9). Poverty is also on the decline. The proportion of people below the poverty line at national level measured by the poverty head count index declined from 44.2% in 1999/00 to 38.7% in 2004–2005 (African Development Bank Group 2010). Development was initially led by agriculture, with a rapid increase in flower production. However, growth is increasingly moving towards the service sector. This has been driven by the rapid expansion in banking, public administration and retail business activities.

By contrast, Eritrea has gone into decline. There are few reliable statistical indications of what is really happening in Eritrea. The UN's Economic Commission for Africa fails to provide any data for the country. The International Crisis Group has outlined the crippling impact of having the nation on a permanent war-footing as a result of the ongoing confrontation with Ethiopia (International Crisis Group 2010). Without payments from the Eritrean diaspora it would be hard to see how the country or its people could survive. The one bright spot in the economy has been the mining of gold, which has taken off in recent years.

The picture that emerges from this cursory look at the economic situation is one of a rapid divergence. Ethiopia is enjoying successful growth while Eritrea is at best registering little or no growth at all. Addis Ababa can sit back and enjoy the benefits of prosperity while Asmara slides into decline. If this is accurate then there is little reason for Ethiopia to provoke a confrontation, while Eritrea may be too poor to afford one. This may be another reason for the current apparent stability in the Horn.

US relations with the Horn since the end of the Cold War

It is often forgotten that the Horn was once among the most divisive issues in international politics. Competition between the United States and the Soviet Union was played out in the region. The US's traditional relationship with Ethiopia was

Table 1. Real GDP growth in percentages.

	2004–2008	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 forecast	2012 forecast
Ethiopia	11.8	11.7	12.6	11.5	11.8	11.2	10.0	8.0	7.5	5.5
Eritrea	−1.1	1.5	2.6	−1.0	1.4	−9.8	3.9	2.2	8.2	6.3
Somalia	n/a	2.8	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	n/a	n/a

Sources: Ethiopia and Eritrea: IMF, Regional Economic Outlook, Sub-Saharan Africa, October 2011, Table SA2, Real Non-Oil GDP Growth. Somalia: CIA World Fact book, Somalia, estimates, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html.

disrupted by the overthrow of the Emperor in 1974 and the Soviets gradually (and rather reluctantly) established a relationship with the new government. The Somalis, who had been a Soviet client, were dumped in 1977 when they invaded Ethiopia, with the US finding a new client in the region.[6]

It is worth recalling just how fierce the competition for influence in the region really was. The former director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Robert Gates, said in his memoires that for a three-month period Soviet aircraft were landing in Ethiopia every 20 minutes (Gates 2006, 122). Cuba poured in 11,600 troops and 6000 advisers (Westad 2007, 276). By early 1979 the Soviet experts in Ethiopia and other socialist countries reached more than 7000 and were directing and participating in military operations against rebellions in Eritrea and Tigray (Connell 2003). It was, says one authority on the period, 'the largest foreign assistance programme the Soviets ever undertook after China in the 1950s'.[7] Zbigniew Brzezinski, US National Security Adviser under President Jimmy Carter declared that détente between the superpowers 'lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden'.[8]

The end of the Cold War halted this rivalry. It also reduced American interest in the Horn. In 1995 the US Department of Defence outlined its view of the continent, asserting that: 'ultimately we see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa' (Ploch 2011, 13). The attacks on American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 changed this perspective. The new threat from al-Qaeda put the Horn firmly on the map in the War on Terror. The result was the formation by US Central Command in 2002 of what was called 'Combined Joint Task Force: Horn of Africa (CJTF–HOA)', responsible for fighting terrorism and piracy (Ploch 2011, 20–21).

The Combined Joint Taskforce operates from Djibouti. It has been used by Washington to wage a quiet but effective war against al-Qaeda and its local Somali affiliate, al-Shabaab. It is not possible to give an accurate picture of the extent of this operation, but from time to time there are press reports of naval gunfire directed at Somali locations and drones being fired at targets.[9] The *Washington Post* reports that the US runs some of its drone operations from a base inside Ethiopia (*Washington Post* 2011). 'The Air Force has been secretly flying armed Reaper drones on counterterrorism missions from a remote civilian airport in southern Ethiopia as part of a rapidly expanding US-led proxy war against an al-Qaeda affiliate in East Africa, US military officials said. The Air Force has invested millions of dollars to upgrade an airfield in Arba Minch, Ethiopia, where it has built a small annex to house a fleet of drones that can be equipped with Hellfire missiles and satellite-guided bombs'. There are also reports that the CIA has a covert interrogation centre at Mogadishu's Aden Adde International Airport (*The Nation* 2011).[10]

The priority given to the War on Terrorism has influenced US relations with the Horn in general and Ethiopia in particular. As Human Rights Watch commented in 2008, the international community is prepared to downplay allegations of what it described as war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Somali region, because Washington was determined to maintain good relations with Addis Ababa. 'Ethiopia is viewed by many western governments as a reliable and strategically important regional partner on counter-terrorism efforts' (Human Rights Watch 2008, 118–119).

The historic, if sometimes difficult, relationship between Washington and Addis Ababa has skewed American relations with the Horn as a whole. Given the centrality of these links it is hardly surprising that Eritrea finds its interests marginalised, particularly when it behaves with such lack of regard for international norms. Other US allies in the region, such as Kenya, have to work hard for American backing.[11]

Is stability illusory?

This briefing began by asking whether the Horn of Africa was as crisis ridden as many commentators suggest. Having reviewed some elements of this question it is possible to conclude that the region is indeed relatively stable while at the same time being far from conflict free.

Having pointed to the stability of these countries it is also important to acknowledge that these regimes are not immune to the stresses and strains that afflict all administrations. They may be sufficiently capable and repressive to bottle these up, but in the end no regime has been able to resist its own population forever. Change frequently comes with little warning. Who predicted the fall of the Mubarak regime in Egypt or the end of the Soviet Union? Indeed, in Ethiopia the military committee or Dergue, which took power in June 1974, at first had no intention of ending Imperial rule, yet by 12 September of that year Haile Selassie was overthrown (Giorgis 1989, 12–16).

Perhaps rather than using the term 'crisis', which uses the medical analogy to suggest a point at which a patient may recover or die, it would be better to look to geography and the movement of tectonic plates. Tension builds up until it is unbearable and is then released in a devastating shock or in a series of smaller, less dramatic movements. Earthquakes are impossible to predict and their outcome and severity cannot be foreseen. This would appear to be a rather gloomy view, since it denies the social sciences their predictive powers, but perhaps it paints a more accurate picture of the state of our knowledge in the political affairs of closed and repressive regimes. At present there seems little obvious way forward, but then this region has a habit of taking all observers by surprise.

Note on contributor

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Notes

1. Available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/17/2011_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings.
2. Available at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009_failed_states_index_faq_methodology.
3. See their biographies in Connell and Killion (2011).
4. UN Monitoring Group 2011, para. 254. 'Violators of this resolution face possible targeted measures, including an assets freeze and travel ban. However, as of the time of writing, the Security Council has yet to designate any individuals or entities for such measures'.
5. The Boundary Commission decisions can be found on the website of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. http://www.pca-cpa.org/showpage.asp?pag_id=1150.
6. Ambassador Shinn has provided an admirable summary of just how this developed. See Shinn (2011).
7. *Ibid*., 279.
8. *Ibid*., 282.
9. See for example: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/22/british-al-qaida-suspect-drone-somalia; http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15052484.
10. It is worth noting that the war against piracy has extended to operations on land, with the European Union attacking a pirate base in May 2012 as part of 'Operation Atlanta'. See: http://www.eunavfor.eu/2012/05/eu-naval-force-delivers-blow-against-somali-pirates-on-shoreline/.
11. The US telexes available on Wikileaks provide an insight into Kenya's increasingly desperate attempts to win American support for its planned operation inside Somalia.

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DEBATE

Land dispossession and rural social movements: the 2011 conference in Mali

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Introduction

The simultaneous convergence of financial, food and energy crises in 2009 paved the way for the emergence of one of the most serious global economic and political crises since the Wall Street crash of 1929. Although the financial defaults emerged in the Western countries, the costs of the crisis have been felt everywhere. In Africa in particular the perceived abundance of land and low land prices came to represent for investors a secure form of investment. Many financial companies found themselves in the aftermath of the crisis without a secure location for their speculative 'hot money'. At the same time the rise in food prices, generated by overinvestment and control by financial capital of the food sector, pushed many food insecure states to invest in farmlands.

Processes of land grabbing started to appear, meaning by this the exponential growth of large-scale commercial agricultural deals (Zoomers 2010) that brought to the same negotiating table transnational corporations and Western states, developing countries' governments and traditional authorities. A plethora of interesting academic studies followed, and the global media started to give some attention to the phenomenon. Historically, land dispossession by concessionary companies and colonial states existed for a long time. It has been one of the main processes that have sustained the installation of white colonies in Africa and the persistent exploitation of natural resources. However, the ongoing nature of processes of capitalist enclosure must be placed side by side with change, as the scope and nature of the contemporary forms of land commoditisation showed both discontinuities and continuities of historical significance. Land grabbing, as a new form of capital accumulation and natural resources privatisation, received a lot of interest.

Land grabbing could not be considered as simply an epiphenomenon of the crisis and could not be reduced to agriculture-related production activities. The rush for land was not only driven by the attempt of states and private interests to secure farmlands for agricultural purposes. It was also an outcome of the attempt of transnational corporations and states to convert agricultural land into land devoted to the production of biofuels. So, whether or not the control over agricultural production has been the main factor behind land grabbing, it is evident that land is today at the core of intense social, economic, political and ideological conflicts to determine who has control and access to land and who decides how to use it.

Nowadays land dispossession can be driven by the vertiginous expansion of

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gold extraction in Ghana's artisanal mining communities (Bush 2008), by the savage forest cutting with the consequent expulsion of indigenous communities through war as in the case of the Moyen Cavally in the west of Côte d'Ivoire (Bush *et al.* 2011), by the voracious appetite of the Libyan state that convinced the government in Mali to grant 800,000 ha at zero cost for 99 years to produce rice and maize to be repatriated back to Libya (Lallau 2011; Baxter 2011), by the expanding tourism industry which is transforming collective and communal resources into conservation areas, game reserves and luxurious private resorts and so on in Eastern and Southern Africa (Kelly 2011; Sarukera and Fakir 2004). In all these cases coercive evictions of local populations, dramatic changes in the forms of social organisation and local governance and damage to ecosystems and local economies, represented the norm rather than an exception.

The World Bank, the FAO, IFAD and UNCTAD defined the global land grab as a 'development opportunity' and designed a code of conduct for land deals to fulfil such expectations. The guidelines issued by the joint work of these institutions emphasise the importance of principles of responsible agricultural investments (RAI) such as transparency, respecting land rights, and promoting social and environmental sustainability and consultative practices (FAO *et al.* 2010). Transnational peasant movements have vigorously contested this assault on African land, proposing alternative paradigms of agroecology, food sovereignty and agrarian reforms (*La Via Campesina* 2011). They argue that land grabbing converts areas originally and currently devoted to food production for subsistence and domestic consumption, land devoted to forests, to either food production for exports or production of biofuels (Borras and Franco 2012).

This 'Debate' piece aims to conduct a preliminary analysis of the emerging forms of local, national and international resistance through the lens of the gathering of transnational peasants and civil society organisations held in late November 2011 at Nyéléni in Mali. It will ask how these different organisations came together, what were the political and ideological platforms that cemented alliances, what strategies of resistance and struggle have been proposed and how these, in turn, impact upon processes of agrarian change. This is because the recent literature has often been characterised by a triumphalist attitude towards social movements in general. Those silences in the contemporary scholarship concern 'issues of class relations and other bases of social differentiation and inequalities among farmers and people of the land' (Bernstein and Byres 2008, xi).

Mali conference on resistance to land grabbing

The conference, held in Nyéléni between 17 and 20 November, was organised by the *Confederation Nationale des Organisations Paysannes* of Mali (CNOP) and the *Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (ROPPA), under the stimulus and support of *La Via Campesina* to which these organisations belong. The conference regrouped peasant organisations from Brazil to Indonesia with a vibrant presence of African peasant organisations mostly coming from Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. The conference was also attended by international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who have sympathised with peasant organisations, although from different perspectives, with regard to issues of access to land by indigenous communities. It aimed from its beginning to share experiences and analysis of the current processes of land grabbing, with the aim of cementing alliances and promoting common strategies of struggle.

These struggles have arisen in a context where the dominant discourse has argued that, in response to the rising prices of agricultural commodities and under the pressure of global development institutions, African countries need to develop and modernise their agriculture. The current mainstream narrative implies that they need to develop secure property rights with tangible title deeds in land in order to reassure the investors and propel the functioning of the markets. To do this they need financial resources which are not easily available, especially in this period of financial crisis that has reduced the capacity of African states to borrow money.

Although land grabbing is ravaging the entire African continent, the participation of northern and eastern African organisations has been marginal. The difficulty of including all the geographical regions might be linked on one hand to the lack of financial resources and active communication. On the other it might have been the intended or unintended outcome of the effort to mobilise and integrate regionally based organisations. This is because in many instances African peasant organisations are looking for spaces of political viability within national states. Regional alliances especially within West Africa are moreover being shaped and strengthened with the aim of bringing to the attention of national states the plight of peasant communities and the inauspicious impact of land grabbing. The conflicted role of the state and the centrality of the state strongly emerge: on one hand the state is the force for capital accumulation, it promotes land investments and also regulates the expulsion of peasants, and on the other it has to provide public investments to its rural populations and needs the legitimisation from its own citizens. The state is thus seen as extremely ambivalent, as part of the problem but also a part of the solution.

Starting from analysis, presented by local peasant organisations, of the specificities of the Malian social agrarian formation and of the devastating consequences that global land grabbing is producing in social, political economic and ecological terms, the conference debate proceeded to explore the scope and complexities of incipient processes of land dispossession on a continental scale. Although land dispossession had been a pillar of colonialism as a mode of economic exploitation and political domination, the scope of the contemporary large-scale agricultural deals is without precedent. While the process has gained momentum under the push of transnational corporations, its operation has moved beyond the classical axis of North–South geo-political and agro-economic relations and included also South–South or North–South–South relations. Grabbers are states and multinational corporations which are based not only in the West but also in Brazil, Malaysia, Egypt, China, India, South Africa and so on. Although the nature of the drivers of land grabbing is hugely differentiated – for example, unlike China's investment in Africa, which is led mostly by state-owned companies, Indian investment is mainly led by the private sector – the significance of a(n) (inter)national ruling class, which embodies and expresses the economic and political interests of diverse fractions of capital, is under widespread scrutiny. Data are scattered and difficult to uncover also because many deals are secret, which makes any counting a rough approximation (Global Witness 2012). Early statistics from 2005 to 2009 show that approximately 20 million ha were transferred to foreign investors (Cotula *et al.* 2009; GRAIN 2008). According to the World Bank, 45 million hectares of land have been alienated in 2009 (Voegele 2010, vi). The land acquisitions, which combine both coercive and commercial elements, are presumed to take place on idle, vacant or non-occupied land. This assumption reverberates with the old Latin dictum of *terra nullius* used by colonial powers in order to find a justification for colonial dispossession.

According to this principle, European powers could settle on land which did not belong to anyone. Such presuppositions, besides being very instrumental to the advancement of the combined operation of land dispossession and land law, that is the codification of private property rights, missed fundamental elements of mobility, fluidity and social organisation of African social formations.

As stated by Ibrahim Coulibaly, President of the CNOP, humanity has never been confronted with a problem of such depth, as the actual processes of land alienation represent a denial of historical rights to land of indigenous people, which are centuries or sometimes millennia old (Coulibaly 2011). If we consider that 80% of the population in Mali draws its reproduction from agricultural activities, then we further appreciate the impact of land dispossession, especially in a context of rising global food prices. Farmers' communities have been forcibly evicted from their lands and their lands sold – or in the majority of cases rented – to transnational agribusiness companies, despite the fact that legislation actually in force does not permit this. Governments are therefore playing a vital role in facilitating and accelerating the pace of land acquisitions by foreign companies. As is the case in Mali, foreign companies are even exempted from taxation in an attempt to attract their investments with the aim of forging private–public partnerships. Parastatal companies take a share in the business and turn a blind eye to the social and ecological catastrophes that are being produced. Small-scale, family-based, agriculture that draws its survival from its capacity to mobilise human labour is being replaced by intensive, large-scale, plantation-based agricultural systems mostly based on a more capital-intensive production system. These 'modernised' agricultural enclaves are oriented towards production for export. Consequently, they do not support the growth of local agricultural markets as they are dependent on the importation of machines and chemical fertilisers.

Activists further note that large-scale agricultural deals are fuelling corruption of government officials by foreign investors. The use of public power for private, personal enrichment is profoundly expanding the gap of dialogue between government and the affected communities. Governments regard the international business community as their interlocutor, marginalising the participation in the decision-making of local communities. The relationship between rulers and ruled, elected and electors, is altered and the nexus of responsibility by which they are bound is eroded. This contradiction is manifested in the attempt of the Malian authority to strengthen its business class, enhancing practices of favouritism and fraudulent land allocation while at the same time trying to maintain – not always successfully – order in the rural areas through allied traditional authorities.

Mali case study

An enlightening case study is represented by the current project of 'agricultural modernisation' in Mali. Libya in this case offered its services, providing capital to invest in the land while the Malian government made available 100,000 ha of land in the hydro-agricultural area of the *Office du Niger*. This body had been created by the colonial French administration in 1932 in the surrounding areas of the Niger River up to the city of Segou, to favour irrigation and experimentation. Inherited by the newly independent government in the 1960s, it became a semi-autonomous state agency charged with managing a large area of land with water diverted from the Niger River by the Markala Dam. The purpose was to lease out irrigated land to small-scale holders who would pay for water provided by irrigation schemes, produce rice and engage in market gardening. Small-scale farmers in the *Office du Niger* used to provide more than half of the country's rice needs – 380,000 cubic tons per year (Baxter 2011, 15). In 1996 wider authority on land and water management was given to the *Office du Niger* to the develop the delta of the Niger River, bringing it close to the role of a state within the state.

In 2011, before the *coup d'état*, the secretary of state in Mali in charge of development of the *Office du Niger* started to send out calls for investors, with very good contractual terms and financial conditions. One of these deals involves the participation of an enterprise with 100% Libyan capital, Malibya, to implement the project. The agreement involves a 50-year renewable lease with the intention of producing hybrid rice, tomatoes and livestock. Malibya has the right to use all the surface and subterranean water needed between June and December each year. However, the project requires the creation of infrastructure necessary for the canalisation of water in the area. To this end a Chinese enterprise with a team of topographers and geometers has been charged with building a 40-km canal with the aim of diverting the waters of the Niger into the valley near the Markala Dam (Adamczewski and Jamin 2011). The agreement between Libya and Mali, sanctioned by the Malian code of investments, assumes that the canal has a capacity of 130 cubic metres per second, permitting irrigation using 11 million of cubic metres per day or 4 billion cubic metres per year (*Office du Niger* 2010). However, during the dry season the Niger River cannot provide more than 50 cubic metres of water per second. This problem places to the fore the issue of unequal access to water resources for peasant and fishing communities who depend for their social reproduction on access to natural resources.

Uncaring of the ecological and social consequences of the project, the Malian state seems only interested in dislodging from the land people whose rights are not recognised, preventing them also from having indemnisation. In the name of development the Malian state aims at issuing secure title deeds and property rights as well as creating the legal preconditions for capital investment, promoting land policies that pave the way for land acquisitions. The monopoly of the state coercive power is fully exerted. According to local activists, people who have tried to resist the evictions have been beaten, or arrested. The same area where local peasant communities used to produce sorghum and breeding cattle and sheep for centuries is now being inundated with water, causing a radical change in the ecosystem to produce rice and re-export it to Libya.

A local farmer, Abdousouf, reported that local people have not been included in the discussion of the benefits or the appropriateness of the project and only a few of them have been integrated as rural workers (field notes, November 2011). Only 10,000 workers will be incorporated as rural labourers while the population in the Segou area reaches 2.5 million people. He further noted that those local leaders who opposed the project have been jailed while those who support it have betrayed, the promises made to their people (*ibid.*). The worsening economic conditions have been here used as a sword of Damocles in order to push people to accept small monetary compensations. However, community assemblies unanimously declared their opposition to the compensation, which is just 'a drop in the ocean' and cannot be a substitute for life-long livelihood strategies. Moreover, the impact of land expropriation is already being felt on the ground. According to local sources there is already an ongoing migratory process towards urban areas as the viability of the 'peasant way of life' has been drastically undermined. Edy Jara, a farmer of Kolongo, the place where the Malibya project starts, declared that the project is in its implementation phase and already 170 villages that have been there for 500 years have been taken away (field notes, November 2011). Jara also complains that local inhabitants have not been informed about the logistics and the schedule of the project. So when infrastructural work started, crops had still to be harvested. He claimed that the infrastructural works had violated the place where the graves of their ancestors lay (*ibid*.).

Theoretical and organisational implications of the conference

Does this means that – when respected – these principles of 'responsible agricultural investment' can mitigate the negative consequences of land grabbing and create opportunities that might be beneficial to local communities? The peasant organisations that have animated the 'Stop Land Grabbing' conference have been clear about the impossibility of finding a middle way. Land grabbing cannot be mediated. There is no such a thing as responsible land grabbing. The violent process of separation of the agricultural producers from their means of production and social reproduction represents an outcome which cannot be compensated for with a small amount of money. Land to Africans does not represent a factor of production to be added into the general formula of capital accumulation; it is a mixture of territory, culture, relations with ancestors, dynamic equilibrium with nature, and a perpetual source of livelihoods and social security. It is in other words their *dominium eminens* [eminent domain] (Mafeje 1991).

However, the other side of land grabbing is given by the mobilisations of farmers' organisations that are resisting forceful expulsion from their lands and the consequent privatisation of the countryside. The conference in Mali was essentially planned with the aim of sharing experiences on a continental scale on practices of land expropriation, developing common analysis and expanding international solidarity alliances with groups sympathetic to their plight.

Under the impetus of the transnational peasant movement, *La Via Campesina*, the conference produced a fruitful exchange of experiences between peasant organisations, establishing the preconditions to forge a global alliance against land grabbing. Learning from the experiences on the ground in Latin America, East Asia and Africa above all, has helped the movement to reach a common understanding of the phenomenon and therefore gain authenticity and reality. As specified by Paul Nicholson, one of the historical leaders of *La Via Campesina*, the forging of a global alliance is aimed not only at discrediting and fighting land grabbing; it means supporting a family-based agricultural model (Nicholson, interview, November 2011). This is not an ephemeral struggle against capitalist and neoliberal policies; it is a struggle to defend common goods and natural assets that are vital to agricultural, pastoral and fishing communities. It is therefore an ideological contest between the model of large-scale chemically intensive industrialisation of agriculture and a model of small-scale ecologically sustainable family farming. While land grabbing has been considered by some international development agencies as an improvement, a step towards the modernisation of the economy, peasant activists are contesting the notion that technology is a solution to fight hunger. Rather than a model of agriculture based on fertilisers and incipient biotechnologies, peasant movements are struggling to defend agro-ecology as the only socially and environmentally viable system of agricultural production and exchange. The latter provides an alternative because of its intensive utilisation of labour which limits the depth of under-employment and reduces the rural exodus experienced in the last few decades. It mitigates the 'artificialisation' of ecosystems while at the same time reducing the environmental pollution and over-exploitation of rural work. Finally, it enhances the development of local markets as well as favouring the relationship with other social groups such as artisans in their profitable economic interactions (Lallau 2011).

Peasant movements reject technical solutions to development and are against the spoliations of the land of the world, the enclosing of water sources and the patenting of seeds. Farmers' communities and rural workers need to mould global alliances to strengthen the democratic power of the people and build a development model based on agro-ecology and food sovereignty. This is not a struggle that concerns only rural people; it is a social struggle that requires the effort of multiple social components in each country and globally (Nicholson, interview, November 2011). Therefore besides highlighting the gravity of the process and the devastating social and ecological consequences of land grabbing, activists tried to elaborate common visions, articulate praxis of struggle and guiding principles to enforce the fight against land grabbing, promote encompassing and redistributive agrarian reforms and defend a socially based use of the soil and natural resources.

Land grabbing therefore constituted the common denominator in the Mali conference that pushed many distant rural communities to share their experiences and discuss hypotheses and forms of struggle. Fragmented and often disconnected from each other and from the wider political arena on a continental scale, peasant organisations face a David against Goliath scenario within which the coercive power of public or private armies of nation states and transnational corporations is brutally deployed. Thus, the strategy of moulding continental and global alliances goes hand in hand with the attempt to consolidate a political praxis and ideology aimed at carving out movements of resistance to the neoliberal hegemony. Social movements in Africa have been described as a 'nightmare' by Joao Pedro Staedile, one of the leaders of the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST). Although not structured in the form of a large assemblage of politicised organisations of peasants, landless or and rural workers as it has been and is the case of Latin and Central America, the practice of community-based, indigenous-led social resistance has been diffused, and such resistance has taken a central stage in the struggles over land. It seems that African social movements gained momentum especially as a result of the African social forums in Nairobi in 2007 and in Maputo in 2008. The current practices of land expropriation on a continental scale are creating the common ground, which is promoting the cementing of political alliances. After 15 to 20 years of mobilisation initiated by the transnational peasant network *La Via Campesina*, the organisation of the anti-land grabbing conference in Mali constitutes a landmark in the trajectory of social struggles in the African countryside.

Organisational modalities of rural social movements

In the first instance, the relationship between the global, regional, national and local organisations should be placed under serious scrutiny. This is because the relationships between different organisations that meet within these spaces of discussion and organisation enormously impact upon the issue framing and demand-making. Often it happens that the transmission of knowledge and experiences by stronger peasant organisations to the smaller ones inhibits the endogenous and autonomous process of analysis and evaluation of the problem and making demands in accordance with historical, geographical and sociological peculiarities and specificities.

The creation of a hierarchy within Transnational Agrarian Movements has also been identified by Belletti *et al.*

(2008) with reference to the relationship between the MST in Brazil and one of its branches, the Landless People's Movement in South Africa. This development of a hierarchy emerged by the cross-contamination in the global scene. They argue that stronger organisations play an hegemonic role in the determination of appropriate theories and interpretations of land grabbing as well as of practices of struggle and resistance (*Ibid*.). This is tantamount to 'homogenising' the multiple and dialectic insights coming from a variegated array of historical and geographical experiences and instances of resistance to land grabbing by local communities during colonial and post-colonial periods. It also consciously or unconsciously sets up a series of predetermined steps and strategies that need to be replicated in order to achieve the successful experiences of stronger movements. This also tends to underplay the importance of differentiated drivers and catalysts of organised political action and mobilisation.

In the specific case of ROPPA and CNOP, the former a regional network that regroups different peasant organisations, the latter one of the most consolidated organisations of peasants and small farmers in the region, it is important to stress the variegated repertoire of actions and sites of struggles in which they have been involved, opposing WTO meetings, GM crops and test sites, unfair trade rules and market-based land reforms (Borras *et al.* 2008, 30). These peasant organisations have also struggled for innovative approaches to development within the national and international arenas. It is imperative, however, to recognise the salience of the role of local structures of authority and power, often articulated through ethnic belonging, in enhancing mobilisations from below. Traditional chiefs have also represented a transmission belt of coercion and violence from the state to the local communities. They have often been caught in cases of corruption. Nonetheless it is not rare to find cases where grievances and forms of localised resistance gained momentum also because of the involvement of local leaders and traditional authorities in opposing violent dispossession of land. Land in this case embodies a set of identity practices and histories that forge new contours of peasant class consciousness which, rather than simply based on objective material conditions, is the outcome of a convergence of multiple meanings around the notion of land as a territory. This multi-dimensional understanding of land, interpreted not as an economic asset, not as a factor of production but as the nucleus of historical, social, cultural, political and ecological practices reveals the significance of the new notion of land sovereignty as the core of a new paradigm.

Organisations like the CNOP and other African peasant organisations have however maintained high degrees of autonomy, having been able to depict themselves as the social actors who have been at the forefront of the contestations of state-imposed agricultural neoliberal policies of the 1980s. In other words, African peasant organisations have a heritage of experiences and struggles that make them the legitimate actors in the political arena around which to catalyse an effort of mobilisation.

Discourses of international NGOs

Another point worthy of examination refers to the relationship between peasant organisations and NGOs. The Mali conference in fact was organised and funded mainly by the hosting organisations – CNOP and ROPPA – although some funding has also been received by NGOs. In the course of a number of years, the relationship between social movements and civil society organisations has been dual in character. In some cases NGOs have used their logistical, financial and organisational capacities to support mobilisation around specific causes marshalled by social movements. In other cases NGOs have used their influence and financial capacity to bring to the public attention themes and issues that pertain to their specific social and political agenda and objectives. The recent global focus on land grabbing has been prolonged not only by resurgent rural struggles against land commoditisation but also by the attention of international media and NGOs. Today, many civil society organisations, NGOs and think tanks are talking of land grabbing. They support meetings and conferences around the world on this subject and offer advocacy to local civil society and communities as well as engaging in debates with government officials in the global South to reach sustainable solutions to this challenge.

With few exceptions, much of the discourse articulated by NGOs and think tanks that adhere to the International Land Coalition on land grabbing is framed in a legalistic and rights-based approach that tends to misunderstand the nature of power relations, which are enmeshed within legal institutions, and ignores the complexities of socio-economic forces at play. From a blinkered scrutiny the issue of land grabbing is seen as lack of a legal right to land, but law and legal institutions are the crystallisation of political and economic complexes that articulate into specific social relations that determine access, control and use of land. This discourse produces a universalising and homogenising tendency that makes individualised, formalised, private property the sanctuary of the protection of people's rights to land. The absence of titling and private property explains land grabbing, and gives to it its justification. The discourse of obscure customary rights that cannot prevent land grabbing because they are inadequately formalised does not withstand historical scrutiny and does not do justice to the numerous resistances produced in the same process of land dispossession and labour commoditisation.

Formalising land rights through freehold, leasehold and certificates of customary ownership as is occurring nowadays in Uganda, or through the Traditional Property Associations as in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, reveals the existence of pressures to expand land markets and enhances processes of accumulation by dispossession in the countryside in the form of mining exploitation, forestry industry, agribusiness and enclosing land for tourism. Framing the issue of land grabbing in the universalising lexicon of legally enforced and secured land rights distances us from an accurate understanding of locally based social relations, the relations of power between different classes and land tenure regimes, their genealogy, their transformations and how these in turn are related to the modes of land use and political organisation. While some human rights mechanisms have revealed the importance of defending the victims, a strictly legalistic and institutional approach to the land and agrarian questions obscures the social and political dynamics of 'societies structured in dominance' (Hall 1980). In particular, it obscures how the state manipulates differential access to civic and political rights in order to constantly produce uneven power and class relationships.

The idea that secure land property rights are the necessary condition to enhance poverty alleviation mechanisms by developing rural land markets and creating access to credit is postulated by Hernando de Soto (de Soto 2000). In his view, long-term rural development is engendered 'by bringing life into a dead asset', land. It takes place through a virtuous process that starts with titling, formalising and securing access to land and completes its course with access to rural credit by using land as collateral. In many historico-geographical settings in Africa the affirmation of private property tends to occur at the expense of other historical notions and forms of ownership that have played an important socio-cultural role in the structuring of equilibrated relations with the environment. In countries like South Africa, Mali, Tanzania and Uganda the expansion of private property in the countryside is synonymous with increased processes of class formation and social stratification at the local level. Such governments, through national land policies, and capitalist interests place increased pressures for more commercialisation and market integration of small-scale farming via secure land rights as a catalyst for rural investments. The form this takes in its productive aspects is the coexistence of small-scale farming that is constantly under the exaction of state taxation and merchant classes' surplus extraction, with large-scale plantations farming that has highly intensive use of chemicals, irrigation schemes and external market orientation. The unevenness in the land holding pattern that it drives is expressed in increasingly individualised, privatised and male-dominated claims to land and notions of landownership. It therefore inhibits the constitutive potential of collective reclaiming of access to common goods and natural resources under different denominations, being then based on communal or collective (ethnic) membership or constituted by use groups of women and youths, landless and rural poor. Individualising land rights unavoidably means demarcating, consolidating and protecting and securing property in an exclusionary way. It is also translated into a process of enclosing spaces which prevents or potentially undermines access to the commons.

This NGO segment of international civil society, whose existence is inextricably linked to the funding of European governments, global development agencies and private foundations and to the geopolitical exigencies of foreign policies of Western countries, is in fact promoting supposedly win–win solutions to make land grabbing workable and socially acceptable. In fact, they seem to accept uncritically the set of RAI (Responsible Agricultural Investments) principles that are paraded as the inducement through which a discourse and practice of responsible agricultural development are framed. This global process of capitalist enclosing must be read, as the development sociologist Fouad Makki (2011) defines it, as development by dispossession. Alternative discourses to land grabbing should also pay more attention to the role of community organisation and resistance articulated into what Scott would define as 'the weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985). Analyses and testimonies of peasant and family farmers, rooted in the peculiarity of local, cultural, ecological and geographical narratives of place and space, have revealed experiences of land dispossession. The anti-land grabbing conference in this regard expressed without exception a rebuttal of the 'everyone wins' myth and of ultra-neoliberal policies of the World Bank and other global development institutions.

Conclusion

There is an urgency to undertake community organisation work on the actual or potential site of land grabbing, which is often different to the site of mass-based organisations. Local actions are crucial, but these have been easily defeated by the forces of reaction. There is therefore a need for coordinating local, national, regional and global collective action. Negotiation with central states is very important in order to integrate within the national political agenda the issues of land privatisation and dispossession, but this has to be combined with militant action. Without militant forms of action complementing state negotiations, there is no clear leverage and pressure. The difficulty in consolidating structures of militant political action comes also from the fact that land grabbing has a differential impact on different social groups. There is moreover the recognised need to move beyond defensive struggles that happen in the face of land dispossession towards more constitutive, engaging and offensive struggles that project the front of the struggle into different political, social, economic and cultural domains with the aim of securing equitable access to the commons and transforming the language and praxis of politics. With the insights of historical analysis, the capitalist enclosures today are just the latest episode in capitalist land grabbing initiated during the global colonial enterprise. This anti-capitalist characterisation is not only nominal, it rather has to be interpreted to open up the debate over the social forms and practices of resistance, their discursive and constitutive powers as well as to ascertain the different claims of multiple subject positions to access, control and use of the common goods. Against a capitalist mode of agrarian exploitation that promotes land privatisation and concentration, social movements and rural communities on the African continent are debating and experimenting with alternatives.

Note on contributor

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BOOK REVIEW

Security beyond the state: private security in international politics, by Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams, Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 272 pp., £19.99, ISBN 9780521154253

This is an extremely well written book on the political economy of private security and sovereignty in a globalised world, with four excellent and well-crafted case studies from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Kenya and South Africa. The book draws explicitly on sociology, criminology and international relations besides various takes on neoliberalism and globalisation and perhaps less explicitly on post-structuralist theory, to develop its perspective and analysis. The books starts out by demystifying the issue of private security, which has often been conflated with spectacular events from the frontlines in Iraq and the deeds of infamous private military companies like Executive Outcomes in Africa. Instead of the spectacular they zoom in on the incredible growth, multidimensional relationships to the state and overlooked pervasiveness of private security companies as the sector more broadly gains prominence, linked to changes in international politics, corporate organisation and global governance. The book traces the emergence and expansion of the truly global industry from its primarily northern European moorings to the various corners of the African continent in a detailed while still clear and concise manner.

Theoretically, the book has several errands that are explored in greater detail in the case studies, which focus on protection of natural resources and oil extraction in Sierra Leone and Nigeria and everyday security provision in urban South Africa and Kenya. As has become rather common, Abrahamsen and Williams in part abandon the Weberian notion of the state as defined by its monopoly of legitimate violence – but, in contrast to many studies, they do so without losing track of how the pervasiveness of private security becomes intertwined with and allows for state authority and power to become reconfigured and even bolstered in some cases. This is a great advantage, as by adopting Bourdieu's analytical lens they can explore the different configurations of authority and power in the form of symbolic and cultural capital through an analysis of the fluctuating power dynamics at different scales and levels (global/local) as well as between the state and non-state actors like private security companies. In other words, their perspective allows for an analysis of private security provision that captures the 'multiple forms of power available to the participating actors' (88) without making it a priori antithetical or adverse to state authority. As they show in the case studies, the newish security configurations that emerge as a consequence of the changes to national and global governance allow African states to bolster their authority, whether in practice or symbolically, despite challenges to their sovereignty, whilst yet catering for a profound enmeshment of the public/private and global/local.

Conceptually, Abrahamsen and Williams develop the idea of 'global security assemblages' that are 'simultaneously global and local and that treat public and private as relational, not opposed, categories' (13). Using Bourdieu's analytical lens once again – this time his field perspective – they emerge at the notion of such global security assemblages as 'boundary fields' constituted by and operating through diverse forms of power which are neither purely 'private, nor public, neither local, nor global but mark analytical spaces that lie between these common distinctions and require their own empirical investigations' (218). Drawing on the concept of assemblages, which today has become one of the most hip concepts, is highly interesting and works despite – or maybe because – the authors never really define it as they do with all other key concepts used in the book. Instead the concept is used mostly as a 'descriptive term' (95) to capture effects of ongoing processes of state disassembly and reassembly, where private security creates 'complex hybrid structures' assembling actors, knowledge, technologies, norms and values that draw on but cannot be reduced to dichotomies like global/national and public/private (*ibid*.). Thereby the authors avoid being theoretically camped in the rather limited post-structuralist and post-colonial parts of the social and political sciences normally associated with the concept of assemblage, either through the Latourian science and technology studies or the older Deleuzian work on agencement. Key here is that Abrahamsen and Williams still derive the main benefits from (at least) the Deleuzian version, emphasising the constant processes of arranging, organising and fitting together implicated by global security assemblages instead of the static terms usually applied to the field of private security.

This allows the authors to move beyond analysing security through conventional institutions like the police, military and justice without throwing these institutions out with the bathwater. Through the concept of global security assemblages used as a heuristic device, Abrahamsen and Williams manage with great veracity to work across the different case studies while still making key theoretical claims and providing new conceptual tools for engaging with the remarkable rise in private security provision globally as well as in Africa in particular. This process seems to be even more pronounced due to changes in the global political economy during the past five years that have made it highly profitable for foreign companies to develop Africa's vast natural resources. As Africa now finds itself in the midst of a substantial extractive industries boom, Abrahamsen and Williams' book provides scholars with key tools for analysing security beyond the state and maybe even beyond security, and this is no small feat.

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BOOK REVIEW

Chronique d'une transition, by Kmar Bendana, Tunis, Les Editions Script, 2011, 213 pp., 8 DT/10 €, ISBN 9789973027856

La face cachée de la révolution tunisienne: Islamisme et occident, une alliance à haut risque, by Mezri Haddad, Tunis, Arabesques, 2011, 392 pp., 20 DT/20 €, ISBN 9789938801934

The two books in this review present oposing perspectives on President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's exile from Tunisia on 14 January 2011. The key difference is that Kmar Bendana's *Chronique d'une transition* seeks historical understanding of a social movement whose influence expanded outwards, while Mezri Haddad's *La face cachée de la révolution tunisienne: Islamisme et occident, une alliance à haut risque* insists that the 'true' actors in the revolution were the US and the 'television-state' of Qatar, fuelling the Tunisian 'horde' from outside. Given the cacophony of Internet traffic, these approaches need not be mutually exclusive. They can be reconciled by Samir Amin's preface in Mezri Haddad's book: he agrees with the author that there is an alliance between Washington, reactionary forces and Muslim brotherhoods, but he also recognises the role of progressive forces.

Bendana's *Chronique d'une transition* is a collection of 17 short texts written between January and November 2011. Many of these were published as online articles by *La Presse de Tunisie* and aim to document the reactions, political atmosphere and tensions that followed Tunisia's revolution. The book begins with a chronology of events from the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in December 2010 to the elections a year later. This timeline usefully incorporates key dates of demonstrations and uprisings in Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Libya, Bahrain, Morocco and Syria.

As a historian, Kmar Bendana uses the tools of her discipline to formulate debates and questions that were previously forbidden. She explores historical precedents to the uprising that 'cracked a numb geopolitical order' (69). The Thala–Kassrine uprisings in 1906, student unrest in 1968, protests against collectivisation in 1969, trade union movements in 1978, bread riots in 1984, and strikes in the mining area of Gafsa in 2008 are examples of social movements led by workers, unemployed youth and students. In this long view, the author argues that the martyrs of the revolution, named in the inauguration of the National Constituent Assembly, should be joined by the 56 people killed in the Gafsa strikes.

In the text titled 'A democratic transition for the archives?', Kmar Bendana focuses on the challenge to make national archives accessible to the new national committee on excess, violations and abuse (93). Continuing with the book's theme of information flows, the author evokes the public mood of curiosity after a life of apathy, captured in popular fascination with the enormous fortunes of Ben Ali and his wife, Leïla Trabelsi (66). Bendana does not hold back from documenting the euphoria, confusion and tension surrounding the rapid spread of information in the aftermath of Ben Ali's departure. This collection of texts promises to be a valuable social history, which is grounded in observation of the private sphere and public engagement via the Tunisian media.

There is a deliberate avoidance of grand political explanations in *Chronique d'une transition*, and neither are there claims of activism, but some texts present a cutting critique of post-revolutionary phenomena including the 'restoration' of first President Habib Bourguiba in national politics and the linked feminist debate. Bourguiba's Code of Personal Status developed a 'feminist country' in which polygamy was banned among other measures aimed at equality, but this did not destroy the patriarchal order. Hence the essay '2/32: Ratio of transition?' decries the small number of female ministers (38). Bendana claims that the social heritage of feminism has been perverted into a surface ideology and 'export commodity' that is sold by diplomats and lauded by short-sighted foreign governments (37). In 'The return of Bourguiba: a return of politics?', she argues that the legacy of this autocratic Supreme Commander who confronted France, combatted obscurantism and triumphed over a divisive history, is now open to use and abuse (53).

Moving now to the account of a neo-Bourguibist, *La face cachée de la révolution tunisienne* is a searing analysis of the 'Arab spring'. Mezri Haddad was Tunisia's ambassador to UNESCO until he resigned in the eleventh hour of Ben Ali's reign. He is also a scholar and a journalist. All three vocations are evident in the book, but the dominant voice is that of an ardent political agent. Haddad was in favour of democratic transition rather than revolution and identifies members of Tunisia's *ancien régime* who might have supported this, were it not for mafia rule and particularly the excesses of Leïla Trabelsi. He identifies foremost as a patriot and his nationalism is rationalised by the connections between social movements, foreign neoliberalism and religious fundamentalism.

Chapter 1, 'Sources of political consciousness', is mainly autobiographical and discusses the motives for including a significant personal element in the book: these include Haddad's desire to challenge his detractors and explain the circumstances of resignation, the imbrication of his private and political life, and the need for transparency (37–9). Chapter 2, 'The non-conformism of an ambassador', documents the relationship with Ben Ali and resignation from UNESCO more closely. Insisting that he was not jumping ship, Haddad explains that his ambivalence towards the Internet meant he was unable to see the fall of the regime coming and was uninformed about the recent violence (159). Chapter 3, 'The revelations of a free man', presents an 'autopsy' of the revolution, which the author insists was a 'cyber-revolution' rather than a classical revolution, the former being orchestrated and the latter spontaneous. There is a detailed exploration of Facebook and the Anonymous movement, here linked with the CIA, and of the manipulative powers of Qatar's Al-Jazeera channel. Chapter IV, 'The insubordination of an intellectual', produces an interesting analysis of connections between US foreign policy and political Islam. Following this, he addresses the young 'Internauts', warning them against opportunists (328).

Although Haddad refutes the criticism that he treats the Tunisian people as 'frenzied hordes' (37), there is an underlying cynicism in the book. He denounces Facebook, but reveals that he deployed this media tool to conspire against two politicians, taking revenge for the downfall of a political associate (168). In the founding of the *Mouvement Néo-Bourguibiste*, Haddad launched a 'media counter-offensive' against public accusations towards a different ally (369). These manoeuvres are legitimised by claims that Bourguibism is the only doctrine that can democratically challenge Islamism (363). What appears, however, is a power struggle within the elites in which the people, seen as a bloc, merely bear the imprint of the most powerful ideology.

It is important that media manipulation of public opinion is closely examined and exposed. It is essential that the specifics of the relationship between neoliberal forces, 'rebel' movements and political Islam are identified. Haddad's book contains interesting detail and lines of enquiry to this end. One such line is the suggestion that Qatar's state apparatus might be seen as a hub between the axes of Washington/Israel and the Arab world (371). However, this primary aim of the book is somewhat clouded by personal vendettas and vitriol against his 'cyber-lynchers', materialising in the growing prevalence of exclamation marks that attempt to coerce the reader into submission.

Aside from these latter criticisms, it is clear in both books that the authors are in service to a country in turmoil and this is evidenced in their choice to publish through Tunisian channels rather than the global media.

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BOOK REVIEW

Urban appropriation and transformation: bicycle taxi and handcart operators in Mzuzu, Malawi, by Ignasio Malizani Jimu, Mankon, Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2008, 141 pp., £18.95, ISBN 9956558753

Ignasio Malizani Jimu's book is about informal responses to urban poverty and urban unemployment in Mzuzu city, Malawi. He illuminates linkages between rapid urbanisation, increases in urban poverty and unemployment and the growth of the urban informal economy as a refuge for young people unable to secure formal sector jobs. Jimu's point of departure is the fact that Malawi is experiencing high urban growth rates driven by natural population increases and more so by high rates of rural–urban migration. Every year many young people flock from rural areas to towns and cities such as Mzuzu to look for better socio-economic opportunities associated through historical times with cities (1). In Malawi – as in many other African countries – these young people are also pushed to towns and cities by a complex myriad of factors. These include (but are not limited to): low levels of rural economy development hence excessively low economic activity; lack of economic diversification; low development of transport and communication infrastructure hence high transaction costs; limited access to farming inputs; risks of natural shocks, adverse weather, crop and animal diseases; and physical insecurity as a result of political violence. In addition, droughts, floods, declining land–people ratios, falling soil fertility and rising costs of farm inputs have undermined optimism in rural Malawi and raised doubts about the sustainability of agro-based livelihoods (29). It is no longer profitable nor a viable livelihood option for most families to continue with agriculture in rural Malawi. These harsh realities have pushed many young people to migrate from rural to urban centres such as Mzuzu in search of 'greener pastures', accelerating Malawi's urbanisation in the process. Consequently, Malawi is one of the fastest urbanising countries in the world with the urban population growing at an annual rate of 4.6% per annum against the national average population growth of 2% per annum (38). Such rapid urbanisation is confirmed by the UN which estimates that by 2015 more than 44% of Malawians will be urban dwellers.

However, rapid urbanisation in Malawi does not mean economic prosperity, poverty reduction and increased employment opportunities in cities such as Mzuzu. As Jimu underlines, the prevailing rate of urban population growth is not commensurate with the growth of the formal economy (45), hence the formal economy cannot absorb all new job seekers. Consequently, many young Malawians discover that the 'grass is not greener in cities' as they fail to secure formal sector jobs. Jimu summarises: 'the economic challenges that recent rural–urban migrants encounter, at least in the initial stages of their stay in towns and cities, revolve around limited employment opportunities and slim chances of ever getting meaningful and rewarding employment' (1). Thus, migrating does not mean an end to poverty for these young people as they discover upon arrival in urban centres. Instead, they face the harsh reality of entering an urban environment experiencing increasing poverty levels that were pegged at over 60% in the early 2000s (2) and have increased since then as Malawi has become poorer due to the failed neoliberal macro-economic policies pursued by former presidents Bakili Muluzi and Bingu Wa Mutharika.

These increasing urban poverty levels and unemployment – especially after the failed neoliberal policies of the 1990s to early 2000s – have been one of the main drivers behind the growth and expansion of the informal economy in Malawi. Out of economic desperation, many urban unemployed young people have ventured into the informal economy to create jobs for themselves and earn a living. This was the case for Jimu's respondents who were bicycle taxi and handcart operators in Mzuzu city. These bicycle taxis and handcarts represent transport options with significant socio-economic and environmental benefits for the operators and their clients. Relatively lower costs make them convenient options for passenger and freight services for the low income and over relatively longer distances (4). By linking various informal and formal socio-economic activities within urban spaces, these bicycle taxis and handcarts serve as modes of urban transformation. Although Jimu did not succeed in gathering exact amounts of daily or monthly incomes, his qualitative assessments, approximations and other indirect measures show that these informal activities make a significant contribution to the economic life of the operators and their families (94). Approximated daily incomes are higher and more regular than in other informal occupations averaging US$2 to US$7 (125). These earnings are used to meet minimum daily nutritional requirements, as well as other needs such as clothing, education, housing rentals and transportation. This suggests that operating in this subsector of the informal economy in Mzuzu city is an economically rewarding enterprise and a means for negotiating challenges associated with urban poverty and unemployment. For Jimu, this is also a demonstration of the agency, capability, creativity and ingenuity of the urban masses denied or deprived access to orthodox and formal economic opportunities. These activities stand out as creative and imaginative ways of appropriating urbanisation. They also showcase grassroots responses to widespread poverty, unavailability of meaningful employment opportunities and the failure of the state as well as the private and non-state sectors to respond to escalating demand for formal sector jobs.

Jimu is however careful not to romanticise these grassroots responses to urban unemployment as he correctly notes that bicycle taxis and handcart operators are beset by numerous challenges. These include stiff competition among themselves and with minibus operators; instability of income as it fluctuates responding to cycles of household incomes and expenditure patterns, unsound small business practices due to lack of business management skills; limited access to credit due to lack of collateral; non-payment of fares by some unscrupulous clients; frequent road accidents, sometimes fatal, due to congestion on the narrow city roads; problems of organisation and cooperation among the operators; and theft of bicycles by thugs who disguise themselves as clients (71). These constraints obviously affect net income returns and the overall socio-economic contribution of these informal businesses to the livelihoods of the operators and their families. Some of these challenges are not unique to this sub-sector of the informal economy in Malawi but cut across the entire informal economy in Africa.

Given the contribution of the informal economy to the livelihoods of many urban unemployed, one would expect the Malawi government to institute interventions that support increased efficiency, profitability, growth and sustainability of these small businesses. But alas, just as in so many other African countries, this is not the case. The Malawi government's lack of positive interventions in this sub-sector implies lack of commitment by local and national government officials to institute strategies that can guarantee better business environments and returns for the poor eking a living in the informal economy (72). This government inaction trivialises the informal economy even though it is a direct product of its failed neoliberal macro-economic and employment creation policies. Trivialisation of the informal economy is framed in 'unofficial' discourse that sees it as a problem, disorganised and causing urban disorder in Mzuzu. This belittling language (which is regurgitated by the media) questions the very existence of informal non-motorised modes of transport in cities with a tone that is degrading to the humanity of the operators and disparaging to the users of such services (3). These operators who are trying to exercise ingenuity by creatively responding to desperate economic situations created by the failure of the state to provide essential services and employment, are quite often the subject of state sponsored stigma and oppression. This is a contradiction because while this trivialisation and criminalisation of informality by the authorities continues, the official Malawi government discourse on pro-poor growth is dominated by the need to empower the poor economically as encapsulated in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The Malawi government is speaking in a 'forked tongue': how can it talk of empowering the urban poor when it does so little to support poor bicycle taxi and handcart operators (and others in the informal sector) who are using their own initiative and ingenuity in an attempt to economically empower themselves?

In conclusion, Jimu argues that while many urban informal sector activities in Malawi have grown without state support to this date, state involvement is necessary to regulate and promote the growth of the sector and the welfare of the workers as well as the users of their services and the general public. Such constructive state engagement with the operators and users of their services, adds Jimu, will be an acknowledgement that urban informal economy workers are not simply people who have lost out on the struggle for formal economy opportunities. Rather they are people attempting meaningful ways to address the real causes of poverty at a level that even the state with its agents of development and oppression cannot reach.

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BOOK REVIEW

South–South cooperation: Africa on the centre stage, edited by Renu Modi, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 272 pp., £61.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780230248854

Renu Modi's edited book is a significant contribution that chronicles the emerging counter-hegemonic South–South development paradigm with a particular focus on Africa. Viewed against the background of most literature that documents the hierarchical international economic and political relations of North–South development since decolonisation, the book is a unique effort to map out the various contours of a revitalised South–South relation that is not wedded to the dominant international development cooperation discourse.

The authors regard South–South Development Cooperation (SSDC) as a process of economic, cultural and technical cooperation which has no strings attached for the mutual benefit of the participating countries. SSDC thus contrasts to the economic and political conditionality of the development loans from Bretton Woods' institutions to developing countries, particularly in the 1980s. The authors investigate the normative and theoretical underpinnings informing the SSDC, as well as practical issues which arise from the socio-political and complex economic relations of particular SSDC groups such as the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). By drawing on the experiences of Asia and Latin America with similar demographic trend to African countries, other areas explored in the book relate to food and energy security; 'medical tourism of African patients' to India (117); and the role of regional economic communities in SSDC. The book thus foregrounds the utility of SSDC as an alternative development platform for African countries to fund their development projects. Far from conceiving the SSDC as a finished project, the authors identify various areas – such as institutionalising the structure of SSDC and the development of physical infrastructure – that need to be strengthened in order to facilitate its operations.

Although the book is not an archival work, in many ways it raises important questions about the role of the past and its significance in understanding the uniqueness of the current SSDC narrative in Africa today. The notion of South–South Cooperation in itself is not a novel phenomenon. It is historically grounded in many past events and resistance efforts across the Third World since the end of the Second World War. Indeed, Ned Bertz rightly observes that despite the proposed SSDC model for development being firmly rooted in historical precedents, its 'globalized antecedents usually go unacknowledged' (62). Bertz's contribution draws on major historical references in presenting the continuities and fluidities in the Indian Ocean context since the colonial encounter, but few other chapters follow his approach. Given the book's focus on Africa's political economy, a more contextual historical focus on Africa's particular past engagement with South–South Cooperation efforts would have been useful. For instance, the quest to rationalise how African countries can harness the new relationships with emerging powers such as BRICS to establish an alternative counter-hegemonic global economic and governance framework favourable to them (Chapter 3), raises significant questions about Africa's past attempts at South–

South Cooperation. While some references are made to historically important moments like the Non-Aligned Movement and the New International Economic Order agenda of the 1970s, a more rigorous contextual analysis of these earlier experiences would have helped to better distinguish the uniqueness of the contemporary SSDC practice in Africa from past efforts especially in view of the heterogeneous nature of the SSDC which spans Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America. Hence, beyond the call by Ned Bertz that South–South Cooperation be historicised, emphasis also needs to be placed on the trajectory of Africa's specific past relations within the South in order to provide for a more nuanced historical narrative particular to the continent.

Modi's other contribution in the book examines the concept of 'medical tourism' by African patients to India – itself a member of the BRICS coalition with strong presence in the economic sphere in Africa. Modi argues that the proximity of India to many African countries, its high level of expertise and comparative cost advantage over the West, are some of the factors that provide insight into the recent influx of Africans to India for medical treatment. A critical analysis of the BRICS will however reveal that the SSDC's emphasis on mutuality masks great inequality and imbalance. In this regard, it is therefore difficult to reconcile Modi's argument with the overarching mutuality claim of SSDC. For instance, what is the assurance that the eventual outcome of 'medical tourism' by African patients to India may not be the advancement of India as a Southern hegemon, thus simply reproducing the hierarchical relations of North–South which the authors critique, albeit with a different geographical inflection? Or, given past experiences in the continent, what is the assurance that the result of this practice will not reproduce or further the dependency of African states?

Despite the preceding reservations, the book represents a valuable and timely addition to the literature on South–South relations. It provides a greater avenue for further academic debates on South–South cooperation generally. The variety of areas examined – which include trade, energy, food and healthcare, as well as the practical policy recommendations – make the book a beneficial and accessible tool for scholars within and outside the development narrative in African political economy and the third world at large.

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