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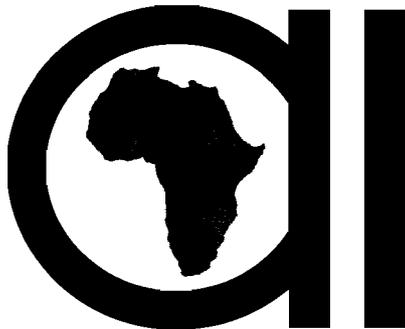
INSIGHT

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Contents

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Lessons for South Africa's second elections	230
Comment <i>Professor Michael Bratton</i>	
Foreign aid and democratization in Africa	233
<i>Professor Goran Hyden</i>	
Lesotho's political turmoil and prospects for the 1998 national election	240
<i>Dr Khabele Matlosa</i>	
The political economy of Zaïre: A case of a predatory state	247
<i>John M. Luiz</i>	
Development and democracies: Liberal versus popular	253
<i>Professor Kenneth Good</i>	
The fragility of democracy in West-Central Africa	258
<i>Dr Emeka Nwokedi</i>	
African immigrant entrepreneurs and Johannesburg's changing inner city	265
<i>Professor Christian M. Rogerson</i>	
South Africa and Egypt: The foreign policies of regional powers in search of African security	274
<i>Professor Willie Breytenbach</i>	
Tourist trends in the Indian Ocean Islands	279
<i>Dr Denis Fair</i>	
Bookshelf and book review	284



Lessons for South Africa's second elections

Professor Michael Bratton

Between April and July 1999, South Africans are scheduled to again exercise their hard-won voting rights. Second national elections will be less momentous than the historic founding contest of April 1994 — in which domestic stakes and international concern could hardly have been higher — but they will nonetheless be consequential. The way that voters, parties and officials conduct the campaign, the poll, and the aftermath of announced results will test if South Africa is developing the institutional capacity and political culture to sustain a democratic regime. It will convey an early signal about the deepening — or weakening — of democracy.

In some respects, elections in South Africa will be a tougher trial on the second occasion. Citizens will discover that political participation is more demanding than before because of the introduction of voter registration requirements. Candidates for public office will encounter the full implications of political competition because the country's new constitution no longer guarantees that minority parties will be included in a national unity government. And electoral officials will face the challenge of applying a partly untested set of election procedures to a complex environment with limited resources.

In order to identify emerging issues for these elections, there may be some advantage in thinking comparatively. After all, South Africa is not alone in seeking to institutionalize voting as a democratic routine. Between 1995 and 1997, some 16 sub-Saharan African countries conducted a second round of presidential or parliamentary polls following founding multiparty elec-

tions earlier in the decade. What lessons can be learned from these events? Are there trends that might inform the South African case?

Second elections in Africa

So far, trends in second elections point to a dwindling democratic impulse on the African continent.¹

To begin with, democratic transitions have been reversed in some countries. By the end of 1997, military forces had executed coups in four of sub-Saharan Africa's neo-democracies (Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Niger and Sierra Leone), thereby effectively cancelling scheduled second elections. And Mobutu was ousted from the former Zaïre, not by long-delayed founding elections, but by the military victory of a leader who models his regime along no-party lines. As such, the fate of democracy in Africa continues to rest all too heavily in the hands of men with guns.

In more positive developments elsewhere, the majority of new African democracies survived the backwash of regime reversal. Of second multiparty elections due by the end of 1997, almost all (22 out of 23) were held on time, suggesting at least token observance of electoral laws. Only in Gabon were legislative elections held late after the incumbent unconstitutionally seized an additional six months to reorganize his ruling party. To be sure, local government polls have commonly been postponed, often owing (as in Malawi and Zambia) to the government's inability to raise finances. In general terms, however, and although election administrators invariably started late, the conduct of the continent's scheduled second elections has

been timely.

But what about the quality of these elections? Unfortunately, the record is less encouraging in this regard. Compared to founding contests, electoral quality has fallen the second time around: significantly more elections were either boycotted by opposition parties, ruled imperfect by election observers and monitors, or rejected by losing candidates. These trends are strongly inter-correlated. Thus, in Africa's 23 second elections between 1995 and 1997, overall quality improved in just 2 cases (Ghana and São Tomé); the quality was unchanged in 10 cases; and it actually worsened in 11 cases.

Challenges to the quality of elections arose for two main reasons. First, some sitting presidents chose to manipulate the rules of political competition. In Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia, for example, leaders amended constitutional provisions governing the qualifications of candidates for the presidency in order to eliminate their main rivals. Second, political participation was blocked in other countries because the administration of the election was badly bungled. In Mali in April 1997, for example, polling stations failed to open, voting materials were in short supply, and inaccurate voter lists prevented many citizens from casting a ballot. In the legislative election in the Comoros in December 1996, the central administrative building in the capital city was torched, destroying ballot boxes and electoral materials.

The results of second elections confirm that, across Africa, both participation and competition are in decline. Whereas voter turnout averaged some 64.1% of registered voters in founding elections, it dropped to a mean 55.8% in second elections. To some extent,

voter turnout can be expected to shrink as elections become routine rather than watershed events. But this trend also reflects the gradual withdrawal of citizens from public life. In addition, second elections were also less competitive. Whereas in founding elections, the winning party generally secured less than two-thirds of the available legislative seats (an average of 65.3%), this threshold was easily surpassed in many second contests (with winning parties obtaining a mean 70.1% of seats).

As a result of all these trends, the meaning of Africa's second elections is highly contested. Even though incumbent leaders have usually been returned to office (in 14 out of 16 countries), elections of questionable quality have not generally enhanced the legitimacy of winners. Especially where voter turnout was very low (see Niger, Burkina Faso), second elections marked instead the resignation of the electorate to the dominance of a "big man" and his ruling party. The role of elections in democratization in Africa is therefore ambiguous. Formally, second elections have helped fragile new democracies survive. But, the declining quality of electoral conduct — especially persistent disagreements between incumbents and opponents about the rules of the electoral game — suggests that the substance of democracy has yet to be consolidated.

South Africa's 1999 poll

South Africa is both a part of, and stands apart from, the rest of the continent. It possesses some of the material, technological and institutional attributes of wealthier countries but it also shares leadership proclivities and cultural traditions with poorer neighbours to the north. It has established a legacy of competitive politics among its white citizens, but has much less experience with mass electoral participation than other states in Africa. Thus, mounting successful second elections in South Africa will involve both typical and distinctive challenges.

South Africans have surely achieved enough basic consensus on the rules of the political game for second elections to proceed without being cancelled. Elections are now guaranteed by one of the world's most liberal constitutions; drafted by a representative assembly and confirmed by an independent constitutional court, it entered into force in February 1997. By 1998,

the African National Congress (ANC) government had established civilian control over the military by integrating former guerrilla forces into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), including at the very top. Although well-armed fringe elements retain some capacity for violent disruption, all major political parties — from the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the Freedom Front (FF) on the right to the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) on the left — have accepted elections as the only legitimate way of winning power. To date, there has been no hint of any opposition boycott in 1999.

But will second elections be held on time? Because South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was only recently established (in July 1997) and started slowly with election preparations, there is less certainty on this point. With one year before elections are due, the IEC faces a daunting array of tasks including the delimitation of the country into about 12 000 voting districts, the registration of more than 23 million eligible voters, the recruitment and training of some 300 000 electoral officials, the education of up to 6 million first-time voters, and the management of both national and provincial polls simultaneously on a single day. Thankfully, the government has chosen, within legal limits, to defer local government polls until November 1999.

Quite apart from the sheer magnitude of the venture, the election will be conducted in a complex administrative environment. On the central government side, Parliament has yet to pass a definitive Electoral Act, the Ministry of Finance slashed the election budget by half, and the Ministry of Home Affairs has not always honoured the Commission's independence. On top of this, local government authorities are being asked to run the poll. Yet cash-strapped municipal councils have announced that they cannot cover any costs and prospective electoral officials (who were well paid in 1994) now show little enthusiasm for voluntary public service. And, because local councils do not effectively exist in many former homelands, the IEC will have to rely on traditional authorities whose administrative capacity and political neutrality are questionable at best.

Moreover, any consensus on democratic rules will be tested as political parties struggle to shape new election requirements to their own advantage.

If experience elsewhere in Africa is a guide, the IEC will face a torrent of partisan complaints about voting district boundaries, procedures for candidate nominations, and the adequacy of voters rolls. Given South Africa's strong community identities, accompanied by political party claims to exclusive "no-go" zones, electoral boundaries are likely to be particularly contentious. When ruling parties raise grievances, the IEC will have to defend its independence against compelling political pressures. At the very least, political disputes are likely to add delay to preparations that are already behind schedule.

Without prejudging the quality of South Africa's second elections, one can nonetheless identify factors that will determine their acceptability. The greatest threat to free and fair elections would be a resurgence of political violence. Encouragingly, national ANC and IFP leaders seem committed to trying to reduce deadly clashes and Afrikaner extremists seem ready to abandon their quixotic bid for a *volkstaat*. Nonetheless, the struggle over apartheid has instilled a culture of violence in South African politics that will probably give rise to widespread political intimidation — perhaps even pockets of political killing — as the 1999 election campaign heats up. As in other countries, politicians also can be expected to deploy patronage resources to attract votes, a practice that will grant undue advantage to incumbents.

The quality of the elections will also depend in good part on the extent of political participation. Inevitably, voter turnout in 1999 will be lower than the 86% of eligible adults who streamed to the polls in April 1994. Citizens in new democracies are everywhere less interested in second elections, especially if disillusioned with the ability of an elected government to deliver mass benefits or protect minority rights. In South Africa one must add obstacles posed by new requirements that citizens must register to vote in national and provincial elections and cast a ballot only in the district where they are registered. The voter registration exercise scheduled for October to December 1998 will be an early test of the willingness of people to again become involved. If, say, fewer than 75% of eligible voters register and fewer than 75% of these registered voters actually vote (which are fair assumptions), then South Africa will experience an even

bigger dropoff than other African countries in terms of turnout in second elections.

On the surface, South Africa's 1999 elections are shaping up to be reasonably competitive. To the government's credit, it has given no signs whatever that it intends to tamper with the constitution before the election, for example to disqualify parties or candidates. Of course, under the proportional representation electoral system, candidates who do not toe the party line can be eliminated from any party's electoral list. A merger (or, more plausibly, an electoral alliance) between the ANC and IFP would further reduce political competition. This prospect depends, as in 1994, on the last-minute calculations of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi: if he is assured that IFP will retain key cabinet positions and control of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial legislature, he will probably continue to resist ANC overtures; if he senses impending electoral losses he may allow his party to be absorbed within the country's dominant political movement.

Most observers expect the ANC to

win again in 1999, the only question being whether it does so with two-thirds of the seats in the National Assembly, the majority needed for constitutional change. The ANC has been coy about its ambitions in this regard, with some party and labour leaders contradicting President Mandela's assurances that the constitution is sacrosanct. What seems clear is that the present government would prefer a freer hand in carrying out its agenda for institutional "transformation". If the winning party falls short of the two-thirds target and continues to be checked by opposition parties and watchdog agencies, then South Africa will remain one of Africa's more competitive political regimes. If the ANC surpasses this critical benchmark, however, then South African politics will more closely come to resemble the one-party dominant rule now being entrenched within Africa's multiparty systems.

Helping democracy survive?

For a democratic regime to survive, a country must hold regular competitive elections. If these events are delayed

or disputed (or worse, both) a country's democratic credentials will be called into question.

Thus, 1999's second election must go well if South Africa is to uphold its reputation as a leading light of democratization on the African continent. The fact that the country enjoys basic consensus on the rules of the political game augurs well, not only for the survival of democracy, but also for its eventual consolidation. This consensus will be challenged in the year ahead, not only in disputes over new electoral rules, but also by a growing public apathy that threatens to lower electoral participation. Moreover, major political actors — leaders, voters, observers or monitors — will be much less willing than in 1994 to overlook lapses in election administration in the name of a larger political good. On this occasion, the winners of the election will inherit only as much political legitimacy as the election itself will convey.

Note

- 1 For data describing these trends, see Michael Bratton, "Second Elections in Africa". *Journal of Democracy*, forthcoming.

Foreign aid and democratization in Africa

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Introduction

The discourse on democratization continues to dominate the minds of those who are interested in how African development can be accelerated. The international community and Africa itself have moved a long way from the jargons of the 1980s, which implied that the continent's salvation lay in economic reform. As we approach the end of the century, it is not a matter of "getting prices right" as much as it is of "getting politics right". The latter has become a virtual imperative since the end of the Cold War. The rest of the world is being moved by a powerful democratization wave and Africa is being swept along, whether it likes it or not. Although there are many African leaders who have found it hard to adjust to the new situation, they have had little choice but to acknowledge that "democracy is now the only game in town".

Foreign donors have become some of the most prominent emissaries of democratization in Africa. These include the aid agencies of the OECD-member country governments as well as a broad range of international non-governmental organizations, which often are contracted by these agencies to do work for them. Their own agenda and presence in so many African countries mean that they also constitute a strong pressure group for democracy. When African governments are reluctant to accept the liberal democratic agenda that these agencies are pushing, the donors typically step up their pressure by imposing conditionalities for the receipt of further aid. In short, at least in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, donor country representatives are an integral part of the democratization process.

This is a new situation and it is important to examine a little more closely how this has come to be the case. This article, therefore, will provide com-

mentaries on the following questions:

- How did the donors come to put such emphasis on democratization?
- What drives their agenda?
- What has been accomplished in the form of democracy in Africa?
- What are the issues that need further examination?

Donors and democratization

The conventional wisdom is that the current democratization wave is the result of the end of the Cold War. With no powerful enemy to contend with as in the past, Western democracies have been able to extend their political sphere to other parts of the world without much opposition, particularly in weak African countries. There is much to this thesis but it must be added that the current democratization effort has roots in the international development discourse, which over the years has moved more and more in that direction. In other words, the present donor agenda has not been grabbed from the blue in the 1990s. It has evolved organically over the past 40 or so years, as international development organizations, the bilateral donor agencies included, have reflected on their own lessons with financing and operationalizing development initiatives. To fully appreciate this, it may be necessary to take a look at how ideas about development, in international circles, have changed to the point where they now embrace democracy and political reform.

It should be stated from the outset that the agenda that is being presented below is very much the product of international organizations that are dominated by Western governments. They include the Bretton Woods institutions — the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — United Nations organizations, bilateral donor agencies and, in recent years, influential non-governmental organizations. It

would be wrong to state that all these organizations share the same perspective in all respects, but it is remarkable how much unanimity there has been in terms of where the principal thrust of development financing should be.

Representatives of the less-developed countries of the world have had little direct input into the agenda. They have been at the receiving end and have typically been forced to respond to it rather than being proactive. To the extent that they have had any influence at all, it seems to have dwindled over the years. For example, 30 years ago Julius Nyerere's *ujamaa* strategy of rural development attracted interest among donors, some of whom used it as a model to be emulated elsewhere. Today, however, there is very little responsiveness to initiatives in the Third World. One possible exception to this is South Africa and its attempt to create a new "rainbow" nation out of its segregated past.

Let us go back 40 or so years, when the international community began to concern itself with the fate of the poorer and oppressed peoples of the world. This is when the current notion of "development" was born. Its origin was not in an act of altruism or international solidarity as much as it was the result of realist foreign policy thinking in Washington. The Truman Doctrine of 1947, which set the pace for the rest of the Western governments, argued quite explicitly that emerging nation-states in Asia and Africa, as well as countries in Latin America, needed to be assisted so as to preempt possible Communist takeover. It was this fear and the desire to win the Cold War that led Washington, and subsequently others, to engage in a massive development assistance programme. Because it was viewed as an externally induced and supported process, "development" was defined as an external intervention aimed at di-

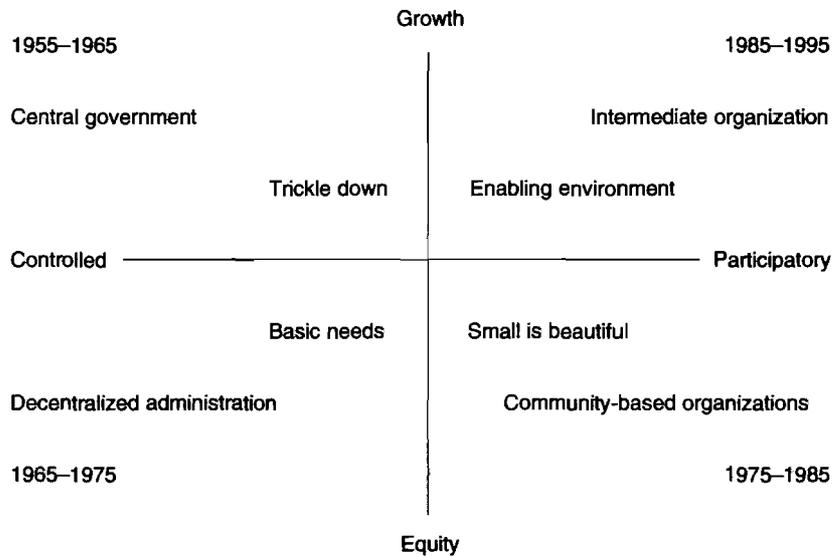
recting the course of change in a society and accelerating its pace through faster economic growth. Because development was an external input, it had to be arranged as a top-down exercise. National governments became the natural partners in this approach because they were the formal authority through which foreign donors must operate.

As will be further illustrated below, the objectives of development have since shifted in the direction of becoming concerned not only with growth but also with equity or redistribution of resources. In fact, a look at what has happened over the past 40 years indicates that development thinking was initially focused on growth but subsequently turned to equity before refocusing on growth again. The mechanisms or methods of conducting development have also changed over time, in the same way as the objectives of development have. These mechanisms were initially all government-based and they were tightly planned and controlled. In the past 20 years, the pendulum has swung more and more in the direction of non-governmental organizations and participation. From having been top-down, it has become increasingly bottom-up in orientation. Also, instead of being externally imposed, the prevailing orientation stresses development from within and the possibility for people as stakeholders to "own" both project and process.

The shifts that have taken place over the past 40 years are summarized in Figure 1. It is worth noting that in the first phase — from the late 1950s to the late 1960s — development was viewed first and foremost as a matter of letting the laggards catch up with the more developed societies. The dominant modernization theory of those days implied that development meant imitating the already developed societies. The development path was already known. It was a matter for the better endowed societies to provide the necessary capital and manpower to accelerate the process. In this perspective, no one thought of development as difficult or controversial. Its main parameters were economic and technical; hence the emphasis on massive capital transfers and large-scale provision of technical assistance, including training of local counterparts.

Because the initial development ideas assumed that it was a matter of diffusing ideas from one source to an-

Figure 1 Shifts in development thinking, 1955-1995



other, the principal investments had to be made into institutions and individuals who had the best chances of serving as role models. Governments were seen as having that quality. So were well-endowed individuals and groups in society — for instance, progressive farmers in the countryside. The premise was that if only these individuals and institutions were to succeed, others would follow. Development ideas would "trickle down".

In the late 1960s the international community was faced with a rude awakening. It was clear that development was not only a matter of stimulating economic growth or identifying individuals who could diffuse new ideas to others. Development was no party — rather a bloody struggle. Within a short span of time in the late 1960s — 1968 being the real turning-point — the paradigm shifted in a radical direction with a more explicit focus on redistribution of resources to assist the poorer segments (or classes) in society. The target was no longer the progressive farmer, but the poor peasant. They had to be approached not only as producers but as human beings with certain basic needs that must be met before they can be fully productive. Thus better health care and education emerged as concerns on the international development agenda. These were the years when universal primary education and universal primary health care were principles that were endorsed at international confer-

ences and implemented by national governments. They remained the principal agents of development, although a change was made as more and more emphasis was laid on decentralized administration and integrated development programmes.

Towards the end of the 1970s, however, there was a growing realization that governments, particularly in Africa, were not only lacking implementation capacity but were not even committed to realizing the policy objectives they had officially stated. Governments were increasingly being seen as liabilities rather than assets. The break at this time was more significant than it had been 10 years earlier. Two competing concerns emerged. One was economic liberalization and the growth of the market as an alternative resource allocation mechanism to government. The other was the "discovery" of institutions outside government as agents of development. One was purely economic, the other organizational. In Figure 1, I have explicitly mentioned only community-based organizations, which were one type of institution that was now being emphasized as important for development. What this box in the matrix contains, however, is much more diverse. Among the small that were regarded as beautiful were also women's groups, informal sector entrepreneurs, and other actors who belonged to the poorer segments of the population. The growing emphasis on the market

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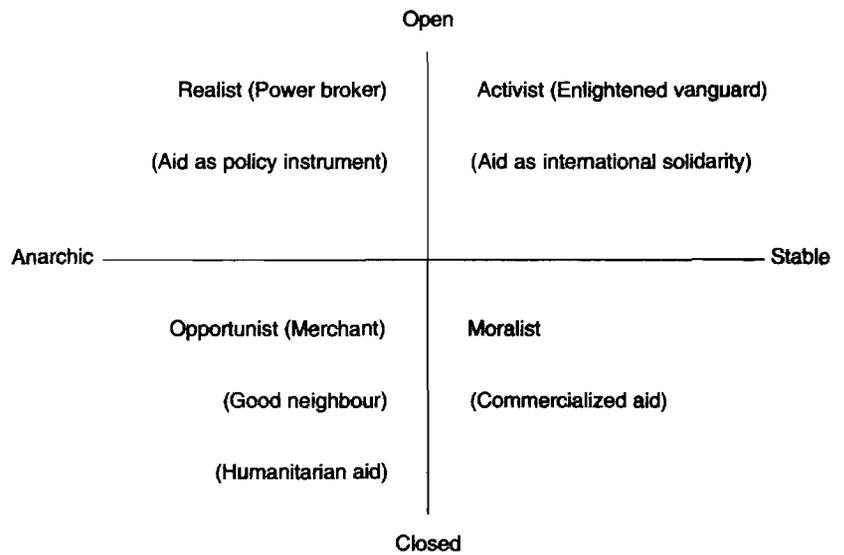
instead of the state meant that in supporting these groups, it was not really government handouts that were important, but loans and other support mechanisms that allowed them to move forward on their own. Peasants and other "small people" were rational and no different in the marketplace from other well-endowed actors.

The last phase, which began in the late 1980s, is a continuation of the third in that both emphasize the importance of a participatory approach to development. If anything, this trend has acquired even more strength as arguments in favour of sustainable development emphasize the need for ensuring that people feel they have a stake in a given activity and perceive it as theirs. The different thing is that everyone has come to realize that small is not only beautiful, but also vulnerable. It needs to be protected and its voice articulated at higher levels in society by organizations which work with it and relate to its needs and demands. In this sense, these intermediate organizations play an important role in providing and protecting an enabling environment for the small actors outside the state.

It is also here that the current democratization comes in as a logical ingredient. The political reforms that this process implies form a natural part of any effort to sustain an enabling environment. Development in the 1990s is not so much a matter of providing goods and services as it is of providing the framework — both economic and political — in which private and voluntary initiatives can flourish. This is not merely a technical task, but one associated with conflict. It is in this sense that development has become politicized in recent years. No one in the international community is ready to defend, as they did as late as the 1980s, the proposition that politics and development be kept separate. Because they are now being regarded as integrated, foreign donors not only support democratization but also use it as a lever to have recipients comply with other demands.

Recognition that development is politics and politics is development also means that the original conception of development as an external intervention aimed at setting a new direction from above is now dead. That is why one might say, using the illustration in Figure 1, that development which has traversed four different territories on that cognitive map has now reached its

Figure 2 Donor perceptions of the international arena



end. We are neither going back to where we were in the late 1950s, nor are we starting a new circle. Development today is no different from any initiative that ordinary people take to improve their lives. Coming from within, as it is now perceived to do, development is no longer going to be what it was in the past four decades. There will never be any more highly publicized announcements by the international community of the beginning of a new "development decade". Development as we have known it in my generation is dead and this is increasingly evident in the decline in foreign aid made available to poorer countries of the world. They are expected to do things on their own. Outsiders can only help provide the enabling environment; hence the emphasis on economic liberalization and political democratization.

Having traced the evolution of thinking about development and identified the place that democratization occupies, it is now time to turn to the next question: What drives their agenda?

Donor agendas

We have used the term "international development community" to indicate that there is a corporate body out there that represents at large a wide range of actors involved in providing development assistance of some sort. This corporate entity is a reality in that it

promotes a set of values that are generally agreed upon by this disparate body of actors. Each individual agency, however, has its own profile. Many take a pride in what they do and want to ensure that their own ideas are respected and part of the agenda. Others are less ambitious and have a more skeptical view of what they can accomplish in the international arena. Why these actors differ and in what respects they do so may be worth examining a little more closely.

Foreign aid is typically not pursued in a policy vacuum. It is part of a broader foreign policy. How it is being used depends on what perceptions policy-makers operate with. How do they see the international arena? Does it lend itself to constructive initiatives? How stable or predictable is the international arena itself? It is with answers to such questions that foreign policy-makers arrive at strategies that eventually translate into specific foreign aid activities. To illustrate this, I am borrowing and modifying a typology that was originally used by Marijke Breuning, a political scientist at the University of Arkansas.

The realist thrives in an environment that he perceives as open and anarchic. This is where calculations of national interest are most demanding but potentially also most rewarding. The realist wants to structure reality around him and to that effect he will devise policies aimed at taking advantage of others' weakness and opportunities for

influencing others. The United States government may be the most consistent adherent to this approach to foreign policy, but other states follow it in their own way too. France, for example, is also a realist actor. Its foreign policy, in Africa as elsewhere, is very much characterized by what is perceived as the French national interest. In this perspective, foreign aid tends to become an instrument for promoting not only the welfare of others but also one's own status in the world. There is nothing altruistic about this kind of foreign policy. It is hard-nosed and, many would say, selfish, but it is also pragmatic and particularly well suited to the task of serving as power-broker.

For a long time, realism in US foreign policy in Africa manifested itself in support of regimes that were corrupt and undemocratic, as long as they helped in the fight against communism. After the end of the Cold War, the tune has changed and now it is the promotion of a liberal democratic agenda that matters. In the context of democratization in Africa, the realist perspective as conveyed by the US calls for the promotion of the kind of democracy that is in line with one's own values; hence the emphasis on liberal democracy. Support for these efforts in Africa is part of a global strategy to promote "Western" values and institutionalize political regimes that are likely to be non-belligerent and generally positive towards the realization of the liberal paradigm.

The activists share with the realists a sense of openness in the international arena, but also see it as stable. They have a sense of mission and may be portrayed as attempting to serve as an enlightened vanguard on international issues. Foreign aid is not merely an instrument of foreign policy but is an end in itself as an act of international solidarity. Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and to some extent Canada have, over the years, taken positions that resemble this approach. As part of their ambition to serve as an enlightened vanguard, they have often taken identical positions in the name of "like-minded" countries. Because all these countries are mature democracies and see peace and stability as associated with such political systems, they have been very vocal in their support for democratization in Africa and elsewhere, not least Eastern Europe. Denmark, in particular, has taken a high profile in Africa and been in the forefront of European countries pro-

viding aid for democratization.

The opportunist approaches foreign policy in a less systematic fashion than the realist. The notion that the international arena is not only anarchic but also closed means that the options are regarded as few. The primary concern is to satisfy one's own interest and one way of doing this is to subsidize local business. Foreign aid, therefore, tends to focus on how it can help domestic companies to get contracts overseas. Some countries in Europe, notably Italy, and to some extent Japan behave in ways that are in line with this approach. It shuns politics, and governments following this approach tend not to get involved in support of democratization unless very special circumstances exist.

The moralist, finally, is above all a good neighbour who does not take a very active part in the international arena because he sees it as both closed and stable. The only thing that really matters is the support of moral principles that uphold peace and security. Foreign aid is not a priority except in terms of providing humanitarian aid. Switzerland fits this model better than any other country. It gets involved when stability is threatened and people suffer. Its special emphasis in Africa has been on conflict management and resolution and humanitarian assistance, not least through the Swiss-dominated ICRC. As an extension of this Switzerland has also played a leading role in the work of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Not all donors are enthusiastic about aiding democratization, but the interesting thing about the situation today is the shared interest in this field by both realists and activists among the donor governments. The notion of "like-minded" countries today seems to have been extended to include virtually all donors that actively support democratization through their aid programmes. Thus, in African countries where the donor community is strongly represented, Western donors tend to speak with one voice. There is little, if any, disagreement between the United States and the Scandinavian countries when it comes to what to support. They typically meet in informal caucuses to assess project requests from organizations in the recipient country and usually end up sharing part of the costs.

This informal caucusing has become a common feature of donor operations in African countries today. The number

of members varies from place to place. Where African governments have been sabotaging the liberal democratic agenda, as in Kenya, the donors have closed ranks to add pressure. In those places, even the reluctant ones, like Italy and Japan, tend to get involved. Donors like this coordination and they tend to believe that it fosters their cause better when they are united in their position vis-à-vis the recipient country government. Since aid for democratization in a way serves as a test of the latter's willingness to accept the liberal democratic agenda, it is often accompanied by conditions, for example "If you do not agree to hold free and fair elections, we are not ready to extend further aid in other sectors."

There is, however, another side to this which cannot be overlooked. By thinking along one line and speaking with one voice, the donors tend to become rather inflexible and dogmatic in their appreciation of what African countries, including their governments, are doing. Furthermore, they tend to become very impatient. They want to see the forms of liberal democracy introduced here and now. What is more, they also expect them to function as they do back in their respective home countries. Against this background, it may be helpful to see what has happened in the field of democratization in Africa in the 1990s and what foreign aid has helped to put in place.

The record of democratization

Donor governments have been primarily concerned with democratizing the state in Africa. To that extent they have provided support for projects aimed at strengthening the independence of the judiciary, reforming the public service, enhancing the public accountability of state officials and the holding of free and fair elections. The latter have been the single most important aim, because they have been regarded as the "founding event" in the process of democratization. Much of the progress to date, therefore, has been measured in terms of what has happened in the electoral field. This, for instance, is the way that two prominent political scientists, Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, assess what they call the democratic experiments in Africa in the 1990s. A summary of the trends that they have discussed at greater length in their recent book (1997) is given in Table 1.

Table 1 The democratization wave in Africa, 1989–1994

1989	5 out of 47 sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries democratic.
1991	21 SSA countries had launched political liberalization reforms; 11 of these had scheduled multi-party elections.
1991-1994	38 SSA countries had actually held competitive elections.
1994	16 SSA countries democratic; 12 flawed democracies; 12 blocked transitions.

That Bratton and Van de Walle concentrate their study so systematically on the electoral side of democratization may be forgiven because their data base is drawn exclusively from elections held around the continent. But their study is indicative of a more general orientation among scholars and practitioners alike. The former like elections because they provide “hard” data that facilitate systematic, quantitative analysis. This bias in scholarship is accompanied by a similar preference among practitioners in the donor community who like elections because they are concrete events and lend themselves nicely to projectization. Many donors are also happy that elections absorb a considerable sum, which means that they get to give away a large sum in one go and forget about administering smaller scale projects which only take time because they are more labour-intensive.

There is a big question-mark, therefore, over how far we should allow ourselves to assess progress in democratization with such a strong bias in favor of electoral data. Nonetheless, this is how the donors have wanted it. A cursory look at Table 1 indicates that what has happened on the continent may best be described as one step forward and two backwards. More or less willingly, governments throughout Africa embarked on political reforms, allowing for multi-party elections, as is evident from the third row, which shows what happened between 1991 and 1994. By the end of that year, however, there were doubts about almost two thirds of those countries that had tried. As many as 12 countries had only introduced some elements of democracy and in many respects these systems were best labelled “flawed” democracies. They were neither here nor there, a type of *democradura*, or “rough democracies”, as Latin Americanists would call them. Another 12 were called “blocked transitions”, which means that they never really managed to take the first steps towards

democracy. Kenya and Zambia may be examples of the first, Nigeria of the second type.

There is little evidence that democracy continues to be anything but episodic on the African continent in 1998. There is only one country — Benin — which continues to be democratic after having held two elections and experienced a change of guard in both. Add to that the “old” democracies like Botswana and Mauritius, and now South Africa, and what we are talking about is 10% of the countries south of the Sahara. There are plenty of countries with a dominant party system which may develop into more genuine democracies in the future, but democracy in those places, for example Namibia, Senegal and Tanzania, is still in doubt. The same applies maybe even more to countries like Kenya and Malawi where political parties are ethnically based. The jury is very much out if one looks only at how African countries perform with regard to multi-party democracy and elections, the indicators favoured by the donors.

This is not to suggest that donors have supported only these electoral reforms. A fair amount of support has gone to support non-governmental organizations and what is loosely labelled “civil society”. The last kind of support, however, has been only secondary in importance. This is reflected for example in the terminology used by the USAID, where support for democratization of the state goes under the label “Governance and Democracy” with a capital “G” and capital “D”, while support for civil society tends to be looked at under the same label without the capitalization of the first letters. Other donors tend to think along the same lines. Furthermore, this support for civil society has been generally regarded by donors as a complement to the other because voluntary associations are meant to hold governments accountable. In that sense, they are part of the programme of democratizing the state.

The question raised by the experience to date with regard to both the democratization progress in Africa and donor support for it, is whether what is being done is the right thing. Have the donors pressed African countries to take too one-dimensional a view of democracy? How should one proceed from here?

Outstanding issues

In addressing these two questions, it is obvious that there are many issues that need to be addressed. It is not possible to include all here. I shall only concentrate on those that from my experience as researcher and consultant on these issues in Eastern and Southern Africa seem to be particularly pertinent. I consider the following five to be issues that need further attention by Africans and donors alike:

- What do we mean by democracy?
- How can democracy be made more authentic?
- What really is civil society?
- What are the consequences of foreign support of democratization?
- What are the consequences of donors treating support for democratization as sectorially separate from other aid?

I shall briefly address each one of these.

What do we mean by democracy?

This has implications for what is being done in the name of democratization. As suggested above, democracy to date has been treated as a prisoner of liberalism. In other words, only the liberal definition of democracy has counted. Those regimes that have breached the rules of liberal democracy in some significant way, for example by refusing to hold multi-party elections, as is the case in Uganda, have not been regarded as democratic. The liberal version that everyone has so dearly embraced in the donor community prioritizes democratization of the state. It is reform of the formal institutions of the state that counts.

There is reason to review this point. Does democracy really have to be defined in such terms only? Are there no advantages in taking a broader look at what the concept stands for? One scholar who has done so is John Dryzek, a British political scientist now professor at the University of Melbourne in Australia. He argues that by providing a definition up-front in any

discussion of democracy, we “freeze” our own thoughts on the subject and overlook what might be interesting and important aspects of social and political life that really bear on the evolution of democratic forms of governance. He has support for this from a few other prominent political scientists, for example Robert Putnam, who maintains that a democratic tradition is fostered in many different ways and in many different places. He talks, for instance, of the positive contribution to the rise of a civic tradition in northern Italy played by such associations as choral groups and sports clubs. Given the significance of both song and sports in African cultural life, it seems justified to consider a broader definition of democracy. Dryzek provides his own proposal for how we may want to think of democratization. As Table 2 indicates, he looks at it in terms of three different types:

Table 2 Three types of democratization

Democratization of the state	Formal institutions, like the judiciary, public service, electoral system
Democratization against the state	Social movements and other forms of organized protest
Democratization apart from the state	Work-place, community, private sphere

This classification is helpful in that it makes us recognize that democratization can be pursued on different fronts simultaneously. It also highlights the fact that support for institutions outside the state has a rationale of its own. It does not have to be linked to how it supports democratization of the state only. Democratization against and apart from the state are integral parts of the overall objective of introducing more stable forms of democratic governance. By accepting this broader outlook on what democratization entails, it is also possible to expand the studies in this field.

How can democracy be made more authentic?

This is a question that is taking on greater and greater significance as more and more countries in Africa are struggling to make sense of the liberal (or Western) version of democracy. Donors tend to view democratic values

as universal, which in many respects they are, as a result of ratifications of a large number of international declarations to that effect, but in practice cultures in many parts of the world, including Africa, contain elements that are not democratic, yet are important to people in these societies. I do not know if there is anything such as “Asian” or “African” values, but we do not need to be essentialists in our outlook to recognize that cultures in those parts of the world are in many respects inimical to liberal democratic values. If the latter, therefore, are the only ones that are being served by the donors, there is good reason to ask how effectively they are really swallowed and absorbed. Is the reluctance shown by many Africans, not only leaders, to espouse this type of democratic values maybe the result of their really being foreign?

This is not only an academic question. Scholars and practitioners have to be more open to possibilities which in the past few years have not been considered because the agenda has been set so narrowly. If our interest is genuinely to assist democratization in Africa, more attention has to be paid to how democratic values can be more effectively internalized by Africans. This is not to suggest that they are a priori hostile to liberal values, but in order for such values to make sense they have to be related to something in African society that we have not really been interested in searching for. Making democracy more authentic, therefore, implies a more flexible and open-ended approach that takes into account not only the liberal paradigm but also African values and institutions that can be used to foster a local sense of democracy and pride therein.

What really is civil society?

This is another question that needs more attention. The expertise in Africanist political science was brought together for a conference in early 1992 to consider “state and civil society in Africa”. What emerged from that meeting was more disagreement than agreement on what the term really stands for. There were those who argued in favour of a strict and quite narrow definition, others who took a broader view of the concept. This difference in opinion has continued in scholarly circles to this day, but it is even more problematic in the circles of practitioners. The latter have almost

all come to accept a functional definition of the concept which implies that all organizations outside of the state are part of civil society. No qualifications are attached to such membership. Civil society has become a non-discriminatory concept.

This may be nice for both moral and practical reasons, but it is becoming increasingly clear that there are costs and disadvantages associated with this approach as well. A lot of non-governmental organizations that currently receive donor support because they are part of “civil society” are not necessarily promoting the values that these donors expect that members of civil society should do. There is a naive sense that simply because these organizations are seen as part of civil society they are also promoting “civil” and democratic values. We have only scattered evidence from Africa that NGOs do precisely this. Many are not doing it because there is no genuine commitment to democratic values, only to the donor-funded agenda. I do not wish to convey the impression that all NGOs are bad, but there is enough evidence that there are enough bad eggs around to spoil the pudding. To become more effective in assisting the emergence of a truly *civil* society in Africa, there is reason to accept that associational life and civil society may be two different things; that associations need to prove that they promote civic values before they are part of civil society. In short, there is no harm in applying a few more conditions to the definition of civil society and operationalizing those in the context of support for democratization.

What are the consequences of donor involvement in democratization?

There is reason for donors to look a little more closely at what they are doing, and whether they are not overdoing their support for democratization. This is becoming an issue in several countries where the democratization process is extensively funded by outside sources. We know already that in many countries multi-party elections could not have been held were it not for the support provided by the donor community. Holding elections is expensive. In the 1996 elections in Ghana the costs worked out to be approximately US\$5.00 per capita. Per capita outlay for health care of women and children in that country runs at US\$8.50. So democratization is an ex-

ercise that is beyond the means of most African countries. For this reason, one might argue that the whole project stands or falls with the donor funding it receives.

Taking such a view, however, may not be very helpful. What needs to be examined instead is the question of what this extensive donor involvement means for public accountability and the establishment of a democratic order in which governments relate to the citizens in specified ways. Although democracy is not only popular sovereignty, it is important in Africa that governments or states are being more effectively tied to public opinion. This is at risk of not materializing because the effort to democratize the state which the donors insist on tends to turn political leaders in the direction of external actors rather than their own people. Because donors have insisted on their own conditionalities, this trend has been exacerbated. We have a contradiction, therefore, that needs to be further considered: donors support democratization with their own conditionalities but by doing so they simultaneously pull political leaders away from their constituents. The result may be less, not more, democracy. One may of course say that the problem lies not so much with the donors as with the African political leaders. This is true, but it would be less than fair to imply that donors have no role in this dilemma.

What are the consequences of sectorializing aid for democratization?

As suggested at the beginning of this article, donors paid no attention to politics for at least three decades. Development was separate from politics. Much the same order persists in the corridors of aid agencies in Europe and North America. Democracy and

governance — the typical name for this division or department — is a separate operation from all other sections that deal with development. This means that those who work on democratization and those who work on development interact very little, if at all. This is the natural result of the way democratization has been treated to date — as democratization of the state. This is a business that has little to do with building health clinics or physical infrastructures. Such a view may be right, but what it overlooks is that there are a lot of activities that fall in between these two poles. Given the extensive interest that now exists both in Africa and in donor circles in promoting participatory development, projects that were previously viewed as primarily technical are now treated in a more integrated fashion. People are expected to participate in the design and to be involved in other phases of the project, so as to develop a sense of ownership.

Much of this is really made up of experiments in democratic governance. These activities should be regarded not merely as development projects, but as part of democratization. This, however, is difficult to achieve with the current administrative divisions that exist in the main aid agencies. It may be asking too much to assume that these agencies will embark on a major reorganization to take this issue into account, but some ways of bridging the administrative boundaries would be a great step forward in terms of strengthening the overall democratization thrust within the agency. This would give people who look at democratization differently from the “hard-core” democracy and governance staff a chance to influence the democratization discourse and agenda. At this point in time, that would seem to be a step in the right direction.

Conclusion

This article has looked at what donors have done in the field of democratization and it has drawn attention to some of the things that may be reconsidered at this point in time, when we have some practical experience to build on from different parts of Africa. What is striking about the current democratization programme of the donors is how rapidly it has come to occupy a principal position on their agenda after having been totally ignored for many years. This shows the extent to which donors are driven by ideas or paradigms that evolve in their own circles but which often are not very well tied to realities in developing countries. It is precisely for this reason that much of development has come to nothing. We must ask ourselves at this point whether the current emphasis on democratization really is the last paradigm that the donors will hang on to. If it fails, will they continue to search for yet another paradigm, or will it be the end of their involvement in development on the African continent? This is a question that cannot be ignored: actors both in Africa and elsewhere have reason to get ready to deal with the consequences of such a turn of events. Democratization could prove to be the last waltz of the donors on the continent.

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Lesotho's political turmoil and prospects for the 1998 national election

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Introduction

Lesotho has been in the grip of political turmoil since the 1993 general election, which most observers thought would ensure political stability in this small mountain kingdom. This turmoil has been marked by various forms of instability and conflict which not only undermine efforts towards economic growth and development but also threaten the fabric of society. In these multifarious conflicts the state has been pitted against its own strategic organs, including the military and the police forces as well as the chieftainship. Besides, the ruling parties have locked horns in unending conflicts with such non-state actors as the labour movement, exacerbated by the World Bank-driven privatization programme. (Like everywhere in Africa, the IMF/World Bank economic adjustment programme has proved incompatible with a democratic dispensation brought by the 1993 election in Lesotho.)

The irony of these conflicts is that a culturally homogeneous country like Lesotho would theoretically be assumed to be relatively stable, with low levels of conflict and political instability. On the contrary, political cleavages in Lesotho seem to have rent asunder the conventionally assumed social solidarity. And this has, in turn, undermined stability and fanned the now pervasive conflicts in the country.

Most observers assumed that Lesotho's democratic election of 1993 would establish a firm foundation for much-needed economic growth and development. The stark reality, however, is that instability and conflicts have become a hallmark of the fledgling democracy.

The apex of Lesotho's endemic con-

licts came with the split of the ruling Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) in June 1997. The split of the BCP into two warring factions was neither a factor of disagreement on policy issues nor a result of ideological differences between the two factions. It was merely the outcome of a tug-of-war over the leadership of the party and the spoils of state power.

The split within the BCP led to the formation of a new party by Ntsu Mokhehle, former leader of the BCP and the current Prime Minister. The controversy that surrounds the formation of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) revolves around whether it was right for the Prime Minister and his colleagues to cross the floor in parliament in order to form a new party; also

whether it was right for the Prime Minister to declare the new party a ruling party and the BCP an official opposition in parliament.

Before interpreting this episode, it is worth while to observe that a similar occurrence happened in Mauritius in 1983 and comparisons with Lesotho are interesting.¹ The then Prime Minister of Mauritius, Anerood Jugnauth, who had assumed the premiership just the previous year, experienced problems with his government, which suffered a major split on 22 March 1983. Policy and ideological differences plagued his cabinet, leading to a considerable number of his ministers resigning en masse. After holding various public meetings around the country, Jugnauth became convinced that he had to make a clean break with those who had resigned and establish a new party, which he did on 8 April 1983. The new party was called the *Mouvement Socialiste Militant (MSM)*. After extensive debate of this new move by cabinet, Jugnauth called for a fresh election on 21 August 1983, some three years before the end of his five-year term. He won the election contest, thus having his mandate to rule renewed under a new political party.²

A comparison of the split in the Mauritian ruling party with that in Lesotho, and the immediate aftermath of both, is informative. Firstly, while in Mauritius the split was over policy and ideological issues, in Lesotho it was a power struggle within the ruling party. Secondly, the decision by Jugnauth to form a new party was informed by wide-ranging consultations with different constituencies throughout the country, driven through public meetings; Ntsu Mokhehle only convened one meeting of some 700 BCP suppor-



Ntsu Mokhehle

ters on 7 June 1997. Thirdly, Jugnauth deemed it fitting to call a general election to renew his mandate under the changed political conditions some three years before his term of office expired. For his part, Mokheide declared the new party the ruling party and waited for the term of the "BCP" rule to expire before calling a general election.

There is no doubt that the split of the BCP and the subsequent establishment of the LCD as the ruling party will feature considerably in the forthcoming election in 1998. What impact this will have on the electorate's choice of government remains to be seen. Before we deal with the current political turmoil and assess prospects for the forthcoming election, it is in order to provide a brief exposé of the political dynamics of the previous elections.

Assessment of the previous elections

Prior to attaining its political independence on 4 October 1966, Lesotho held a pre-independence national election in 1965. This was meant to put in place a political party which would usher the country into its new political dispensation, the era of self-rule sweeping through the entire African continent at the time. As the principal protagonists began to flex their muscles for that important contest, neither they nor independent political observers could predict with certainty which political party would become the first government after October 1966. Most analysts believed that the radical, and indeed populist, Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) would win a comfortable victory. Others grudgingly reckoned that the conservative Basotho National Party (BNP) might surprise its rivals. The royalist Marena-Tlou Freedom Party (MFP), which had in fact just suffered a split, was not considered a critical force. It came to pass that the outcome was a surprise victory by the BNP, much to the chagrin of the popular BCP. To be sure, this was a narrow victory, for the BNP got 42% of votes as against the BCP's 40%, but the first-past-the-post electoral system that Lesotho inherited from the British confirmed the BNP as a single ruling party.

When the second round of elections came in 1970, tempers ran high as the BCP vowed that it would settle its unfinished business with the erstwhile



POLITICAL

Head of State:
Nou Mokheide
since 1996 (b 1963)
Head of Government:
BN Pakalitha Mosisi
since 1998
Independence: 1966
National day: 4 Oct
independence anniversary
National capital: Maseru
Official language:
English, Sesotho

PHYSICAL

Total area: 30 355 km²
Arable: 1% of land area
Coastline: landlocked
Largest city: international
airport: Maseru

SOCIAL

Total population:
Census (1986): 1.4 m
Estimate (1997): 2.1 m
Projections (2000): 2.3 m
Av growth p.a. (1985-95):
2.3%
Age group 15-64 yrs
(1995): 56%
Persons/km² (1995): 69
Urbanised population (1995):
25%
Human Development Index
(1997)
Rank among 175 states:
157
Adult literacy (1995): 70%
Male (1981): 80%
Female (1981): 61%

Gross enrolment ratios (1992)

Primary schools: 100%
Secondary schools: 25%
Tertiary institutions: 1%
Primary pupils/teacher
(1993): 51
Life expectancy at birth:
1960: 43 yrs 1994: 56 yrs
Male (1994): 57 yrs
Female (1994): 59 yrs
Population/doctor (1994):
2 500
Mortality/1 000 live births:
Infants: 134 (1970) 76
(1995)
Under 5: 154 (1995)
Population with access to
safe water (1994): 36%

ECONOMIC

Currency: Maloti (M)
Reserve ratio (1997):
4.6%
Real GDP (1995): US\$ 1.5 bn
GNP/capita (1995): US\$ 770
Av growth p.a. (1985-95):
1.2%
GDP/capita rating (1995):
13th among 59 African
states
Total GDP (1995): US\$ 1.5 bn
Av growth p.a. (1980-95):
7.5%
Sectoral share of GDP (1995)
Agriculture: 16%
Industry: 36%
(Manufacturing: 19%)
Services: 48%
Investment % of GDP (1995):
17%

Av inflation p.a. (1985-95):
13.6%
Inflation rate (1997): 11%
Exports (1997): US\$ 200 mn
Main exports (1997):
Manufactures:
(72%), livestock products
Main markets (1995): South
Africa (52%), N America
(11%)
Imports (1997): US\$ 880 mn
Main suppliers (1998): South
Africa (82%)
Development aid (US
million):
1980-1995: 104
per capita (1995): US\$ 40
External debt (US million):
1 285 71 1 005 559
% of GDP or GDP (1995):
45

INFRASTRUCTURAL

Railway track (1995): 2 km
Paved roads (1995):
18
Motor vehicles (1995): 10 000
Av (passenger km) (1994):
8 km
Electricity (1994)
Installed capacity (MW): 5
Output (kWh): 342 mn
Telephones (1995): 12 000
per 1 000 people: 9
Radio/7 000 people (1994):
33
TV sets/100 people (1994): 1
Daily newspaper (1994):
1 (1992): 2

victor. The BCP had undoubtedly prepared itself well for this contest. It had organized its constituency quite well throughout the country, especially in the mountain areas where people felt left out in the cold by the BNP's urban-biased development policies. Indeed, despite the BNP's reliance on state resources and various forms of support from the then apartheid regime in South Africa, the BCP won that contest. However, the BNP annulled the electoral process and continued its rule, which from then on became firmly premised on the Machiavellian praetorianism which marked most one-party states on the African continent. Denied an opportunity to continue its rule through the ballot, the BNP rule was henceforth to be anchored on the bullet. The pervasive political culture of settling political scores by politicians, rather than by addressing key national concerns, began to lay deep roots during this period.

Besides the mock election that the BNP organized in 1985 under pressure from the donor community, Lesotho never went through an electoral process to determine a democratically institutionalized form of government.³ Only in 1993, after eight years of military rule, did the Basotho electorate regain its political right to choose its rulers peacefully and openly through a free and fair election. As could be predicted, the BCP struck a stunning landslide victory during the 1993 contest and effectively denied all other protagonists representation in parliament.⁴ It won 75% of the total votes as against the BNP's poor showing of about 23%.

Although the tables had been turned upside down, Lesotho's historical tradition of one-party rule continued unabated — though, to everyone's relief, governance would be based on the dictate of the ballot rather than the absolutism of the bullet. Be that as it may, the old tradition of settling political scores continued as the ruling party set about mounting a political patronage programme which decidedly marginalized supporters of the opposition parties. As the English aphorism goes, "old habits die hard", for Lesotho's embryonic democracy did not change this political culture. But as the next section will demonstrate, even the ruling party itself was destined to break asunder — not only in an uncharacteristic fashion, but in a manner unprecedented in the political history of this country.

Making sense of the current political jigsaw

One of the problems to vex Lesotho's new-found democracy since 1993 has been the split of the ruling party, the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), into two factions: the Maporesha or Pressure Group (the young Turks) and the Majelathoko (the old guard). The dominant political tendency in the Pressure Group is that of the educated middle class who have exerted a considerable pressure for reforms of both the leadership and the administration of the party. The Majelathoko (literally translated, "those who eat apart") faction is dominated by old conservative forces who have been in the leadership of the party since the 1950s and would like to maintain the status quo. Ntsu Mokhehle himself, who was the leader of this faction, had been the leader of the BCP since 1952.

The faction-fighting within the BCP became public a couple of years before the 1993 election, which the party won with a landslide that left other contesting parties stranded. The internal rift within the BCP assumed greater proportions after the party won the election and formed a one-party government. This, of course, was to be expected, for it is in the nature of one-party regimes that opposition tends to emerge from within their midst. This internal feuding is based on various factors, which include (a) the tug-of-war over leadership positions; (b) squabbles over the succession to the leadership of the party; and (c) competition for various government positions such as cabinet portfolios, ambassadorial postings, and other civil service jobs. Weisfelder makes a similar point by arguing that

... there are no apparent ideological or programmatic divisions between the competing factions. The issues at stake are clearly the undemocratic character of party governance, political succession to the mantle of the aged and infirm leader of the party, Ntsu Mokhehle, and the distribution of power thereafter.⁵

As the two factions failed to resolve their differences through internal party mechanisms, litigation and counter-litigation became the order of the day, especially since 1995.

Developments took a melodramatic turn when, in March 1997, the Pressure Group faction attempted to remove Dr Ntsu Mokhehle as the party leader. Mokhehle lodged a lawsuit against this decision and the court ruling was inter-

esting, for it gave both parties a chance to clean their own house. The High Court of Lesotho ruled as follows: (a) that Mokhehle's five years of office had expired in January 1997 and he was therefore no longer leader of BCP; and (b) that because the conference that purported to have dismissed Mokhehle as leader did not give him both a warning and a hearing, he should be reinstated as Interim Leader of the BCP for three and half months during which time he was ordered to cooperate with the Executive Committee in preparing for a national conference to elect a new leader.

The Prime Minister did not cooperate with this committee, for it was composed of his arch-rivals in the Pressure Group. Instead of working towards resolving the internal conflicts within the party, the interim leader assumed a virulently belligerent attitude and seemed more determined than ever before to vanquish his enemies.

Around March 1997, the Prime Minister made a surprise cabinet reshuffle whereby he dismissed all ministers aligned to the Pressure Group, including Qhobela Molapo, Ntsukunyane Mphanya, and Tseliso Makhakhe. Two more ministers, namely Khauhelo Raditapole and Moeketsi Senaoana, resigned their posts both to give solidarity to their sacked colleagues and to duck the axe that the Prime Minister was threateningly brandishing over their heads. Furthermore, the Prime Minister organized a public rally on 16 March 1997 at which he implored a crowd of BCP supporters to turn their backs on the sacked ministers and the Pressure Group.

Although during the same rally the Prime Minister announced his desire to retire from active politics, he made a surprise political volte face in early June, when he formed a new political party and resigned from the BCP. The new party was formed on 7 June and formally registered two days later. On 10 June 1997, Mokhehle wrote a short letter to the Secretary General of the BCP, G.M. Kolisang, informing him that he had resigned from the party and had thus relinquished his position as leader.⁶ Surprisingly Mokhehle resigned not before forming a new party, but afterwards, and this means that for one day, 9 June, he was the leader of two political parties; a very interesting paradox indeed. This anomaly can be explained on the basis of Mokhehle's well-known political opportunism, for he wanted to make sure of being

firmly positioned at the helm of the new party before letting go his four-decade leadership of the BCP.

Since 1952, Mokhehle's leadership has been heavily marked by intolerance and dictatorial tendencies which did not provide room for internal democracy in the BCP. It is not surprising, therefore, that the party has historically experienced internal strife, acrimonious dissension and splits. Makalo Khaketla, a renowned writer and a former deputy leader of the BCP, argues that Mokhehle

does not compromise easily, if at all. He likes to have his way, and will stick to it unless he can be shown convincingly why the course he proposes to take is wrong. One weakness he may not be aware of (...) is his extreme suspiciousness. On several occasions this had led him to a head-on collision with some of his strongest supporters. Because of this suspicious nature, many staunch supporters found themselves either expelled from the party they loved, or so isolated by the whispering campaigns that he never did anything to stop, that they ultimately concluded that their only alternative was to resign from the party.⁷

Another element of surprise, and indeed shock to some, was that the Prime Minister announced in parliament that the new party would form the government, while the party that won the 1993 election which catapulted him to the premiership of the country would be the official opposition. Justifying his move and also making a swipe at the Pressure Group, the Prime Minister claimed that

I, and those who support me, have tried to restore normality in the affairs of the party, but it is now clear to us that these gentlemen, in fact, stand to benefit from this confusion; their strategy seems to be to drag the issue, so that, come election time, they should be the ones in control, even if this is against the wishes of the majority in the party.⁸

As Mokhehle's statement clearly shows, one of the major factors that led to the split within the BCP was the struggle over the control of the party. Another unstated reason was crucial too. Mokhehle and the Majelathoko faction were also concerned about the 1998 election. First, aware that they had lost the grip over the BCP, they had to form a new party. The BCP member of parliament for the Maliepetsane constituency, Tseliso Makhakhe, confirms this observation by arguing that Mokhehle had "earned members' displeasure through a long period of inefficiency, divisive policies and recalcitrancy, he sensed that he

could no longer be re-elected as he had been since 1952 (*sic*)".⁹ Second, also aware that the BCP had generally failed to deliver the fruits of its 1993 election manifesto, the Majelathoko faction calculated that a new party without a substantial track record in government would probably appeal to the electorate in 1998. Their plan is to present the new Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) to the electorate as an alternative to the BCP and the BNP, both of which have been the ruling parties previously. But this will be extremely difficult to canvass among the electorate since the same personalities in the LCD have been part of the BCP government since the 1993 election.

The jubilation of the Prime Minister and his Majelathoko faction in the formation of the LCD was premised on two grounds: first, that the LCD enjoys majority support of 40 members in the lower house of parliament against Pressure Group's 23 supporters, which essentially allowed him to turn his party into the ruling party. Second, although there is no clause in the national Constitution which allows the Prime Minister to engage in that political fraud, there is no constitutional provision that expressly debars him from doing what he did. The Westminster system that Lesotho inherited from the British allows parliamentarians to cross the floor from their original party affiliations as part of their fundamental human rights enshrined in Chapter II of the Constitution. But the crux of the debate in Lesotho is whether parliamentarians can cross in order to establish a party which could in turn be said to have a *loci standi* in parliamentary business. There is no clause of the Constitution "which expressly prohibits members of one political party in the House of Assembly from 'crossing the floor' in order to form or join another party".¹⁰ In legal-speak, that which the Constitution does not expressly prohibit, it allows; that which the constitution does not outrightly condemn, it condones.

Some observers have questioned the move by the Prime Minister not only to cross the floor in order to establish a party, but worse still to declare that party as the new government and himself as still the Prime Minister and, in turn, to relegate the elected party to the status of an official opposition. These grey areas in the Constitution have angered the Prime Minister's opponents bitterly, especially the BCP. They claim that what the Prime Minister

has done amounts to an unlawful ousting of an elected government. According to section 87 of the Constitution of Lesotho, the Prime Minister is appointed by the King in accordance with the advice of the State Council. The Prime Minister is appointed from the political party or coalition of political parties that commands the support of the majority of members of the National Assembly.

Enraged by the Prime Minister's unexpected political somersault, which they term a coup d'etat, the BCP have refused to assume the role of an opposition party in parliament and have recommended the following: (a) that Ntsu Mokhehle should resign from office as Prime Minister; (b) that all forces committed to democracy should advise the King to call upon Ntsu Mokhehle to resign; and (c) that the King should summon the Council of State so that the right to rule is restored to the BCP which won the 1993 national election.¹¹ The royalist Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) and the conservative Basotho National Party (BNP) seem to agree with the BCP that this move is tantamount to a coup, but unlike the BCP, they recommend that the King should dissolve the LCD government and form a government of national unity comprising all parties and which would prepare for the national election.

On Wednesday 11 June 1997, 22 members of parliament from the BCP walked out of the National Assembly in protest against what they deemed the legitimization of the alleged coup by the Speaker of the House, who readily accepted the status quo ante. This happened just before the Deputy Prime Minister, Phakalitha Mosisili, tabled a motion of confidence in Mokhehle and his new government. The BCP MPs were also protesting against the new sitting arrangement whereby they were supposed to occupy opposition benches. They also refused to appoint a leader from their ranks who could be accorded the necessary privileges of an official opposition. From this incident onwards, the BCP members of parliament vowed to make the parliament ungovernable and unworkable. It is worth noting that the BCP members of parliament raised about 15 points of order on 11 June regarding the formation of the LCD and its assumption of state power which the speaker did not address immediately. After that, parliament was adjourned indefinitely and seemed to have

ground to a halt until it reconvened some time in August 1997.

The Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (LCN), an umbrella body for all NGOs in Lesotho, organized a two-day extraordinary general meeting from 14 to 15 July 1997 whose primary objective was to analyse the political developments that led to the formation of the LCD and the resultant split in the National Assembly. Such a dialogue would, in turn, assist the LCN to make public its stance on these developments. The LCN felt compelled to organize this forum, given that in 1994 when King Letsie III toppled the democratically elected BCP government, it was the LCN which spearheaded protest marches and organized stay-aways which in part helped exert pressure for the restoration of democracy. The LCN forum resolved as follows:

- (a) that the move by the Prime Minister, Ntsu Mokhehle, is politically and morally reprehensible and hence necessitates the holding of general elections conducted by a legally established IEC and the said elections to be held not later than March 1998 in conformity with the Lesotho Constitution; and
- (b) mindful of the complexity of the constitutional questions raised by the formation of the LCD government, and that this sets a precedent that we do not wish to see recurring in the future, it is further resolved that independent opinion be sought by the Prime Minister, upon whom it is incumbent for him to do so, from inter-governmental organizations such as SADC, OAU, Commonwealth and the UN to be published by August 1997, so as to establish for certain the constitutionality of this action.¹²

On 16 July 1997, the Heads of Churches and the Christian Council of Lesotho also made their position known, criticizing Mokhehle's announcement that the LCD would form the new government while the BCP would become the official opposition. In their own words, they argue that:

We do not accept the propaganda, emanating from people in high status that the BCP is the official opposition. Results of the last general elections did not give the BCP the label of official opposition, we hold that nobody, at this stage has the competence to give that label now. It is only the electorate which can transform BCP into the official opposition by voting it the second largest political party in a general election.¹³

As the above exposé illustrates, the general mood in Lesotho is pretty negative towards what Ntsu Mokhehle has done, although frankly he has not

breached any aspect of the Constitution. The public bewilderment is premised more on the morality than on the legality of the act.

In the meantime, parliament has had difficulties doing its business given the political rift within the Lower House. After adjourning for a long time, it resumed business on 22 August 1997. Even then, it only sat for a few days and adjourned again as the BCP refused to play the role of an official opposition. As the leader of the party, Molapo Qhobela, stated during a press conference on 26 August 1997, "BCP was elected in 1993 as government by Basotho and nobody would forcibly make us opposition against the wishes of Basotho people."¹⁴ This was in response to the ruling by the Speaker of the House, J.T. Kolane, that "the official opposition is the largest minority party which is prepared, in the event of resignation of the government, to assume office... The largest minority party in this House is the BCP as matters stand at present."¹⁵

The ruling hardened feelings of the belligerent parties in the National Assembly. The BCP members raised a multiplicity of points of order and the House became unruly as some members referred to the members of the LCD as thieves who had stolen a democratically constituted government. As they refused to withdraw this allegation upon request by the Speaker, three BCP parliamentarians, N. Mphanya (Kueneng constituency), P. Moejane (Thaba Moea constituency) and K. Sekoto (Peka constituency) were suspended for one week from the House on 1 September 1997. The following week, on 4 September 1997, 18 other members of the BCP were also suspended for one week and forcibly removed by the police as they refused to leave parliament.

The BCP members of parliament were suspended for what was regarded by the Speaker as misbehaviour which brought the House into disrepute. The BCP members are alleged to have

ignored the procession from the chambers by the Speaker and his clerks and made noise as if nothing was happening. Others are reported to have remained seated while they were supposed to stand up when the procession moves (*sic*) into parliament, while another repeatedly hit (*sic*) a rubbish bin on the table making an unbearable noise.¹⁶

The leader of the BCP, Molapo Qhobela, justified their act of disobedience

on the grounds that they wanted "to show the speaker (. . .) that he is not the owner of the parliament, but a servant. . . . We will not accept his (. . .) authority, he can even call the army."¹⁷

The disorder that reigned in the National Assembly was so intense that even abusive language was traded between the two protagonists. The Speaker was not spared some of this trading of blows, later announcing that he was "vilified, disgraced, denigrated, despised, belittled and insulted in manner unheard of in any Commonwealth parliament. The insults that were heaped upon me led to the irresistible conclusion that we at last had an Opposition in this House."¹⁸ As Parliament seems to have been thrown into limbo and unprecedented disarray, the public and media have been barred from entering the premises of the National Assembly and police presence has been stepped up. This augurs badly for Lesotho's young democracy.

These recent developments bring into sharp focus the dangers that face Lesotho's democracy. Firstly, involvement of the security forces in settling disputes in parliament points to veiled attempts by the political elite to steer the country towards authoritarian rule. Secondly, prohibiting the public and the media from parliamentary sessions will undoubtedly lead to a deformed democracy — a democracy of the elite without a mass base.

The left-leaning Popular Front for Democracy (PFD) maintains that the recent developments in Lesotho "have amply proved that the democratic order in Lesotho is still in a fragile state and its enemies within and without the government are still very strong and active".¹⁹ In response to the perceptions of the other parties, the PFD has argued that

although they have not violated any constitutional provision, the Mokhehle faction of the BCP, the LCD, has betrayed a political mandate and the trust invested in them by a majority of voters in the 1993 elections. That the electorate should wake up to the announcement that they are governed by a party whose existence it does not know, and for which they never voted, is repugnant to the conscience of ethical politics. In the light of this, we are of a firm opinion that Mokhehle and his followers in the LCD were bound to seek a fresh mandate from the electorate in assuming power under a new name. Such a mandate could only be through an electoral process.²⁰

The reality is that Mokhehle's latest move does not amount to a constitu-

tional crisis requiring intervention by the courts of law, but rather a political crisis that demands a political solution through an electoral process. Only the electorate can either formalize the LCD rule or punish that party for political fraud during the 1998 elections. Only Basotho themselves can solve this problem effectively, not some benevolent external force. It is rather surprising that some political parties and the LCN have harboured the illusion that the presidents of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, together with external bodies such as the Commonwealth and the UN, can fully resolve Lesotho's domestic political crisis. While the value of external efforts should not be underestimated, domestic efforts are more important in redressing Lesotho's perennial political problems; and one of these domestic efforts is the forthcoming national election.

As King Letsie III was pressured to pronounce himself and/or take decisive action with the view to stabilizing Lesotho's severely threatened democracy, as the Head of State, he sought legal advice from W.H. Oliver SC, a law firm in Bloemfontein, South Africa, whose report was made public towards the end of August 1997. The report states that the formation of the LCD by Ntsu Mokhehle does not entitle the King to either dissolve the government or remove Mokhehle from the office of Prime Minister. By establishing the LCD Mokhehle has not violated the clause of the Constitution on the office of the Prime Minister and the lawyers argue that "Dr Mokhehle is in fact the leader of a political party that commands the support of the majority of members in the National Assembly, there is no reason that he should not be assumed as a properly appointed prime minister."²¹ The lawyers further counselled that since Mokhehle was sworn in as Prime Minister under the banner of the BCP in 1993, which no longer holds the majority in Parliament, "it may be advisable that the King summons a meeting of the Council of State to confirm Dr Mokhehle's designation."²²

In the meantime, the Upper House of Parliament (the Senate) made a resolution on 8 October 1997 to the effect that it would not pass laws or handle any issues emanating from the Lower House (the National Assembly) as a protest against Mokhehle's actions. Furthermore, Senate has made a written request to King Letsie III to intervene in this political crisis by dissol-

ving parliament and calling a fresh election.²³ The King is in a dilemma regarding his method of intervention, given that his temporary dissolution of the BCP government in 1994 invited a hostile response from various non-state actors and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), whose pressure led to the reinstatement of the government.

If the current political saga in Lesotho does not amount to a constitutional crisis, then it cannot be resolved by legal means, strictly speaking. It can only be resolved by political means through a vote by the electorate in a free and fair national election. This is the key challenge that confronts the electorate in the forthcoming election in 1998.

The 1998 election and its possible outcomes

At the time of writing, the exact date of the election has not been decided. However, preparations are already afoot. First, the bill that formally establishes the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has been signed into law in the form of an amendment of the Constitution through *Government Gazette* no. 43 of 7 July 1997. Second, the King, on the advice of the Council of State, appointed a three-man IEC by *Government Gazette* no. 65 of 1 September 1997 comprising Makara Mafisa (the chairman of the Commission and a practising lawyer), Moriee Khaebane (former clerk of the National Assembly) and Letjea Qhobela (former chairman of the Public Service Commission). The primary functions of the IEC are (a) to be responsible for conducting free and fair local and national elections; (b) to delimit boundaries of constituencies and supervise registration of voters; (c) promote voter education and register political parties; and (d) publish election results and adjudicate complaints of irregularities and malpractices. Third, although the government has already started a process of constituency delimitations through the Elections Office, opposition parties argue that this duty falls within the jurisdiction of the IEC, not a government department. Fourth, various NGOs, both local and international, have already started programmes and projects on voter education. Fifth, various donor countries and donor agencies have also pledged some form of material assistance to the 1998 election.

The significance of the 1998 election

is that it may turn out to be a very interesting contest compared to previous elections. It is likely to be driven more by real issues (i.e. policies) than by personalities. However, it may also degenerate into personal squabbles, especially judging the heightening tensions between the LCD and the BCP. If that is so, then there is a likelihood that, in much the same way as the 1993 election was about righting the historical wrong of 1970 when the BPN usurped power by force after the BCP had won the election,²⁴ the 1998 election could be about righting the historical wrong of June 1997 when LCD removed from power a government duly elected in 1993.

There will be many contestants, both parties and independent candidates, compared with previous elections. The turnover for the election is likely to be low given the pervasive political apathy among Basotho, which has definitely been the rule as regards the formation of the LCD. As experience elsewhere shows, once the electorate loses confidence in political parties the number of independent candidates increases and voter turnout decreases.

The recent Zambian election is a clear case in point. Prior to the 1996 general elections, the Zambian president Frederick Chiluba and the ruling Movement for Multi-Party Democracy made controversial changes to the constitution. These included provisions that any person vying for the presidency had to prove beyond doubt that his/her parents were Zambians by birth or descent; those people who had been elected president twice before the election would not be eligible to stand as candidates; and that all the chiefs who wanted to contest parliamentary elections had to abdicate the throne.²⁵ As a result of these changes about six political parties boycotted the election and there was general apathy among the electorate. Out of a total of 4.6 million eligible voters only 2.3 million registered for the election and worse still only 1.1 million people voted.²⁶ The trend is likely to be replicated in the forthcoming election in Lesotho.

There are three possible outcomes to the election. First, the electorate may turn its back against the LCD, judging that it unfairly grabbed state power from the BCP. In that case the outcome may be a "righting the historical wrong" scenario whereby the electorate returns the BCP to power.

Second, the electorate may want to support the LCD and formally confirm it as the ruling party. This scenario will be driven mainly by the advantage this party will have as the ruling party against the other contestants, including use of state resources, preferential access to the public media, and the likely undue influence on the IEC. Besides, the LCD will make every effort to exploit Mokhehle's personality cult to woo some hardline BCP supporters into its camp. In case of the first and second scenarios above, Lesotho will still be under one-party rule, which, as experience elsewhere has shown, does not usually augur well for deepening democratic culture and practice. Thirdly, the electoral outcome may bring about a coalition government involving the BCP, LCD and other political parties including the MFP and the PFD. This would come about in a case where there is no clear-cut winner. At no other time in its history has Lesotho ever come so close to this scenario. Although coalition governments are also problematic in their own ways, the third scenario may provide Lesotho with a golden opportunity to evolve a new political formula to stamp out political polarization and apathy among the electorate, a prerequisite for national unity and long-lasting reconciliation.

Besides the general election, a strong case can be made for a comprehensive review of the Lesotho constitution to achieve two critical objectives: (a) to deepen its democratic content and (b) to redress existing loopholes that political elites may exploit in future, so that no more LCDs can emerge. Lesotho's constitution was inherited from the colonial masters in 1965. It was put in force during the period 1966–1970. It was suspended in 1970 by the BNP after losing elections to the BCP. When the military toppled the BNP in 1986, governance in Lesotho was still premised on orders and decrees as the constitution remained suspended. Only during the twilight of the military dictatorship was an attempt made to review and amend the

constitution. But that was a hasty process overseen by the military who were already under pressure from local and external forces to open the political space for multiparty politics, which they did in 1993.

Lesotho's constitution, therefore, needs a serious review. It is also important that such a review ensures that the conventional political rules of succession of governments are strictly adhered to by politicians and political parties. This will ensure that no political party imposes itself on the electorate without the latter's mandate, irrespective of whether or not such a party commands the majority of members of the National Assembly.

Conclusion

Although conflict may be perceived as a vehicle for social progress, in some instances it translates into political instability which acts as a brake to socio-economic development. Political turmoil in Lesotho is one such conflict, in which the power struggle has become an end in itself. Here, politics becomes a zero-sum game whereby the political elite settle their scores without due regard for national development. The environment becomes profoundly hostile to development; the power struggle becomes so absorbing that everything else, including development, is marginalized.²⁷ This is exactly what Lesotho is going through at present. If the 1998 general election does not turn Lesotho's political landscape around, by way of deepening its democratic content and developmental substance, then its national significance will remain in doubt. Besides the general election, one way of ensuring stability in Lesotho is to embark on a comprehensive review of the constitution in order to beef up its democratic form and spirit.

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The political economy of Zaïre

A case of a predatory state

John M. Lutz, of the Department of Economics, University of the Witwatersrand, explores the reasons for the collapse of Zaïre, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Introduction

In size Zaïre represents Africa's giant, covering an area of 2.4 million square kilometres. It is richly endowed with various commodities including cobalt, copper, cadmium, oil, diamonds, gold, silver, tin, germanium, zinc, iron, manganese, uranium, radium, coffee, rice, bananas, palm oil, and timber. Mills¹ notes that despite these riches things have deteriorated to the point where "Zaïre does not exist any more as a state entity". Continuing economic and political anarchy "has transformed Zaïre into less of a pivot for Africa's development than a festering sore".

Zaïre, formerly called the Belgian Congo (now renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo), became independent from Belgium as the Republic of Congo on 30 June 1960. A power struggle subsequently emerged between Kasavubu, Lumumba and Tshombe, with Mobutu finally intervening in November 1965 by seizing power and proclaiming himself head of the "Second Republic". In October 1973 the Republic of Congo became the Republic of Zaïre, and a year later the government of Zaïre and the Executive Committee of the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR), Zaïre's sole legal political power, merged into the National Executive Council. This paper explores the intricacies of the Zaïrian state under Mobutism and outlines the process of state and economic collapse. Zaïre is demonstrated to be an archetypical predatory state, a virtual caricature of the squandering of African potential.

The decline of the economy

It is estimated that annual per capita income for Zaïre's 40 million people declined steadily from \$380 in 1960 to \$234 in 1990, and further to \$154 in 1994, making it one of the poorest

countries in the world, despite its favourable resource endowment.² Life expectancy is a mere 52 years and Human Development Index value was a meagre 0.571 in 1993.³ Zaïre's economy has experienced a dramatic collapse since the early 1970s. This section outlines its poor economic performance over the past three decades, while the following section looks at the role of the state therein. It must be said from the outset that reliable statistics on Zaïre are remarkably scarce. Mbaya maintains that

(there is a serious shortage of scholarly and scientific analyses on the situation in Zaïre as a whole, or the economic crisis in particular into the hole left by the absence of genuine theoretical work, various commentaries have posted easy platitudes and cliché, but essentially empty, phrases.⁴

This is understandable, given that Mobutu was prone to empty sloganeering himself.

Table 1 Growth of production (average annual %) for Zaïre and other low-income countries, 1965-1992

	Zaïre	Low-income economies
1965-1973	3.6	6.0
1973-1980	-2.0	2.8
1980-1987	1.6	-0.4
1988-1994	-8.1	5.9

Between 1965 and 1973 the Zaïrian economy seemed to be in relatively good shape. Its GDP grew at an average annual rate of 3.6%, largely because of the healthy agricultural and mining sectors. Deficit financing was kept to a minimum, averaging about 2% of total annual government expenditure with a resultant low inflation rate of 3% a year.⁵ However, after 1973 the economy regressed rapidly. Table 1 compares Zaïre's average annual growth rate with that of other low-income countries between 1965 and 1992.

Table 1 demonstrates that Zaïre consistently underperformed vis-à-vis other low-income economies, except for the period 1980-1987. There has been a total economic collapse since 1988, with average annual GDP decreasing by -8.1% up until 1994.

Zaïre's structure of production demonstrates little modernization since independence. In fact, agriculture's contribution to GDP rose from 21% in 1965 to 38% in 1994, while manufacturing's share dropped from 16% to 5% in the same period and the tertiary sector declined from 53% to 38%. The contribution of mining declined from 10% in 1990 to less than 5% in 1994, reflecting the recurrent financial problems of the state-owned Gécamines.⁶ Table 2 outlines the trend in Zaïre's production structure.

The collapse of Zaïre's secondary and tertiary sectors since independence points to the lack of any system

TABLE 2 Zaïre's structure of production (distribution of GDP in %), 1965-1994

	1965	1980	1987	1994
Agriculture	21	29	32	38
Industry	26	29	33	n.a.
Manufacturing	16	5	7	5
Services, etc.	53	42	35	28

Source: World Bank, *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* (Washington DC: World Bank, 1998) IMF, *Zaïre - The Economic Information and Statistical Data* (Washington DC: 1997, 1994).

nization taking place in the economy. This is also reflected in the composition of aggregate expenditure: the share of consumption in GDP rose from 85% in 1989 to an estimated 94% in 1994, while the ratio of investment to GDP fell from 13% to less than 3%.⁷ Capacity utilization declined to record levels, with the sharpest drop occurring in industries, particularly chemical and food processing.

The decomposition of the state has been characterized by a heightening loss of discipline over public finances. Between 1967 and 1972 overall state operations were under reasonable control. From 1973 onwards, public expenditure soared, and soon afterwards revenues fell sharply (as the copper price declined). Huge deficits appeared, along with large-scale budget overruns: in 1974 actual outlays for the budget were 163% of the budgeted figures.⁸

Table 3 illustrates the deteriorating state of Zaïrian public finances between 1975 and 1994, pointing to the startling disintegration of the state's extractive capacity as the percentage of revenue relative to GDP dropped dramatically from 1975 onwards (with total collapse in the 1990s, exacerbated by a rapid rise in expenditure relative to GDP). The government deficit as a proportion of GDP also worsened over this time period, reaching its nadir in 1994, when the deficit as a percentage of GDP reached -24,1%. (Note that this takes only central government expenditure into account. Young and Turner⁹ found that total government expenditure in 1974 as a percentage of GDP was, in fact, 56%.)

The period 1990-94 saw an alarming degeneration of the economy as a result of continuing hyperinflation, currency depreciation, and output contraction. The IMF¹⁰ shows that the economy contracted at alarming rate during this time (real GDP contracted by a cumulative 40%) with the formal economy shrinking to minimal levels, and economic activity increasingly shifted to the informal sector. The government budget became disarticulated, with acute erosion of the tax base, in-

effective expenditure control procedures, and soaring budget deficits that were financed by monetary creation; the external position weakened markedly and external payments arrears ballooned.

Developments in the monetary sector mirrored the worsening fiscal situation as monetary policy became accommodative. The IMF¹¹ asserts that the Bank of Zaïre provided financing to the Treasury on demand and also resorted to money creation to finance its own operations. It goes on to say that the marginalization of the banking sector is epitomized by the increase in the share of currency in circulation in broad money, from 54% in 1990 to 88% in 1995. Reflecting the growing need to finance the deficit in treasury operations as well as sizeable extra-budgetary operations, the pace of broad money growth reached record levels: from about 84% during 1986-89 to over 5 500% in 1994. By the end of 1994, the Bank of Zaïre had accumulated losses equivalent to 13% of GDP.¹² The loss of control over monetary and fiscal policy is reflected in the dramatic rise in inflation over the past decade. The average annual inflation rate between 1975 and 1982 was 47,7%; it fell between 1983 and 1985 to 27,9%, then rose again to 77,1% between 1986 and 1989, before accelerating to 2 805,8% between 1990 and 1994.¹³ The result was a startling depreciation in the exchange rate against the US dollar, from an average of Z718 in 1990 (down from 23,4 between 1975 and 1982) to Z7 530 250 in 1993, and in October 1993, the government introduced the new Zaïre currency, equivalent to three million old Zaïres.

The external sector suffered a similar fate. The collapse of state-owned Gemines owing to poor financial management led to a sharp decline in export earnings. Although Zaïre has experienced successive balance of payments deficits since 1982, this worsened dramatically in the 1990s. Between 1992 and 1995 the country incurred an estimated \$2,5 billion capital account deficit and a similar current account deficit. The overall balance of



Mobutu

TABLE 3 Zaïrian public finances between 1975 and 1994 (%)

	1975-82	1983-85	1986-89	1990-94
Revenue/GDP	12,1	10,5	10,6	4,9
Expenditure*/GDP	19,1	16,2	23,9	24,6
Govt deficit/GDP	-6,7	-5,7	-13,3	-19,8

* Central government expenditure only.

Source: IMF, Zaïre — *Background Information and Statistical Data*, Washington DC: IMF, 1996, p.4.

payments deficit has exceeded \$1 billion every year since 1990.¹⁴ Zaïre's external debt paints a comparable sequence of events. At the beginning of 1995, it amounted to \$13,8 billion, up from \$4,8 billion in 1980 and less than \$1 billion in 1970.¹⁵

The point is that the condition of Zaïre's public finances left much to be desired and this chronically affected its macroeconomic performance. The state was unable to mobilize its extractive capacity and consequently ended up making "economically absurd or socially dysfunctional decisions".¹⁶ Although the collapse since 1990 has been particularly dramatic, the fact is that by 1980 the GDP was no more in real terms than it had been in 1959, although the population had doubled.¹⁷

Post-colonial economic management

Economic policies in Zaïre since independence largely mirror economic operations in the colonial period. Mbaya¹⁸ maintains that the root of its current economic crisis lies with the prevailing model of accumulation. Within each economy there are a couple of sectors whose function it is to provide a basis for accumulation by generating economic surpluses which are then used to fund the development of other sectors. However, when the model gets exhausted it affects the entire society and attempts to deal with the crisis in terms of traditional macroeconomic policy are bound to fail as it neglects to confront the real problem, namely the accumulation model itself. Mbaya¹⁹ affirms that the foundation of the colonial model of accumulation in Zaïre was laid between 1920 and 1940. During that period, a dominant coalition was established between the colonial administration, the Catholic church and finance capital. Priority was given to the development of the mining sector and transport infrastructure (necessary to facilitate extraction). The colonial state used its brute force to control rural society, while the Church got the population to obey authority and work hard. The hinterland was systematically exploited — its purpose was to provide manpower to the major mining corporations and provide economic surpluses to that sector. The result was an acute state of stagnation in the rural sector. The mining sector, on the other hand, grew rapidly and soon

joined agriculture as leading surplus sectors. The state gained through its cut from taxation but the bulk of the economic surplus was accumulated abroad.

The post-colonial state never made the effort to adopt a different model and therefore simply adopted the default model — the colonial accumulation model. Mbaya identifies this as the political heart of the crisis:

in the post colonial situation, power relationships between the state, capital (partly national by now) and the peasantry had changed. Furthermore, the state apparatus itself had changed. The new state no longer had the resources formerly available to the colonial state. Neither could it use the same methods. These two changes brought certain hitherto hidden weaknesses of the colonial model, now retouched and presented as the current post-colonial model, out in the open.²⁰

In other words, the new Zaïrian state tried to continue with the grandiose existence of the colonial state but failed to recognize that it did not possess the capacity to fulfil its vision and hence became engulfed in unstable state-society struggles. Immediately following independence, the state was exceptionally vulnerable and disorganized, and unable to control rural society. Mbaya²¹ asserts that since the political bourgeoisie had no economic base of its own, the state was compelled to foster closer ties with the best organized sector, namely mining. This became its main source of income and foreign exchange, and hence the state now possessed a much narrower accumulation base. Given its weakness, the Zaïrian state's alliance with international capital put it in a susceptible power relationship. It therefore decided to use its political clout to deal with foreign capital and to wrangle a larger share of the surplus through large-scale nationalization.

At the end of 1973, President Mobutu announced that all foreign enterprises in the agricultural, commercial, and transport sectors would be Zaïrianized (ownership would be transferred to Zaïrians). Compensation was based on political and strategic considerations. During 1974 there was a general deterioration in management because of the inexperience of the new owners, who often simply sold all the assets and adopted a luxurious lifestyle in Kinshasa. Production dropped and debts increased, and as a result in 1975 a partial "retrocession" was announced with 40% of shares being re-

turned to the former foreign owners.²²

To make matters worse, Zaïre was struck with a devastating crisis in 1975. The primary misfortune lay with the collapse of the copper price, which fell from a record of \$1,40 per pound in April 1974 to a low of \$0,53 in early 1975. In 1967, 287 000 tons of copper brought \$73,8 million; in 1975, 489 000 tons yielded, in constant prices, \$67,5 million.²³ Additional blows included the OPEC oil crisis, which quadrupled the cost of importing oil, the Angolan civil war, which closed off the Benguela railway line (Zaïre's cheapest exporting route), a world recession, and the Shaba invasions of 1977. However, although these factors were serious, conditions were made worse by political factors directly related to the patrimonial nature of the state:

massive and rash spending and borrowing when revenues were high, rampant corruption and fiscal mismanagement, and lack of understanding and concern about the rapidly deteriorating situation by Mobutu and the political aristocracy ... (T)he top government leadership has traditionally known nothing of or cared little for economics, and this shows.²⁴

Mobutu was above all a political leviathan, and was rather ignorant about economic matters, barring financial transactions which lined his own pockets. For instance, the Zaïrianization programme of 1973 reflected a serious lack of planning beforehand as regards its consequences. Zaïre's economic policies reflected inherent contradictions and a misunderstanding of economic realities. Five dichotomies can be identified, according to Kisangani,²⁵ which illustrate the confusion the country found itself in:

- the government's desire to finance the survival of the authoritarian regime, despite an inadequate and inefficient tax base;
- its willingness to restore the profitability of the exporting sector while maintaining an overvalued exchange rate;
- the desire to give the ruling old political order control over small businesses, but implementing the policy through inappropriate distribution without taking into account the new acquirers' managerial background;
- the desire to promote a huge public sector, while freezing its prizes; and
- the willingness to attract foreign capital, while nationalizing foreign small businesses.

The Zaïrian accumulation model, as inherited from the colonial era, was

bound to collapse. The agricultural system was pillaged in colonial times and is still being pillaged today. It has continually been deprived of its surplus, which is used to finance other sectors (especially government services) and gets nothing in exchange, being left without funds to plough back into its own development. For instance, Mokoli²⁶ indicates that although 4–5% of budgetary outlays went to agriculture prior to independence, by 1973 only 1–2% went to agriculture (and 90% thereof went to the salaries of administrators). Industrial growth was also bound to be stunted because as rural societies were forced to cut down on consumption so the market for industrial products shrank. Furthermore, as the agricultural surplus diminished less funds were available to finance industry. Mbaya²⁷ maintains that the rural collapse led to massive urbanization at a rate of 4.4% a year, while those who stayed behind shifted to subsistence farming (whose share of total agricultural production rose from 37% to 60%). The mining sector became the sole basis of accumulation for the state, but the lack of domestic capital made development difficult while foreign capital was unready to invest in mining given poor metals' prices. The accumulation model thus came to an abrupt halt.

Although Zaïre's economic crisis had some external origins (along the dependency lines), it was above all an internal phenomenon. The state managed the situation poorly and its Zaïrianization measures proved disastrous. Far from empowering ordinary citizens, they enriched the ruling élite. Success in the ensuing scramble for a share of the spoils was directly a function of political influence.

Table 4 illustrates the categories of persons who ultimately benefited from Zaïrianization in the city of Lubumbashi — 40% of businesses were allocated to politicians and civil servants. Confusion followed immediately as the legal status of enterprises became uncertain, managerial vacuums developed, production came to a standstill and inflation soared, while the state resorted to mass price controls and empty promises. State revenue dropped dramatically as the new owners refused to meet their financial obligations. The Zaïrianization programme sets the tone for the next section, which exposes the true essence of the Zaïrian crisis, namely the predatory nature of the state.

TABLE 4 Effects of Zaïrianization in Lubumbashi

Beneficiaries	Number of businesses acquired	Percentage of business (divested)
Politicians	62	35.4
Businessmen	67	34.9
Civil servants	9	4.5
Other	36	25.1

Source: Young, C. and Turner, T. *The Rise and Decline of the Zaïrean State*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p.341.

Zaïre's predatory state

Mokoli²⁸ maintains that the post-colonial state in Zaïre is a socialistic ideologico-political superstructure, which stands on a capitalistic socio-economic infrastructure, both coexisting with traditional modes of production in the Zaïrean social formation. The Zaïrean state thus exhibits fundamental contradictions. Mobutu played the East versus West game during the Cold War, masterfully capitalizing on its strategic position in sub-Saharan Africa by befriending the American allies and the Warsaw countries and China. Foreign domestic capitalists were important accomplices in his quest for personal wealth. Yet paradoxically he then proceeded to nationalize many foreign enterprises in an effort to "free" Zaïre from foreign dependency, later reversing his decision. He realized that socialist rhetoric was a crucial ingredient for populist appeal but he was easily manipulated by foreign capital's promises and kickbacks. In addition, as is demonstrated below, he never quite got to grips with the traditional sector, which remained a thorn in his side. Mokoli affirms that this

incompatible juxtaposition of different systemic components has engendered the structural conflicts and blockage of the Zaïrean system in favour of the few who hold the key state offices and have utilized them to establish their economic bases and expand their ideologico-political influence.²⁹

The state in Zaïre represents one of the weakest and yet most repressive regimes. It portrays a clear example of the inherent dangers of a state over-extending itself and ruling arbitrarily. Callaghy³⁰ describes Mobutu's absolutist regime as an authoritarian early modern state organized around a president who has adopted colonial structures and patrimonialized them, thereby creating an administrative monarchy. He compares Mobutu's state to absolutist France under Louis XIV — "a huge patron-client system with the king at the apex."³¹

Mobutu represented the very incarnation of the state. He was citizen, chief, king, and revolutionary. He ruled with grandeur and his kingship had become its own end.³² Structurally the post-colonial state was synonymous with the sole political party, namely the MPR. In fact, in 1974 the Legislative Council passed a law stating that the MPR was not only the supreme institution but also the sole official institution, with other institutions merely becoming its parts. Membership of the MPR was compulsory and automatic at birth. Its main organs were the central committee and the political Bureau which nominated the President and adopted state decisions which were binding on the legislature.

The only person who stood above the MPR was Mobutu, who controlled everything. He was immune from investigation or accusation. He systematically oppressed all independent associations and interest groups. He destroyed and prevented the build-up of local and personal power bases by appointing officials to regions and tribes not their own and making them directly accountable to the president. The office of the president managed the state's departments, state industries, public services, and other key sectors. The personalization of power reached its apex in 1974 when public ideology was renamed 'Mobutism' and the Interior Minister declared that —

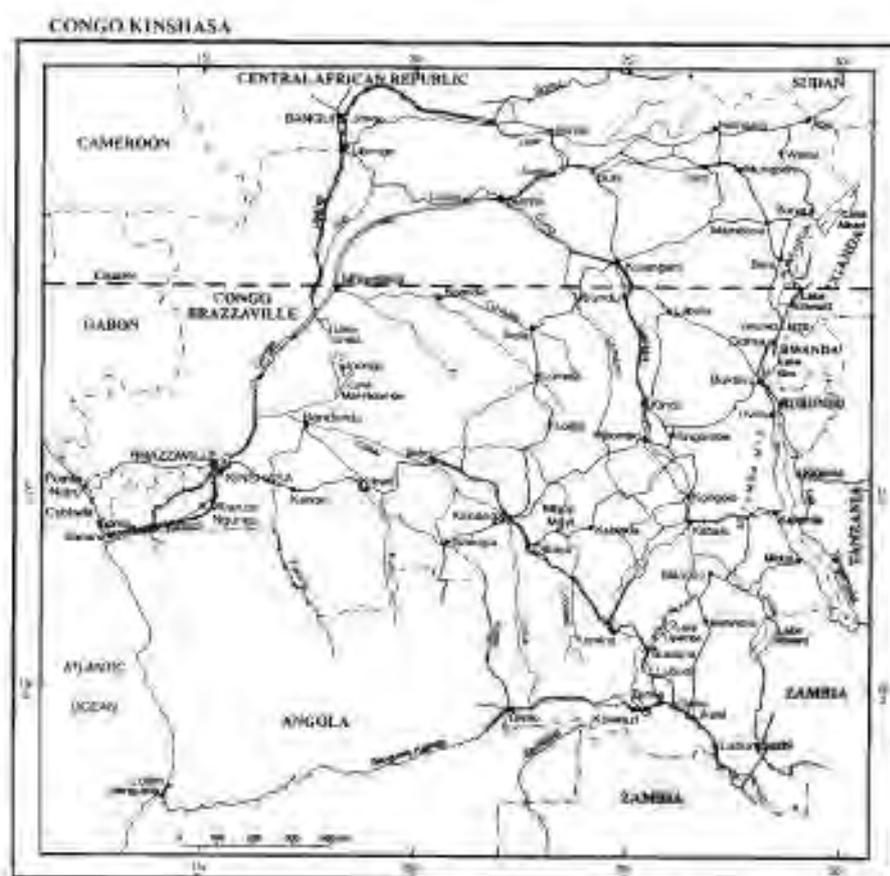
God has sent a great prophet, our pious and glorious Guide Mobutu — this prophet is our liberator, our Messiah. Our church is the MPR. Its chief is Mobutu, we respect him like one respects a Pope. Our gospel is Mobutism. That is why the crucifixes must be replaced by the image of our Messiah.³³

The state in post-1965 Zaïre has been a superstructure of privilege. Mobutu created his own political aristocracy which represented the regime's main internal support and was composed of three main groups, according to Callaghy.³⁴ The first group (the "Presidential brotherhood") consisted of all top-

level administrative, political and military officials, and foreign advisers. It also included Mobutu's relatives, who held pseudo-political-administrative positions. This group had unlimited licence to plunder and its material perquisites were enormous. Most members created their own patron-client networks. The second group was made up of middle-level administrative and military officials in Kinshasa. These people aspired to membership in the "presidential family" and were usually clients in the networks of those who were in it. To a lesser degree they also partook in the "politics of appropriation". The third group included the rest of the territorial prefects and military officers. Loyalty to Mobutu was the ultimate requirement for membership of this political aristocracy.

The pervasiveness of this patrimonialization is truly remarkable. Mobutu became an absolutist presidential monarch, using Zaïre as his financial playground. Callaghy³⁵ estimates that Mobutu controlled between 17% and 22% of the annual budget for his exclusive personal use and it is reputed that he was the richest African head of state. His overseas wealth was calculated at \$4 billion in 1982 and he owns dozens of palaces. Mobutu even formed a holding company (CELZO) to manage his holdings. CELZO employs 25 000 people, making it the third largest employer after the state and the mines. Mobutu has been characterized as a "walking bank account in a leopard-skin cap".³⁶ His corrupt behaviour in turn, set the tone for the rest of the country — corruption is the system in Zaïre. Turner³⁷ asserts that Zaïre is a den of unregenerate thieves. No government project is begun without payoffs and civil servants regard extortion as a part of their job description. In fact, Mobutu maintained the loyalty of his staff by allowing them to participate in the politics of appropriation with as trademark lavish lifestyle.

State-party personnel were totally dependent on Mobutu for selection, appointment, and maintenance in power. No one could be sure of remaining in authority. The system ensured that the state served the President's interests rather than the nation's. The system was thus incapable of promoting development. Mobutu controlled the state personnel by keeping them powerless and uncertain about their job security. He constantly rotated and changed the membership of the highest organs of power. Mu-



luya³⁸ documents the new cabinets installed between 1970 and 1990 and counts 47, with only four lasting 12 months or more, and none more than 17 months. Nepotism was the order of the day and thereby Mobutu was able to maintain himself in power. All important government and security officials tacitly colluded to conserve the system as it was in their financial interest to perpetuate the status quo.

Callaghy³⁹ contends that the Mobutu strategy of state formation was highly organic-statist in orientation. It entailed:

- the consolidation and use of coercive force (with external assistance) to contain overt political unrest;
- an intense personalization (patrimonialization) of power;
- a recentralization of power along the lines of the authoritarian colonial state using a territorial administrative apparatus to dominate the population, especially to control ethnic, regional, religious and linguistic particularisms as they merge in complex ways with emerging class factors;
- the emasculation of all alternative sources of autonomous authority;
- the maintenance of severely con-

stricted political participation (de-participation) in which a highly corporatist single state-party is the only legitimate political arena;

- the establishment of a domain consensus, which consists of a political religion built around the presidential monarch, which is relied upon for legitimation and the diffusion of traditional authority; and
- neo-mercantilist economic policies designed to increase the political and economic power of the political aristocracy.

The result of this strategy was an African absolutist state, a mixed patrimonial-bureaucratic state revolving around a presidential monarch with a "democratic" facade. Mobutu relied heavily on foreign support but sought to limit its influence when it impinged on the interests of his political aristocracy.

The Zaïrian state represented the essence of a predatory entity. Some have gone so far as to question whether a state actually existed in Zaïre.⁴⁰ In fact, Biaya and Tsionda⁴¹ sum it up perfectly by musing that the presence of the state was much more mythological, ritual and ideological than concrete.

They go on to say that scholars on Zaïre have fallen into the conceptual trap of assuming that the Zaïrian state was actually interested in being a state. The state was merely Mobutu and his henchmen and its function was accumulation. It was a self-perpetuating, kelpocratic organ in Mobutu's command. Newbury argues that —

the state ... may no longer be so visible in performing the functions associated with the post-industrial state in the West (health, education, transport, infrastructure and court system). But it is nonetheless active in performing those functions associated with a pre-industrial state: the accumulation of resources and the creation of a dependent work force. ... In such a context, it is in the interest of the state — and the groups who control it — to further ... underground functions, both because this assures that power will devolve to the rich and because it means that the maximum number of people are dependent on the corruption of the state. ... In such a decay, therefore, the state is very much alive.⁴²

The state existed only to further the interests of the ruling elite. The state did not govern but it did rule using its repressive tentacles. It possessed no development plan and had neither the will nor the means to plan consistently.

Overall rule in Zaïre was patrimonialized under the patriarchal ruler, Mobutu. The upper echelons of the civil service were dependent on him for selection and maintenance in power. They, in turn, controlled appointments below them. Corruption, nepotism and embezzlement became characteristics of Zaïre's bureaucracy. State bureaucrats benefited from patrimonial favour with wealth and status but did not have the capability or desire to perform their duties. Boyle questions whether the state had the capacity to carry out even minimal tasks:

The state thus risks becoming an irrelevancy, as well as a mechanism of predatory accumulation by those associated with its eroding power.⁴³

Patron-client linkages (often along ethnic lines) permeated every level of the state, which itself was incapacitated — an instrument for rent-seeking and personal gain. The state's struggle against society became more and more desperate and its rule more and more arbitrary. The arbitrariness of the decision-

making process permeated every state-level and led to state irrationality and softness. The state had neither the will nor the means to construct a development plan; still less did it ever have a real development plan, and hence the unpredictability, incoherence and arbitrariness of policy. Zaïre was the worst kind of state, relying on "piracy and repression" for survival. It reflected the "inertial perpetuation of its colonial past" and although it may have been a leviathan, it was a lame one.⁴⁴

Conclusion

This article has shown Zaïre to be the quintessential predatory state. Governance was based on a system of patronage with personal accumulation as its goal. Mobutu, as head of this kleptocracy, set the example by his accumulation of wealth. It was an absolutist regime with broad discretionary power. The bureaucracy, in turn, reflected Zaïrian politics and lacked any capacity to govern. Zaïre is a perfect example of an imploding state over-extending itself and being engulfed by state-society struggles.

The future for Zaïre (Democratic Republic of Congo) is bleak. Whilst Mobutu was on his deathbed on the French Riviera, anarchy and war erupted in eastern Zaïre. The civil war reached its apex with the flight of Mobutu and the transfer of power to the rebel leader, Kabila. After 32 years of Mobutu's rule Zaïrians face a potential power vacuum with his removal. There are those who believe that his departure will lead to genocide that will make the Rwandan experience pale in comparison. Kabila has scheduled democratic elections for the Democratic Republic of Congo for 1999, but international opinion is weary of this promise and there are already indications that Kabila may end up being another African dictator.

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Development and democracies

Liberal versus popular

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The relationships between development and democracy are complex, fraught with problems and uncertainties — and of decided importance. Only the broad and loose association in today's world is really clear — while all existing institutionalized democracies are located in capitalist economies, not all capitalist societies are by any means democratic. Fascist systems grew out of advanced capitalism in Germany and Italy, democracy rubbed shoulders with apartheid in South Africa for decades, and bureaucratic authoritarian systems are notable features of the decidedly capitalist Tiger economies of East Asia.

Existing democracies also differ in significant ways. The predominant form is liberal (or elite, or electoral) democracy, as found in, say, Britain, the United States, Japan, and Botswana. There is the significant social democratic variant, represented chiefly by the Scandinavian countries, where the inequalities of capitalism are curbed by state-supported welfare and redistributive programmes. Popular or participatory democracy, where people directly determine the conditions in which they work and live, is a rare and usually endangered species. It flourished in South Africa through the 1980s, however, borne on the back of exploitative, advancing capitalist development, and the United Democratic Front/Mass Democratic Movement (UDF/MDM), supported by international sanctions, was probably the main force that prompted Pretoria to initiate the dismantling of apartheid.

While the UDF/MDM was quickly demobilized after the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC), the participatory impulse persists within trade unions and some civic groups. Strong tensions usually exist between liberal democratic institutions and pop-

ular participatory tendencies, the former perceiving the latter accurately as threatening to both elitist privileges and authoritarianism. People's power emphasizes accountability and openness in government, while liberalism stakes all on the right to vote in periodic, multi-party elections. All three forms, liberal, social democratic, and participatory democracy are potentialities growing in and out of capitalism, and the industrialization, urbanization, infrastructural and educational developments which its advancement entails. As Bertolt Brecht famously remarked: "It is not communism that is radical, it is capitalism." When and how the alternative directions were chosen, and the distinctions between the different democratic forms, are worth consideration. Liberalism is highly preferable to autocracy, but it nevertheless contains many insufficiencies and limitations which deserve scrutiny and correction.

The historical sequence of development, liberalism, and democracy is clear. Liberal democracy emerged in a small number of Western countries out of a particular historical experience. Capitalism began to arise first, from around the end of the 15th century, followed by liberalism's appearance some two centuries later, in a process initially of struggle but also of considerable harmony between these two systems — each emphasizing the individual, property rights, and choice between and among those fit to make it.¹ Democracy, aside from the few-centuries long Athenian experience,² came later still, again out of conflict, in an even smaller number of places. It came with the stress on voting rights for electing representatives, and essentially through compromise enforced by liberal capitalist power holders over the democratic, largely working-class, impulse for much more.³

Liberal or representative democracy is a phenomenon of this century, expressing not the fulfilment of democratic aspirations, but their deflection, containment, and limitation. As firmly stated by a number of its intellectual advocates, it was essentially a system of choosing a government; that, and nothing more: in Joseph Schumpeter's terms, a "political method", an "institutional arrangement", for deciding who shall govern. Citizens' participation in politics was limited to the act of voting in competitive elections every four to seven years or so. Elitism and popular passivity were in-built in this concept. As Seymour Martin Lipset stated: "The distinctive and most valuable element of democracy is the formation of a political elite in the competitive struggle for the votes of a mainly passive electorate."⁴

John Stuart Mill, doyen of modern liberalism, had earlier been even more frank about the true meaning of the liberal concept in expressing his notion of "rational democracy". This was, "not that the people themselves govern, but that they have security for good government.... The people ought to be the masters, but they are masters who must employ servants more skilful than themselves..."⁵ Western politicians would avoid similar admissions, but elitism and popular passivity are twin pillars of the liberal democratic conception.

So formulated, representative democracy, says John Dunn, helped to make the world safe for capitalism and the modern state, throughout most of the Western nations, and later in other places like Japan and Botswana. But in successfully cutting-off the old concerns with equality, justice, and self-rule, it also "neutered" democracy, and deprived it "of all generative energy".⁶ The supposedly non-ideological and value-free system constituted

also a rather sterile and empty society.

The failures of the democratic transitions in sub-Saharan Africa in recent years could relate in large part to the sterility of the liberal conception. "The wind blowing from Europe has begun to sweep Africa", enthused French President François Mitterand in 1990,⁷ but aside (significantly) from Namibia and South Africa, it has not extended far beyond the established liberal democratic systems in Botswana and Mauritius. In the first years of this decade parliamentary elections were held in 35 out of 48 sub-Saharan countries. In 17 of these, Marina Ottaway has calculated, elections "did not bring about significant changes in the direction of democracy"; in seven others they were "seriously flawed"; in another four the results "were voided by subsequent non-democratic interventions"; and in six, elections were at best "marginally free and fair".⁸

Different factors, with nevertheless a common tendency, produced these dismal outcomes. African leaders were aware that international communities could be appeased without, as Ottaway neatly put it, a complete surrender to the voter's choice.⁹ But for *The Economist*, more blundy, it was "the

political elites and their bribed officials who have hijacked politics in Africa." Elections were actually about "electing elites". The model offered to the people legitimized the concentration solely upon the brief and vulnerable act of voting. People in some countries seem aware of the inadequacies, and they respond by doing what is open to them. Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, a case-book specimen of the hollowness of multi-party theory, was re-elected for another six-year term in March 1996 on a turnout of only 31 per cent of eligible voters.¹⁰ Abstention in this context meant not apathy but rejection.

A democracy which is nothing more than the periodic election of elites has little or no defence against authoritarian manipulation. Liberalism had happily sloughed off the values of equality and justice in preference to those of individualism and competition. Equality is understood within the existing model as simply "one person, one vote", as equal opportunity (for those possessed of the necessary resources), and as in the earlier abstract principle of the impartiality of the law. But inequalities of wealth and bureaucratic power easily outweigh such limited conceptions. Big economic inequal-

ities, like those that exist in Botswana and South Africa, distort and even negate the equal voting rights of the poor and weak.

Many dangers emanate from the competitive market wherein, in differing degrees of unrestraint, all existing democracies are embedded. The negative effects extend far beyond the creation of inequalities. The market is an amoral force. The conservative and the democrat, if not always the liberal, recognize this. "You often hear the phrase 'What are you worried about? The market will put everything in place,'" an enraged Alexander Solzhenitsyn thundered. "The market will not create a state structure. Nor will it create a moral basis for society."¹¹ Robert Dahl, the American political scientist, has recognized the inefficiencies that exist in competitive markets, and also stressed their "severe moral weaknesses."¹² The economist Robert Kuttner accepts the importance of markets, but points out the profound limitations of a system where the value of anything is its price. Where pure market principles apply, the poor, the aged, and the sick — a health insurance market, for example, will not insure the sick — can literally lose everything.¹³

On the other hand, however, definite important links appear to exist between equality, economic growth, and increased democracy. Citing evidence from the World Bank, Przeworski noted a "strong statistical correlation between more equal distribution of income and faster growth."¹⁴ Japan and Taiwan offer seemingly strong examples of capitalist countries where rapid economic growth has been accompanied by relatively low inequalities of income.¹⁵ Przeworski's study of 14 OECD countries between 1960 and 1981 showed that the welfare of the average adult, the average worker, and the average manufacturing employee was higher in social democratic countries — or, as he also notes, "the only countries in the world in which almost no one is poor after taxes and transfers are those that pursue social democratic policies." He notes data showing that the percentage of people in poverty after taxes and transfers in Norway recently was 4.8; in Sweden 5.0; in Britain 12.1; and in the United States 16.9.¹⁶

Equality is clearly an option achievable to a relatively great extent in both capitalist social democracies and in Japan. It is conspicuously absent in the most unrestrained of capitalist liberal



Voting in Nongoma Town Hall, KwaZulu-Natal

democracies, in contemporary Britain and in the United States. Other findings indicate that the average chief executive of a "Fortune 500" American corporation earned, in the mid-1990s, 157 times as much as a factory worker there. In Japan a comparable executive received only 17 times more than his shop-floor employee.¹⁷



After a long wait . . .
The vote is cast.



Despite liberalism's insistence to the contrary, equality and justice remain inherent in the concept of democracy. The distinctiveness of a democratic society, says Schwarzmantel, is its "aspiration to popular sovereignty", built in turn upon three "core values" of equality, accountability, and participation.¹⁸ In sharp contrast, too, with the liberal claim that democracy is simply a form of government, Arblaster insists that it refers, as it did in Classical Greek thought and in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, necessarily to the whole society. It involves a continuous process of interaction between government and society, with a maximum involvement of the people in decision-making at various levels.¹⁹ Rousseau's just and free society was one where citizens gave obedience to the laws that they prescribed to themselves. While the liberal idea of freedom is being left alone - "doing your own thing", careerism, leisure, consumerism - the democratic idea involves self-determination.²⁰ It is in no sense an outdated abstraction. It is in fact what organized workers in South Africa, in Friedman's significant interpretation, were striving to do through the 1970s and 1980s.²¹

Popular participation initiates not only real democracy, but is also historically the best means by which to limit elitism and corruption. Contemporary state-established agencies like the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime in Botswana, and the Office of Serious Economic Offences in South Africa, do not work effectively alone. The close association between economic development, social change and democratization was seen in 19th century England. The latter, associated with the clean-up of British politics, was built upon a big shift in class alignments. It was the formation of new urban middle and working classes, seeking to utilize the state as the agency for their own social emancipation, that decisively brought an end to the entrenched system of ruling-class corruption in Britain. The extent and consequences of the change were profound. "The division of spoils" in the 18th century, says Peck, was "the lifeblood of the British system." Corrupt practices served to "reinforce the status quo, primarily in the interests of the landed aristocracy."²²

But with increasing political participation by commercial and industrial middle classes and by the new urban working class, borne on advanced capitalist development through the peri-

od, "corruption became outmoded and gave way to democracy". King extends Peck's interpretation. There was a "significant relationship", he emphasizes, between the rise in the proportion of newly enfranchised voters and the decline of corruption. By the turn of the 20th century "the new political style had become the normative one" in English politics. The speed at which normative and democratic politics developed together, especially in the second-half of the 19th century, was, concludes King, "quite outstanding".²³

The participatory movement went a considerable distance, but no further. Liberal democracy was firmly established at the cost of keeping social democracy at bay. In the United States, in sharp contrast, no similar class action took place then or later, and corruption has remained as a distinctly American phenomenon,²⁴ as the accompaniment to its relatively unregulated liberal capitalism.²⁵ Historically, the majority of Americans, according to Van Klaveren, "did not place any value on an honest administration", and "corruption is systematically practiced even today".²⁶

Levels of voter participation in America are extremely low even by the most passive liberal democratic standards. President Ronald Reagan, for instance, gained a supposedly big victory in 1980 with the support of only 28 per cent of the eligible electorate, and Bill Clinton entered the White House with just 24.5 per cent of the eligible vote. The Republicans led by Newt Gingrich took control of Congress in historic mid-term elections in 1994 with 39 million voters favouring them, against 35 million supporting the Democrats, while another 112 million eligible Americans did not bother to go to the polls.²⁷ And this, in the "paradigmatic liberal polity"²⁸ whose whole notion of democracy is focused upon the vote.

Increased participation is also an antidote to bureaucratic and monopolistic power today. When great power lies outside the scope and control of elected governments, as it does in, say, Britain and South Africa, the requirements of democracy cannot be met, says Arblaster, if "government alone is popularly elected and, in principle, accountable". Elected representative assemblies in advanced capitalist countries are presently "dwarfed ... by the bureaucratic and monopolistic structures which surround them". He therefore sees the "old and broad concept

of democracy [as popular power] holding out "the only hope" of compensating for their weaknesses.²⁹ Munck's conclusions are similar: democracy is above all popular participation, and its principles must be extended to the economic sphere for its objectives to be attained.³⁰

A critical press and informed public opinion are key accompaniments of effective participation. True press freedom inherently involves the making of scandalous and even false statements against the powerful. The ability of the press "freely to report allegations of scandals in government", declared Sir Richard Scott, is "one of the bulwarks of [Britain's] democracy." If the price that has to be paid is the exposure of the government "to pressure and embarrassment when false allegations are made, then that price must be paid."³¹ Namibia has had difficulty according with this principle in practice, despite the existence of a critical press and supportive constitutional provisions, while a secretive Botswana government seeks frequently to deny it. Relative openness and acute sensitivity to criticism are twin and competing characteristics of the government of President Nelson Mandela. That "standards of justice had to be maintained across the board" in South Africa, says Mamphele Ramphela of the University of Cape Town, is "an important lesson for the new black elite to take note of." There should be "no shying away from criticism of people, especially public officials, simply because they are black."³²

Transforming the bounds of liberal democracy would build upon modern capitalism and the social forces and political organizations that accompany its development. So too with liberal institutions; the right to vote is of course not unimportant though it is, as things stand, profoundly insufficient. Specific technical reforms exist which promise to strengthen the position of the citizen in relation both to his or her representative and to the executive.

The broad use of voter initiatives, referendums, and recalls of elected representatives are proposed by Ralph Nader. He also favours the addition of the category "None of the Above" to the names of candidates on the ballot paper. If the vote for "No One" outnumbers those for any candidate an election would be automatically void, to be followed by a fresh one within 30 days.³³ This particular device could prove a potent check upon the incom-

petent or demagogic politician.

Demos, an independent think-tank in Britain, has propagated the notion of "voter vetoes", to give citizens the right to call a consultative referendum against a law or decision. Any petition of, in the British context, one million signatures should be able to trigger a national referendum. Local referendums would require 2.5 per cent of the electorate to sign a petition.³⁴ So called "voter juries" could examine expert evidence regarding existing or proposed policies and, after serious and sustained debate over many days, pronounce effectively upon their suitability. Reputable foundations and television channels have served as venues for such citizen consultation in the United States and Britain.³⁵

The ideas and techniques of James Fishkin have encouraged much of this important experimentation. He seeks, he says, "to conduct democracy under conditions where not only does everyone's vote count the same but social conditions have been provided that facilitate everyone's thinking through the issues together ... the *ideal of face-to-face democracy*" (which he also calls *deliberative democracy*). The citizen in this participatory system will not be the isolated, passive and uninformed individual characteristic of liberal democracy. Voting in referendums or in general elections based on mere "sound bites" of information,³⁶ or an impression culled from media headlines, is "quite different from voting in a small group after extensive face-to-face discussion".³⁷

These proposed devices are not impractical, technically or otherwise. They would help to move a society, like Britain or South Africa, towards participatory democracy. Nader sees his proposals as likely to hasten the end of the "corporate" party duopoly in the United States: "We have", he accurately states, "an underdeveloped democracy and an overdeveloped plutocracy." Like Arblaster in Britain, he would seek to balance non-accountable bureaucratic and corporate structures with an empowered citizen's democracy.

The aim should not be underestimated. The reason why there is very little direct democracy in most contemporary societies, Arblaster adds, is that the powerful "simply do not want it, and actively resist any attempt to bring it into being. Opposition to democracy", he adds, "is not as moribund as public rhetoric might lead us to be-

lieve." Liberalism, after all, embraced democracy only around a century ago largely in order to stifle it. Its obscuratory techniques and institutions become pervasive. Liberal capitalism has increased its predominance over the past decade when social democracy has appeared to falter.

Dunn sees democracy as "an unfinished journey", and the continuance and development of the process might well be more important than its probably illusory and definitely uncertain "end". What has been done in Britain and South Africa was carried through by people themselves as they confronted and resolved the problems they faced. Democratization in England in the 19th century came about through "working-class self-help" which was very broad and active. Its strongest characteristic "was not individualism", states Hopkins, but "*co-operation*" — people "working together to safeguard employment, and to make provision for sickness and ill-health." There was "the great expansion of the friendly society movement ... combining conviviality with simple insurance against ill-health"; the co-operative movement which began small and expanded greatly; and the organization and action of trade unions which led on to working-class representation in parliament.³⁸

The worker and civics movement in South Africa also stressed active self-determination aimed at changing people's lives. The aim, said Murphy Morobe in 1987, was that "the people shall govern ... at all levels and in all spheres". Not only that, but "democracy [was] the *means* by which we conduct our struggle." Techniques and organs of people's power had begun to emerge, and the new democracy stressed in particular the accountability of leaders to the rank-and-file.³⁹ The movement, in its ideas, experiences, and closeness, is deserving of our reflection. It ushered in majority rule at the cost of its own durability. Other everyday experience is also encouraging. Fishkin remarks that people in the United States who have participated in his deliberative assemblies are strongly impressed by the quality of the experience. Democracy grows out of capitalist development, but it is far more than an electoral method — it is the means through which people acquire control over their lives and over those who lead and dominate them.

"Ever tried. Ever failed. Never mind. Try again. Fail better."⁴⁰

Notes and references

- 1 "The liberal state", wrote C.B. Macpherson, "was the politics of choice, in the service of an economy of choices." Macpherson, *The Real World of Democracy*, Oxford, 1966, p.46.
- 2 Wherein citizens had chosen for themselves the laws by which they were governed, and enjoyed freedom as a result. John Dunn, *Democracy: the Unfinished Journey*, Oxford, 1992, p.242. Women and slaves were not citizens, and Athenian democracy was destroyed as a result of external forces and the contradictions of slavery.
- 3 Across a range of historical cases "the working class was the most consistently pro-democratic force." Dietrich Rueschmeyer and Evelyne and John Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Cambridge, 1992, p.8.
- 4 Anthony Arblaster, *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism*, Oxford, 1984, pp.327-28.
- 5 Quoted in *ibid.*, p.280. The fear of popular democracy, and the attribution of ignorance and passivity to the people, are consistent themes in liberal and elitist thought.
- 6 Dunn, *op. cit.*, p.248. His emphasis.
- 7 Quoted in *Business Day* (Johannesburg), 14 February 1996.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 At independence in 1980 about 94 per cent of the electorate had voted, and in 1985 the turnout was higher. *Business Day*, 23 April 1996.
- 11 He was speaking on the analogous situation of the decidedly flawed transition to capitalism and democracy in Russia. Quoted by James Meek, *Weekly Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg), 4 November 1994.
- 12 Robert A. Dahl, "Why Free Markets Are Not Enough", in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy Revisited*, Baltimore, 1993, p.77.
- 13 Robert Kuttner, *Everything For Sale: the Virtues and Limits of Markets*, New York, 1997. See also the related review article by Charles Murray, "The Invisible Fist", *The Economist*, 15 February 1997.
- 14 Adam Przeworski, "The Neoliberal Fallacy", in Diamond and Plattner, *op. cit.*, p.44.
- 15 Data are unsatisfactory, but World Bank figures show that, while the gap between the richest top and the poorest bottom 20 per cent of income earners in Britain was 9.6 : 1 in 1988, in Japan the same ratio was only 4.3, in 1979. In that year in Norway, a relatively egalitarian Western country, the gap was 5.9. *World Development Report 1994*, Table 30.
- 16 Przeworski, *op. cit.*, pp. 48 and 53.
- 17 *Business Day*, 20 September 1995.
- 18 John Schwarzmantel, *The State in Contemporary Society*, Hemel Hempstead, 1994, pp.33 and 43.
- 19 Anthony Arblaster, *Democracy*, Milton Keynes, 1987, p.81.
- 20 Schwarzmantel, *op. cit.*, p.43.
- 21 Worker action in the factories through this time had "given birth to a type of politics ... rarely seen among the powerless: a grassroots politics which stresses the ability of ordinary men and women, rather than "great leaders", to act to change their world." Steven Friedman, *Building Tomorrow Today*, Johannesburg, 1987, p.8.
- 22 Linda Levy Peck, "Corruption and Political Development in Early Modern Britain", in Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston and Victor T. Le Vine (eds.), *Political Corruption: a Handbook*, New Brunswick and London, 1993, pp.227-28.
- 23 John P. King, "Socio-economic Development and Corrupt Campaign Practices in England", in Heidenheimer, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.240 and 247-48.
- 24 Abraham S. Eisenstadt, "Political Corruption in American History", *ibid.*, p.31.
- 25 The introduction of regulated, welfare-orientated capitalism in Western Europe was the central achievement of the socialist movements there, according to Donald Sassoon, who contrasts this situation with the crime and poverty of contemporary America. Przeworski sees the United States as an "inhumane society", owing to its stark inequalities and poverty among riches. It also has "one of the lowest voter participation rates in the democratic world, and the highest per capita prison population." Review of Sassoon's *One Hundred Years of Socialism* in *The Economist*, 6 July 1996, and Przeworski, *op. cit.*, p.40.
- 26 Jacob van Klaveren, "Corruption: The Special Case of the United States", chapter in Heidenheimer, *op. cit.*, pp.557-58.
- 27 Figures quoted in James S. Fishkin, *The Voice of the People: Public Opinion and Democracy*, New Haven and London, 1995, pp.46-47.
- 28 Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*, p.546.
- 29 Arblaster, *Democracy*, *op. cit.*, p.64.
- 30 Ronaldo Munck, "Democracy and Development", chapter in Leslie Sklair (ed.), *Capitalism and Development*, London and New York, 1994, p.22.
- 31 Quoted in *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 25 June 1995.
- 32 Mamphela Ramphele, "What Gravy Train?", *Mail and Guardian*, 17 May 1996.
- 33 Lexington, "Ralph Nader, Throwback to the Future", *The Economist*, 30 March 1996.
- 34 Voter vetoes originate with Geoff Mulgan and Andrew Adonis. It is noted that this procedure might have saved Britain from the unpopular poll tax foisted on the country by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. *The Economist*, 17 September 1994.
- 35 The Jefferson Centre in Minneapolis has invited a randomly chosen jury of 24 to discuss an issue, such as President Clinton's health-care proposals, over a week, and a "People's Parliament" on Channel 4 in Britain has examined witnesses and engaged in sustained debate. *Ibid.*
- 36 The sound bite is the brief and slanted information which the candidate offers the people in the highly competitive media environment of the liberal capitalist countries today. The voter who relies on this source of information must necessarily be uninformed of the issues. The existing trends in the United States, thinks Fishkin, will render the American voter more ignorant. Studies of the 1988 presidential campaign showed that the average sound bite on network evening news was about nine seconds in length, but in the 1992 campaign it had declined further to only 7.5 seconds. Fishkin, *op. cit.*, p.42.
- 37 *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.
- 38 Eric Hopkins, *Working-Class Self-Help in Nineteenth-Century England: Responses to Industrialization*, London, 1995, p.3.
- 39 Quoted by Michael Neocosmos in his chapter in Peter Gibbon, et al. (eds.), *State and Civil Society in Africa*, forthcoming. Morobe's own emphasis.
- 40 Quoted by Salman Rushdie, "Is Nothing Sacred?", *Granta* (London) vol. 31, Spring 1990, p.110.

The fragility of democracy in West-Central Africa

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Introduction

Since the ebbing in the mid-1990s of the high tide of democratization in sub-Saharan Africa, some of the states in which this process led to a “transfer of power” have suffered a reversal in their democratic fortunes, either by way of a successful coup d’état carried out against the new political regime by their own military, or a descent of their political society into factional and fratricidal violence over the locus and exercise of political power. It follows that the outcomes of these two instances have been the eclipse of democracy or the restoration of military dictatorship for the one, and the considerable weakening if not submerging of the democratic process for the other.

To be sure, many commentators expressed doubt about the form and the content of the emerging democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, thus hinting strongly at its congenital fissures and fragility and, by extension, at its impending failure.¹ Under the then pervasive pressure to put an end to decades of authoritarianism in sub-Saharan Africa, this debate on “forms of democracy” appeared to some others as largely futile since it tended to detract from the urgent task of political transformation under way. Besides, there is no definitive theoretical statement in the literature on a correlation between modalities and outcomes of democratization on the one hand, and between these and regime durability over time and space on the other. Nevertheless, the pertinent point on which consensus should be assumed for parties to the debate is that whatever form of democracy — social or, as indeed was eventually the case, “liberal” — emerged in diverse forms in this region, it needed to be functional, effective and sustained. That is precisely the crux of the matter.

In West and Central Africa, the chal-

lenge to the process of democratization then on course, or to its final outcome, as the case may be, was swift and decisive.

- In June 1993, the Nigerian military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, scuttled his self-imposed seven-year democratization programme by annulling the results of the presidential elections held that month.
- In July 1994, amid the ecstasy generated by democratic transitions elsewhere in the sub-region, “young Turks” seized power in The Gambia, thus bringing to an end West Africa’s celebrated and long-functioning democracy. The subsequent conversion of Captain Yaya Jammeh from a military to a civilian president illustrates the point that is being underscored.
- Similarly, in January 1996, the military in Niger, which had been thoroughly discredited during this country’s sovereign national conference in 1991 as a prelude to the democratization process, staged a comeback to the political scene.
- A month later, in February 1996, it was the turn of the young military officers in São Tomé and Príncipe to usurp, momentarily, the executive powers of a democratically elected president.
- In April 1992 and again in May 1997, the Sierra Leonean military intervened to take power amidst civil strife.
- On two occasions in 1996, June and November, sections of the Central African Republic army mutinied over poor pay and ongoing restructuring within the armed forces, necessitating the intervention of French and, later, inter-African troops to maintain order.
- Lastly, in February and June 1997 (as in 1993), factional fighting en-

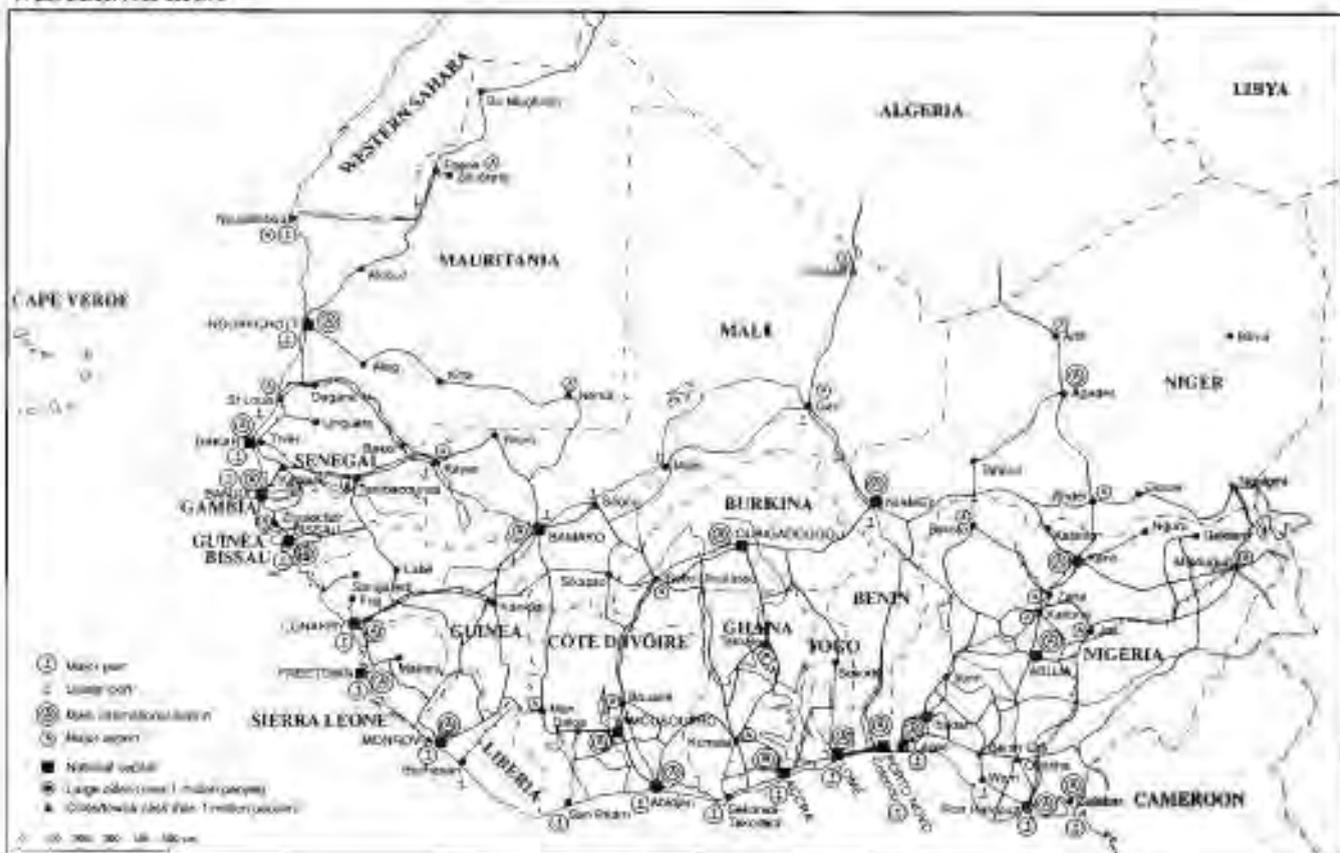
gaged military supporters and militia opponents of the democratically elected regime in the Republic of Congo, thus pushing this country, like the Central African Republic, close to civil war.

The foregoing catalogue of military assaults on the state in recent times — in many ways reminiscent of the praetorian outbursts in the 1960s and 1970s in the same sub-regions — demands a re-think of the democratic agenda in sub-Saharan Africa. How does one account for these relapses into authoritarianism and anarchy (in other words, the fragility of democracy in the post-transition era)? A counterpart to this interrogation is to account, as was suggested by Juan J. Linz² in a different context, for the inability of malfunctioning and, for our purposes, newly installed democracies to move towards consolidation. Useful as this latter perspective is, it does not recommend itself to the fluid circumstances which prevailed in the immediate post-transition period in the above regions. Beyond this consideration, this essay is equally concerned with suggesting remedies for the weaknesses of their attempts to evolve a stable democracy.

To be sure, the foregoing concerns are not entirely new, as they constitute the core of studies on the pitfalls of competitive democracies in consolidated nation-states³ and on militarism in the so-called Third World states.⁴ However, they need to be re-examined in the African context and especially now in the light of the assumed acquisition of “second independence” in sub-Saharan Africa (as a result, incidentally, of the varying schemes for political reform and democratization adopted by most states in the region in the first half of the 1990s).

My contention is that the military, whose disengagement from overt politics is the core objective of democrati-

WESTERN AFRICA



zation most of the time, remains the greatest threat to this process, where:

- power transition excludes it from the networks of patronage over which it had presided;
- elements in the officer corps continue to evolve personal power projects which are necessarily at variance with the prevailing democratic dispensation; and
- the normally heterogeneous civil society that forged unity and solidarity in bringing down authoritarianism fails, for various reasons, to defend its democratic gains.

It is also probable that a convergence between these endogenous factors and other exogenous ones (consisting mainly of ambiguous signals from the "international community" about appropriate responses to the collapse of democracy in the sub-regions) encourages the anti-democratic forces, civilian and military alike, to attempt to reimpose authoritarianism.

From the foregoing premise, it should follow that any serious attempt to redemocratize and, indeed, to sustain democracy in the sub-regions under consideration has necessarily to —

- formulate new power projects and

relations in the polity and between this and the rest of society:

- redefine role perceptions and performance especially for the military, which *must* be subordinated to civilian control;
- evolve new formulas for the redistribution of wealth and other power-sharing arrangements for the state and its constituents; and
- conceive political contestation, participation and accountability as privileged instruments in the hands of a self-confident, autonomous and interactive civil society.

The contours of democratic reversal and failure

Simply put, fragility of democracy refers to the absence of institutionalization or consolidation in its practice. The attainment of the latter is a long-term project, and even then, it is not a linear process. In the short-term, and with particular reference to West and Central Africa, fragility of democracy describes both the imperfect circumstances under which the process of democratization was undertaken and the uncertain outcomes that have resulted from this in most instances. This is not to say that perfect conditions and out-

comes, if indeed such exist, would have yielded stable democracies in this region. Political processes do not take place under perfect settings, and the democratization process, in particular, is remarkable for its turnarounds, disputes and disagreements about almost every detail. All the same, although conditions differ across spaces and cases, those prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa tend to tilt towards the negative end of the scale, thus underscoring the imperfection of the circumstances.

In addition to the foregoing, fragility of democracy should equally describe the inchoate nature or total absence of legitimacy norms accepted as such by the contenders for power. It refers to the gaps or shortcomings in the performance of institutions issuing from the process of democratization. Furthermore, it describes the misconceptions about the means and ends of politics shared by the power elite as a result, probably, of low civic culture and/or the distortions regarding ethnicity bequeathed to the post-colonial state by its colonial progenitors (and which the elite have been both unwilling and unable to surmount). In other words, the modernization perspective on the prerequisites for democracy, upheld by some and contested and vilified by

CENTRAL AFRICA



others, finds its salience in the conditions engendered by post-transition democracies in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁰ To understand the circumstances that led to the resurgence of authoritarianism, it is necessary to put the democratization process into historical perspective.

The leaders of the authoritarian one-party states — both civilian, civilianized, and military — which dominated the political landscape in West and Central Africa up until the end of the 1980s, refused categorically to open up their regimes as the demands for democratization set in, preferring instead to extol the virtues of “single party democracy”, whose dysfunctions and dire consequences for governance are well documented. Outside the functional democracies in these areas — Senegal and The Gambia — the only other exception to this de-

scription is Nigeria, whose abiding commitment to the democratic ethos is reflected, practically but paradoxically, in winding and repetitive democratization projects thrust upon its society by its military since the mid-1980s. For most of the states in these sub-regions, therefore, the decision to democratize was an imposition on their political leaders rather than a voluntary undertaking deriving from a reasoned conviction on the merits of democracy. This position had implications for the unfolding democratization process.

In the first place, democratization was virtually reduced to an intra-elite struggle for the control of political power, which, in instances of deep resistance to this transformation such as in Togo and Zaïre, degenerated into a gratuitous exaction of violence on the very civilian populations — the major-

ity of the citizenry — whose clamour for political participation was at issue. Secondly, it spawned the conversion of autocrats into democrats overnight as democratization was again reduced to electoral competition, leading to what Latin American scholars call “decompression of authoritarianism” — as was indeed the case in Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Mauritania and Burkina Faso.

Thirdly, and related to the foregoing submission, the robust determination to cling to power manifested by incumbent leaders as a way of escaping the fate of the transition pacesetters — for example Mathieu Kérékou and Kenneth Kaunda in Benin and Zambia respectively — meant that many of those who eventually lost power, or their sympathizers, would exploit every conceivable opportunity to climb back to office. Mathieu Kérékou, fortuitously, returned to power in Benin through the ballot-box in March 1996; in Niger, Central African Republic and Congo Brazzaville, the opposition alliance (made up also of the former ruling single parties) sought the paralysis of state institutions and, at times, resorted to ethnic mobilization as a strategy of *revanche*. This paid off in Niger, where Bare Maïnassara, protégé of the former military president, Ali Saibou, and close to the former single party, National Movement for a Society of Development (MNSD), staged a coup d’état in January 1996 and subsequently civilized himself in a controversial presidential election six months later. In Sierra Leone, the military stormed their way back to power in May 1997 after ceding this just a little over a year previously.

The foregoing behavioural patterns shared by the political elite — incumbent and opposition alike — made the process of democratization as well as post-transition politics in many states a complex and complicated undertaking, and, to that extent, contributed to the reign of uncertainty.

Fundamentally, these behavioural patterns have deep roots in the perception of politics and of political roles in the immediate post-colonial period. Patrimonial inclination was a dominant tendency and, with necessary nuances, the driving force of both politics and public life. The capture of state power conferred more rights and privileges than obligations on those who presided over it, precisely because it positioned them as intermediaries between foreign capital and domestic economic

resources and interests, which are the levers of power in these societies.

Democratization was set, in principle, to correct all this; to dismantle the networks and dislodge the personnel that had encysted as parasites on the state, stifling its initiative and consuming its investible resources without consideration for the mass of the under-privileged citizens. (A task that Rostow⁶ had hypothesized in his seminal essay as beyond accomplishment without democrats.) Thus, in the absence of a consensus within the political elite on the merits of democracy, the foregoing interpretation partly explains the ruthlessness that accompanied the transition project in many states and, therefore, helps to explain both its enfeebled outcome and its subsequent eclipse in some places.

Partisanship, parochialism and political calculus

Otherwise, how else can one comprehend the permanence of the Nigerian military on the political stage and, through this, its grip on its petroleum-driven political economy? How does one account for the mobilization of ethnic constituencies and personal militias in the oil-rich Republic of Congo and diamond-exporting Central African Republic, for example? What impels the military in Niger and Sierra Leone, who had presided over their uranium and diamond boom, respectively, to return with a vengeance at a time when both states lay prostrate? To be sure, the Benin example deviates from this general trend but it is an exception that does not refute the submission since, it can be argued, the military in this state has drawn more lessons than any other from its past political adventures in, admittedly, an impoverished state.

In many ways, then, these attitudinal dispositions, orientations and preferences coincide with what Samuel Decalo⁷ refers to as "military considerations and idiosyncratic factors" as part of the probable explanation for the incessant coups d'état in sub-Saharan Africa. These factors operate, analytically, on two distinct levels: personal and corporate, both expressing ambitions and interests attributed to them. Empirically, however, the line of distinction between these levels is blurred because the tendency is for the categories to converge, thus serving as a justification for coups d'état. In fact, the idiosyncrasy is upheld by the very

fact that the "corporate interest" argument fails before the evidence gleaned from the actions and policies of entrenched military regimes who, quite often, privilege selective arms of their constituency in order to perpetuate themselves in office.

Be that as it may, there is ample evidence of the use of this argument in the post-transition coups d'état in the regions under consideration, especially in those countries where forced as opposed to negotiated transitions operated. Having presided over the destiny of their states in periods of relative economic prosperity, the authoritarian regimes in particularly the Francophone states were the targets of severe strictures as economic decline set in, especially within the unrestrained forums offered by the sovereign national conferences in Benin, Togo, Niger and Congo. The declaration of sovereignty by the delegates to these national conferences was a revolutionary procedure which then permitted them to heap the blame for all the ills in their separate countries on the embattled authoritarian regimes. The proceedings of these conferences represented, in many respects, public trials of the regimes in question. The Nigérien sovereign national conference would go as far as humiliating its military establishment, holding it directly responsible for the massacres of unarmed Tuareg in May 1991 at a resettlement camp in Tchín-Tabaraden. This incident accelerated the outbreak of the Tuareg rebellion later that year and, in many ways, threatened to abort the democratization project then on course.

Given the bankruptcy of the state and the embittered atmosphere generated by the proceedings already highlighted, it was out of the question to offer special material incentives and packages to the critical corps of the military whose disengagement from public life was the main agenda of the sovereign national conferences. This sowed the seeds of future discord between both groups of the ruling elite. Here again, Benin's uniqueness should be highlighted. The decision of Mathieu Kerekou to accept responsibility for the shortcomings of his 17-year (mis)rule and to tender an apology to the nation for these played some role in mollifying the public and in taming the military. In Togo, the military under Eyadema succeeded in turning the table against the sovereign national conference and so remained in power. Mali's experience was altogether differ-

ent. Amadou Toumani Touré's coup d'état in March 1991, which ousted the obstinate Moussa Traoré from power after 23 years of unbroken rule, had the singular objective of returning this country to democratic politics.

The point then is that sections of these disgraced militaries, and especially their former stalwarts or their surrogates who were forced from power through mass revolts and who realized, subsequently, that democratization could also mean civilianization at all costs, continued to represent a constant threat to the newly installed democracies, given their doubtful democratic convictions and credentials. This reasoning captures part of the rationale for the military uprisings in Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic and Niger. In Nigeria, military continuity reveals an acute reluctance by this elite to give up power so long as they do not have firm assurances from a succeeding government not to demand accountability from them on their stay in power. The inability of Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner of the June 1993 presidential elections in Nigeria, to reassure the military on this point was added to other political calculations to justify the annulment of the results of this poll.⁸

The foregoing disposition from authoritarian establishments, civilian and military alike, was not entirely a surprise, given the blatant refusal of these leaders to conceive of an alternative to the existing political arrangement. However, the same could not be said of the actions of the political opposition, nor indeed of the ebullient civil society whose profession of democratic ideals was instrumental in not only putting democratization on the political agenda in sub-Saharan Africa, but also in realizing this in some places. Here again, a distinction should be drawn between the performance of the opposition and of civil society in states that experienced a complete change of presidential leadership (Benin, Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic, and Niger), and those that did not (Gabon, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mauritania, for example) as a result of the implementation of democratization.

The concept of political opposition is used here to refer, firstly, to the coalition of groupings that strongly challenged the authoritarian state in the period leading to the onset of democratization, and, secondly, to the political formations that remained outside

the parties in government as a result of their performance in the multi-party elections permitted by democratization. The first is limited by the very fact that the authoritarian one-party state brooked no opposition and, in fact, outlawed or strongly repressed it. Thus the contours of this emergent opposition dovetailed into and merged with the outline of civil society. The second denotes the spectrum of political opposition which now included some of the former ruling single parties emerged from civil society to become part of political society. The other part of this opposition remained within civil society, a concept to which I shall return in greater detail shortly.

In the light of this precision, the fragility of the new democracies goes beyond the actions of the military chieftains. In states that experienced a complete change of regime, as already indicated, the new power elite made up of the former political opposition did not innovate (and have not innovated) in ways that suggested a clean break with the patrimonial, parochial and anti-democratic practices of the preceding regimes. In Benin, Nicéphore Soglo was credited with a higher level of accountability than the Kérékou government that he replaced, but his administration soon degenerated into a family caucus, thus accounting for the enlistment of the same Mathieu Kérékou by the political opposition in order to defeat him in the March 1996 presidential elections.

Likewise, in Niger, the government of Mahamane Ousmane lacked experience and was incapable of running a precipitate "co-habitation" arrangement (as evidenced by the "permanent" dispute between him and his prime minister on areas of competence, appointments and the budget), and the country merely swung from one political crisis to another until the regime was finally ousted by General Bare Mainassara in January 1996. In both Congo Brazzaville and Central African Republic, the new men in power had to fall back on their ethnic constituencies in order to hold the military and the country together. In the event, the political contests between the government and the new political opposition (consisting also of the ousted single parties), proceeded against the backdrop of north-south ethnic cleavages, and threatened to rip the countries apart, thereby exposing the frailty in their professions of democracy.

Within the second category of states, the political opposition, consisting mainly of the same formations previously located in civil society that challenged the founding myths of the one-party state, continued to operate under very difficult circumstances. Because these parties were unable to achieve outright electoral victories in their states; their presence in political society was barely tolerated in some states, leading to their disillusionment with the political process. All the same, the opposition in Ghana and to some extent that in Cameroon differs from those in the rest of the states within this category. One probable explanation for this is that the former country has a higher turnover in multi-party politics than the other states, while the latter bears the burden of an Anglophone-Francophone dichotomy with regard to "cultural identity" which, by its nature and historicity, has remained a rallying point for the opposition.

In brief, what the foregoing analysis portrays is the degree of disarray in political society in West and Central Africa in the post-transition period. This situation is compounded by the unmanageably large numbers of political parties that dot the political landscape in most of these states, and that compete for votes within a larger society where they neither have a well-rooted social basis nor propagate programmatic discourses. In a word, democratic norms remain weak within political society. Because the major players in this society have been recruited from and maintain direct communication with civil society, it will be interesting to ascertain how the latter has shaped the evolution of democracy in the post-transition period.

The changing fortunes of civil society

The appeal to civil society is a recognition of its frontline role in triggering and leading the processes that brought about democratization in sub-Saharan Africa, despite the scepticism evinced by some Africanist scholars in using the concept. To be sure, civil society is a highly complex and pluralistic analytic entity, and the specificity of its historical emergence in Western scholarship, replete with differing traditions of thought, assigns to it conflicting roles and functions in the political system.⁹ In sub-Saharan Africa, civil society — that is, the politically conscious part of it capable of projecting

itself into political society — was repressed, co-opted, or banished as the case may be, as an integral part of the authoritarian one-party state project. It was precisely this fact that enabled these ordinarily diverse associations and interest groups to build unity and solidarity around the common cause of regaining autonomy and freedom otherwise referred to as democratization. The question then is: How and why did civil society in the states under consideration fail to live up to this democratic billing?

Four critical hypothetical explanations can be advanced in response to the foregoing poser. Both the disappearance and the survival in a disguised form of the common cause, authoritarianism, affected the zeal and the ideal of civil society; the weak anchorage of democratic norms in civil society affected its unity and solidarity; the counter-hegemonic objective of civil society was deflated by the activities of the state; and, finally, the donor nations and agencies who helped prop up civil society at the outset, changed their policy towards democratization in sub-Saharan Africa at some point.

To validate, once political transition was accomplished in its full or modified version in the states under consideration, and with necessary exceptions (Nigeria, for instance), these outcomes affected the structure and the combative zeal of civil society in different ways. For the states that attained complete transition through the instrumentality of the sovereign national conference, the demise of authoritarianism represented the elimination of the common glue that bound the heterogeneous elements in civil society together. Some of the groupings that crammed the streets in search of democracy had transformed themselves into political parties, on which basis they contested and won elections within political society and subsequently acceded to the leadership of the state.

Some others, like the church organizations, trade unions and professional bodies, reverted to their routine, while yet others re-channelled their energy to fighting causes with largely external funding. Nowhere else is this submission more graphically illustrated in this category of states than in Niger, which still subsists virtually exclusively on foreign assistance offered to an incredible array of non-governmental organizations. In the states that experienced incomplete transformation, so that the pre-transition superstructures were

only modified, it is reasonable to deduce that the zeal of civil society was somewhat dampened as a result of this partial failure. This outcome varied from state to state. In a state like Togo, where this outcome was achieved through state terrorism and was condoned by the international community, civil society was almost completely sidelined in the political process.

What the foregoing demonstrates is the absence of deep attachments to democratic values and norms within civil society itself. Such a strong anchorage in these convictions ought to withstand any anti-democratic adversity and ought also to guide constantly the actions of those recruited into the state apparatus from civil society. That this has not been so in these states suggests that the upsurge of clamours for democracy from this society was a spontaneous and anguished reaction to cumulative repression and deprivation inflicted on it by the managers of the state. Moreover, it suggests that, on closer scrutiny, at least some of these associations may well not live up to the high standards of democratic performance they demand from the ruling elite — hence their reluctance to engage the state head-on. This appears idealistic and speculative — and so, given the importance of this submission for the whole democratic project in sub-Saharan Africa, it is better to reason this point in terms of the critical elements within civil society that can propagate democratic norms in the short- to medium-term rather than in terms of the entire society embracing these norms at once. Further research on this has become necessary.

That said, the confrontational stance of civil society against the state, in fulfilment of the anti-hegemonic objective attributed to it, is not a one-track enterprise. The political elite seek support and legitimacy within civil society and so have been able to moderate the stances and co-opt the leaders of trade unions, students' groups and professional bodies into supporting their programmes and policies. In this sense, civil society is a political and a politicized market permitting all sorts of bargains and trade-offs between political entrepreneurs. The danger in this situation, though, as is evident from the crisis of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, is the tendency of the political elite in both the state and civil society to promote personal and group interests and ambitions over collective interests, thus abandoning their initial

democratic platform.

Finally, the proliferation of politically conscious associations — especially pro-democracy groups such as human rights and gender empowerment bodies — in sub-Saharan Africa is a phenomenon largely associated with its processes of democratization. Many of these have been funded generously by Western donor agencies desirous to promote democracy through political conditionality in the regions under consideration. The acceptance by some of these donor nations of the varying outcomes of democratization in Togo and Cameroon, of its bloody repression in Zaïre (Congo Kinshasa) and subversion in The Gambia, Niger and Sierra Leone — and, indeed, of its tortuous progress in Nigeria — is highly detrimental to the democratic agenda, reassuring to military interlopers, and demoralizing to the associations in civil society whose objective is to promote democratic ideals with largely donor funds.

When these various constraints on, and weaknesses of civil society are added up, what emerges is a fragile democracy in the sub-regions under focus. Having said that, the remainder of this essay deals with how to redress the situations uncovered in the foregoing analysis.

Rethinking the democratization project

In the light of the foregoing discussion, how should democratization — and, in fact, re-democratization — proceed in West and Central Africa in order to avoid the pitfalls already highlighted? There is no ready-made formula: each state battles with and learns from its peculiarities. Nevertheless, identification of the probable causes of fragility in the practice of democracy in these regions suggests offering reasoned prescriptions, in line with studies of this genre, for the political ailment.

To begin with, it has to be admitted that the democratization pressure which erupted in sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s was so overwhelming that it did not allow prolonged intellectual debate on the diverse facets of this project before implementation. Since then, as the present analysis demonstrates, democracy has been established in some countries, has quickly collapsed and/or been re-established in some others, has been under immense threat or waiting to be established in yet other countries. The

(re)establishment of democracy in these regions takes precedence, in my view, over the current growing concern in the literature about democratic consolidation, which is the terminal point of the democratization process.

Three crucial points have been established with regard to the fragility of democracy in the post-transition era within the states under consideration. The first is that the military remains a mortal danger. The second is that the fluid circumstances in the state during and immediately after democratic transition are not conducive to the smooth working of structures and institutions. Lastly, although the role of civil society in the processes that led to democratization in the first place is unassailable, the constraints on this society, including the low level of democratic norms and of civic culture in general, have undermined its role in the polity in the immediate post-transition period.

To rethink the democratization project implies addressing the foregoing deficiencies. To begin with, the nature of the state itself, which encourages enormous concentration of power at the centre, is a destabilizing factor in so far as it puts a high premium on the capture and control of this power¹⁰ — especially because the assumptions of national unity and discretion in the exercise of this power are not borne out by extant practice. This means that for all of these states which are unitary, excepting Nigeria, (re)democratization is about evolving arrangements for devolution of power to other centres of authority within their multi-ethnic societies without necessarily undercutting the pre-eminence of the central government. Apart from satisfying particularistic interests, this measure has the added advantage of taking the pressure, as it were, off this largely fledgling central authority. To be sure, this alone is not sufficient to guarantee success for democracy in these states, as the constantly modified power-sharing formula in federal Nigeria shows, but its absence breeds a sense of alienation from the political process in sections of society unable to participate fully at the centre.

Reconceptualizing the attribution of power in the state is incomplete without rethinking the role of the military. In the heyday of authoritarianism, as well as in its persistence, most militaries in these sub-regions lost their professionalism as a result of the incessant coups d'état that catapulted them to power. Prolonged stay in power has

led to the politicization and ethnicization of the military, so that the phenomenon of ethnic armies, exemplified by Eyadema's Togo, has shown itself to be detrimental to the success of genuine democratization in plural societies by the very fact that it excludes others after imposing its will by force. Redemocratization is almost always about disengaging the military from the political process in these sub-regions — and, as studies from Latin America show, this is more often accomplished in collaboration with rather than against the military establishment.¹¹

In practical terms, this will entail restructuring the military to achieve a more balanced ethnic composition, as a counterweight to the assumption of power monopoly by sections of it, the latter factor having been recognized as destabilizing. This may not be achieved at once, but a beginning has to be made — especially with the support of the professional, albeit minority, segment in the military averse to coups d'état as a matter of principle. Additionally, increased budgetary allocation, opportunities for retraining and personal development, and new role conceptions for the military in the development process should serve as incentives for disengagement and for the utilization of the boundless energies of the military for the benefit of the wider society. However, the state of the economy of the countries concerned has to be taken into account in devising these remedies.¹²

Nevertheless, the foregoing may induce disengagement without ensuring against the return to power of ambitious military officers. There are at least two ways of getting around this predicament. The first is the more confrontational one of holding the military officers to their oath of loyalty to constituted and constitutional authority — that is, to their professionalism, whenever democratic power is restored — as in South Korea. The other is the necessity to involve the military in the political process through what the Nigerian statesman, Nnamdi Azikiwe, described as dyarchy, a power-sharing arrangement between civilians and the military, within a predetermined duration, with the latter subordinated to overall civilian leadership and control.

Over and above all this, the function

of political socialization should be a priority undertaking by both the state and civil society. Because all other facets of life in the societies under consideration are jeopardized and, in many cases, grossly compromised by the ineptitude and the internecine struggles for resources characteristic of governance at all levels of the state, it will be necessary to reorientate the political leadership and the ordinary citizen alike, as joint managers of democratic structures and institutions, on the interconnections between political performance, participation, accountability and political development. Herein lies the significance of a heterogeneous and dynamic civil society in the redemocratization process, both in the sub-regions under consideration and beyond.

Finally, there is no doubt that the realization of these submissions will be affected by the weak and dependent economies of these states, a weakness that is further compounded by the meagre results of the implementation in the last decade or so of the various strands of the structural adjustment programmes imposed on them by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. I have deliberately side-stepped this dimension of the problem for the simple reason that findings from studies on the correlation between democracy or its absence and economic development remain inconclusive and, in any case, do not also establish causality between the two variables. Having said that, it is commonsensical to expect favourable economic conditions to brighten the prospects of achieving the reforms under discussion, and the reverse equally holds true, while in no way condemning these reforms to failure *ab initio*.

Conclusion

This analysis has demonstrated that the weakness of democracy and its reverses in West and Central Africa in the post-transition period can be attributed to a combination of factors, of which the most outstanding are: the vaulting ambition of military officers and of the political elite, itself a reflection of doubtful democratic credentials and convictions shared by them; the polarization of the society along ethnic lines; the constraints on the capacity of

civil society to continue to play a meaningful role in its relation with the state; and the absence or weak anchorage in these polities of democratic virtues and norms. Against this backdrop, it argues that genuine redemocratization in these states should address these matters through power devolution, restructuring of the military and temporary pacts with them, and the strengthening of the capacity and the socialization functions of civil society as a first step in this impending task and, ultimately, in the long road to democratic consolidation.

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African immigrant entrepreneurs and Johannesburg's changing inner city¹

Christian M. Rogerson, Professor of Geography & Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, examines the part played by these controversial SMMEs in the emerging new production sector.

Trans-border migration is a critical policy issue in South Africa today; South Africa's policy on cross-border migrants will significantly affect its future relationship with its neighbours.² In a recent address by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the Minister of Home Affairs, the future of foreign migrants was identified as "one of the most important problems facing South Africa today".³

Already one of the most significant elements of the democratic transition in South Africa is the increased flow of migrants into the country from surrounding nations in Southern Africa and the rest of Africa. As Crush notes: "South Africa's borders are extremely porous and it is widely accepted that the flow of both legal and undocumented migrants to the country from the Southern African Development Community and beyond has grown markedly since 1990".⁴ This escalating flow of foreign migrants and refugees has generated considerable controversy, particularly over its volume and its wider implications, both for the South African labour market,⁵ and for the development of a national immigration policy.⁶ The best-documented area of migration flows is the movement of temporary workers from surrounding African countries into the South African mining and agriculture sectors.⁷ Less well known is the position of South Africa's new immigrants who have established themselves in the interstices of the small enterprise economy.⁸

The task in this paper is to analyse the role of new foreign migrants work-

ing in the small enterprise economy of South Africa's major city. The findings are reported of a survey into the activities of a group of 70 immigrant entrepreneurs who have established small businesses in Johannesburg. The geographical focus is upon the inner city of Johannesburg, an area which has experienced, over the past decade, dramatic changes in its organization, residential complexion and business makeup.⁹ Key changes taking place in this area are the rise of a largely black-dominated informal economy, a decline in the inner city's formal manufacturing base, the decentralization of corporate head offices to suburban locations, a slow growth in the important economic sphere of financial and business services, and mounting office vacancies.

A number of studies draw attention to the progressive internationalization of the small, medium and micro-enterprise economy (SMME) in South Africa,¹⁰ but little concrete research has been undertaken to investigate this kind of internationalization of the economies of the country's largest cities. The term SMME economy, as applied here, follows the definitions which are now widely adopted in South Africa and are derived from the official White Paper on Small Business.¹¹ A broad distinction is made between three sets of SMME enterprises: survival enterprises of the informal economy, growing micro-enterprises, and formal small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). An examination of SMME economy in Johannesburg is of

particular interest because the city is the focal point for many of the international immigrants into South Africa; large parts of the inner city have been taken over by foreign migrants.¹² Moreover, Johannesburg offers a valuable case study in the light of previous investigations which highlighted growing participation of foreign migrants in the city's SMME economy.¹³ Although the emphasis has been upon international migrants as street or pavement sellers of a range of goods, other work suggests that African migrants also play a part in the area's emerging new production sector.¹⁴

This article will first briefly describe the methodology of the study. The second section presents the detailed results of the research analysing the activities of foreign migrants working in the SMME economy of Johannesburg. Finally, the conclusion draws together key findings and suggests certain policy recommendations. Throughout the analysis, the focus is on international migrants from Africa, with a distinction made between two groups, namely migrants from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries and non-SADC migrants.¹⁵

Research methodology

The research material for this investigation into the role of migrants from elsewhere in Africa was obtained from several different sources. First, existing secondary material on the SMME economy in Johannesburg was examined.

The second step was a search of the local press in order to glean a sense of the public issues and image associated with international migrants in the local SMME economy. This information was complemented by a focused interview with the strategic director for Metropolitan Economic Development Planning in Johannesburg to ascertain the viewpoint of key decision-makers in the city.

Lastly, at the core of the investigation was a field survey undertaken of a cross-section of 70 SMMEs in Johannesburg which were run by international migrants. The questionnaire survey was administered by a research assistant who, as a Malian refugee studying in South Africa, had access to their networks and enjoyed a measure of trust among the Johannesburg foreign migrant community. As the research assistant was fluent in French, the questionnaire could be administered to both French- and English-speaking migrants. A number of Portuguese-speaking migrants were also interviewed; among this group, the questionnaire was undertaken in English.

As no information is available on the total size and structure of the international migrant community in the Johannesburg SMME economy, the research used a snowball sampling methodology. As a parallel investigation specifically focuses on non-South Africans involved in street trading,¹⁶ the emphasis in the sample was upon immigrant entrepreneurs (in the sense of owner/operators) engaged in micro-enterprises or formal SMEs. The interview schedule contained a structured mix of factual questions and open-ended questions that allowed opportunities for migrants to offer their own opinions and address certain controversial issues surrounding international migrants in South Africa. Broadly, the set of interviews sought to collect material on the following issues: the basic demographics and migration history of respondents; their business history and development; current performance; and future plans both for themselves and their enterprises. All interviews were conducted during the period November 1996 to February 1997.

Of the 70 sample interviewees, 37 were migrants originating from SADC countries and 33 from non-SADC countries. In terms of language, 39 interviewees were from English-speaking African countries, 24 from French-speaking countries in Africa and 7

were from Portuguese speaking countries. Overall, the sample included foreign migrants from 19 different African countries. The country of origin of the 70 respondents was as follows: Zimbabwe 14, Malawi 10, Mali 10, Mozambique 6, Congo DR 4, Senegal 4, Guinea 3, Nigeria 3, Ghana 2, Lesotho 2, Kenya 2, Swaziland 2, Congo PR 2, Angola 1, Gambia 1, Botswana 1, Cameroon 1, Uganda 1 and Zambia 1.

Immigrant entrepreneurs and enterprises in Johannesburg

Context and conflicts

Johannesburg is a microcosm of the conflicts and controversies which are emerging around international migrants in South Africa, particularly issues of xenophobia.¹⁷ The phenomenon of xenophobia is manifest in a host of complaints and editorials about immigrants which regularly appear in the Johannesburg press. Hostility is expressed towards "this infestation of foreigners", variously for working as cheap labour (below minimum wage) in inner-city sweatshops, destroying local parks and recreational facilities, and turning Johannesburg into a slum city through squatting. Even responsibility for the rand's depreciation and for interest rate increases has been laid at their door.¹⁸

The growing hostility towards international migrants working in Johannesburg has led to a number of incidents which have occurred in the city since the 1994 democratic elections. Complaints from local black Johannesburg residents that foreigners have been taking away both jobs and houses from locals have precipitated a wave of anti-immigrant activities. The best-known "immigrant-bashing" activities were those mounted in 1995 at Alexandra township where "concerned residents" launched a concerted campaign to oust families who were accused of being illegals.¹⁹ In the ensuing wave of xenophobia, armed groups evicted migrants from their homes and threatened to burn their possessions (including taxis). Calls for the repatriation of foreigners and complaints of foreigners taking jobs away from Johannesburg locals are continually aired in the letter pages of the local press. Typically, one Soweto resident stated that "some of us are angry enough to go on a witch-hunt for these detestable illegals".²⁰ The Illegal Foreigners, Crime and Drugs Lobby

(IFCDL) has staged mass demonstrations in Johannesburg city centre to protest against cheap foreign labour and to call for "rounding up all illegal immigrants in the inner city and shepherding them to police stations".²¹ The Johannesburg press has reported several instances of harassment of immigrants, particularly by the police.²² In addition, legal immigrants have been subject to extortion and beating by the local South African police.²³ These attacks and hostility do not discriminate between legal and illegal immigrants; there were a number of reported attacks on both the property and persons of foreign SMME entrepreneurs.²⁴

The most recent and serious outburst of anti-immigrant sentiment in Johannesburg occurred during August 1997. Large numbers of local hawkers took to the streets of Johannesburg carrying sticks, sjamboks and other weapons, chanting *phantsi ngekwerekwere* ("Down with Foreigners"), attacking immigrant traders, destroying their stalls and pillaging their businesses.²⁵ In a rampage through Johannesburg city centre, local hawkers accused foreign hawkers of "infesting the city streets and killing our business" and even of "taking their ladies".²⁶ One member of the Greater Johannesburg Hawkers' Planning Committee stated "We don't care what the foreigners say, they must just leave this country" and the president of the largest hawker association in Johannesburg declared, "We support the action of local hawkers. It's long overdue".²⁷ Nevertheless, actions such as the smashing of shop windows, the overturning of stalls and assaults on foreigners have been widely condemned, particularly as they threaten to ruin widely-publicized local and provincial government initiatives designed to revive the ailing economy of Johannesburg's inner city.²⁸

Official statements on the position of foreigners living and working in Johannesburg make a distinction between the treatment of legal and illegal immigrants. In a response to hostile questions posed in the local press, the Gauteng Premier at the time, Tokyo Sexwale, stated:

The issue of illegal immigrants must be treated with great sensitivity, understanding and circumspection. Many of these people are here due to, *inter alia*, civil wars in their respective countries, ethnic strife and famine.

Our country, as a member of the international community of nations, is signatory to human rights and refugee protocols that govern the treatment of such foreigners in



"Big city, big opportunities" — a Kenyan curio seller in Johannesburg.

one's country. Consequently, a knee-jerk approach towards this question is ill-advised.

However, those who are not here under the umbrella of these international protocols have to be viewed differently. Those who are in South Africa for business and other trade-related issues should not be viewed negatively, as long as they abide by the laws of this country.²⁹

The Head of Metropolitan Economic Development Planning for the Greater Johannesburg Council took up a somewhat similar stance.³⁰ From the outset, he admitted that a great deal of ignorance surrounded the role of foreign migrants in the SMME economy of Johannesburg and that the city authorities had no formal policy *per se* concerning immigrants. Nonetheless, he argued that whilst it was difficult politically to support the activities of "illegals", the activities of legal migrants, particularly of those who created jobs in the city, would be warmly welcomed.³¹ Any contribution that foreign migrants could make to employment generation in the city, a priority for metropolitan economic development planning in Johannesburg, should be supported.³²

Characteristics of foreign SMME entrepreneurs and enterprises

The sample of migrants from 19 different African countries suggests that the SMME economy of Johannesburg has been increasingly penetrated by foreign migrants originating from a range of countries. Both SADC and non-SADC migrants are well represented in the community of foreign-owned businesses that have become established in the city.

By far the majority of immigrant entrepreneurs cite economic factors behind their decision to leave their home country and to choose to move to South Africa. Among the group of SADC immigrants, in particular, economic factors were given in 30 of 36 responses (no response in one case); the remainder cited war in Angola and Mozambique and marriage to a South African. Common responses for migrating to South Africa were: "To look for a better life"; "Greener pastures"; "To try my luck"; or "To find a better place for my business". In a typical response one Mozambican immigrant entrepreneur claimed "I thought that with the end of apartheid, South Africa would be the best country". Overall, the majority of the SADC sample (28 of 37) had not considered emigrating to any country other than South Africa; the remainder had investigated South Africa in comparison to SADC countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana.

Among the group of non-SADC immigrants, economic issues were again the paramount reason given for moving to South Africa (16 of 29 responses). Typical responses were: "To look for big business opportunities"; "Economic opportunities offered in South Africa"; "South Africa has always been my dream country"; and collapse of economies in Congo DR or economic problems in Mali. Among the non-SADC group there was a notable element (13 of 29 responses) of refugees or asylum seekers, particularly among the community of immigrants from French-speaking West Africa. Responses included "Political and tribal problems" (Kenya); "Political problems" (Senegal, Guinea, Nigeria, Congo DR and Mali); and "Tribal war" (Mali). Answers to the question on when they started up their business in South Africa differ between the group of SADC migrants, the majority of whom (30 out of 36) established their enterprises prior to the 1994 demo-

cratic elections, and the "newer" immigrants from non-SADC countries, the majority of whom (26 out of 33) only arrived in South Africa in the post-1994 period. Many non-SADC migrants described South Africa as "a new country with more opportunities" and "the only developed country within Africa". As opposed to the SADC immigrant entrepreneurs, many of the group of non-SADC migrants had considered a number of destinations other than South Africa, including Gabon, Angola, Cameroon, Réunion, Ivory Coast and even USA, Canada and Australia.

Although this sample cannot claim to be scientifically random and is thus not conclusive, it seems that foreign-owned SMMEs are a significant element of the changing economy and landscape of the Johannesburg inner city. Focal points for foreign entrepreneurs are the CBD, the inner city flatlands of Hillbrow and Berea, Yeoville, Bertrams and Jeppestown; in addition, foreign migrants are well-represented at the city's suburban flea markets, particularly at Rosebank and Bruma. The concentration of foreign businesses in the Johannesburg inner city suggests that their potential contribution to revitalizing the decaying inner city economy needs consideration. Most foreign entrepreneurs not only work in the inner city but live there as well. Of the sample of 70 African immigrant entrepreneurs, only six were residents of suburbs outside the Johannesburg inner city; the largest clusters of immigrant entrepreneurs are to be found in the Hillbrow, Berea and Yeoville areas.

The reasons given by immigrants for establishing their businesses in Johannesburg rather than in other South African cities are instructive, particularly if set against a background of the city's tarnished image of crime, violence and economic decline.³³ Among the SADC migrants, the reasons given clustered around the city's geographical proximity to home, its positive image associated with a strong market potential, and existing networks of family or friends. Responses included: "It's the biggest attraction of South Africa"; "Jo'burg's a bigger and better town"; "Johannesburg — a good place to make business"; "A most attractive city for businessmen"; "Johannesburg is more relaxed than other South African cities in apartheid laws"; and "It's close to Maputo" or "Johannesburg — close to Malawi". A somewhat parallel set of responses was gleaned from the

Table 1 Location and nationality of spouse of immigrant entrepreneurs

	LOCATION			NATIONALITY			TOTAL
	BSA	HOME	OTHER	BSA	HOME	OTHER	
SADC	8	4	—	7	6	2	26
NON-SADC	5	8	2 ^a	1	12	2	15

^a Note: Includes one non-response and one wife of a Congo DR entrepreneur who is in France. Source: Johannesburg Survey.

non-SADC immigrants, who cited business opportunities, friends and family networks. The following are a sample: "Johannesburg is the business centre of South Africa"; "Because I heard more about Johannesburg than any other (South African) city"; "It's the business heart of Southern Africa"; "Big city, big opportunities"; "I've been advised by my brother to come here"; "Because of the big Zairian community here"; and "It's where the action is". Overall, these findings indicate that among immigrants Johannesburg enjoys a far more positive image than it has recently enjoyed in the South African context.

As is the case with South Africa's formal SMME economy as a whole, most of the foreign-owned businesses were owned by men: in the sample, 59 men running businesses were interviewed as compared to 11 women running SMMEs. The group of female-owned businesses were led by SADC (7), as opposed to 4 among the non-SADC migrants — one each from Congo PR, Cameroon, Uganda and Kenya. Overall, most businesses were run by single rather than married persons; 39 businesses were operated by single persons, 31 by married persons. As a general pattern, male-run businesses were more likely to be operated by non-married than by married individuals: of the 59 male-run SMMEs, 34 were operated by single males. In the group of 11 female-run SMMEs, 6 individuals were single and 5 were married. No significant difference was found in the patterns of single versus

married individuals in businesses run by SADC as opposed to non-SADC migrants. Among the group of 31 married entrepreneurs, a pattern emerges: SADC migrants are more likely to bring their wives with them to South Africa than the non-SADC group; indeed, among the latter, only one-third of their spouses were currently resident in South Africa (see Table 1).

In terms of the age of SMME entrepreneurs, the youngest in our sample, from Malawi, was aged 20 and the oldest were 45 years (two individuals from Congo DR and Malawi). Table 2 records the age distribution for SADC and non-SADC entrepreneurs. The majority of entrepreneurs clearly fall into the age group 26-35, with the average age of non-SADC entrepreneurs slightly higher than that of the SADC migrants. The issue of level of education of SMME entrepreneurs produced some notable contrasts between the two groups (see Table 3). The most significant finding was the high proportion of non-SADC entrepreneurs who had university or post-university educational qualifications. Almost half of the businesses (15 of 32 responses) operated by non-SADC migrants were run by individuals with university-equivalent or post-graduate qualifications; among the sample were three individuals with Masters degrees and one with a formal qualification in dentistry. By contrast, the majority of the SADC group of entrepreneurs clustered at the South African equivalents of Standards 8, 9 or Matric (17 of 36 responses).

Table 2 Age profile of immigrant entrepreneurs

AGE	SADC		NON-SADC	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
<21	1	—	—	—
21-25	6	1	3	1
26-30	9	2	6	2
31-35	6	4	11	—
36-40	5	1	7	—
41-45	3	—	2	1

Source: Johannesburg Survey.

Table 3 Educational attainment of immigrant entrepreneurs

	SADC	NON-SADC
No education	1	3
Primary (or less 5)	2	9
Std 6 and 7	4	2
Std 8 and 9	15	1
Matric	12	3
University/Technikon	2	10
Post-graduate	—	4
No response	1	1
TOTAL	37	33

Source: Johannesburg Survey.

The kinds of businesses that have been established by immigrant entrepreneurs appear to fall within a relatively narrow band of activities. Most SMMEs fall in the category of retail or service enterprises (54 of 70 SMMEs) rather than production activities. In terms of retail/service activities the most common SMME activities include the selling of curios, the retailing of ethnic clothes and foods, motor-car repairs/paintbeating and the running of hairdressing salons. Other activities encompass the operation of restaurants, nightclubs, cafes, a music shop, several import-export businesses and one traditional healer. Among the group of 16 production SMMEs, all were clustered in the clothing industry. Their activities include the making of traditional African clothes (the most common activity), the production of wedding dresses, and general tailoring activities. Certain distinct clusters emerged in the kinds of businesses that were operated by migrants from particular countries. Of especial note was the concentration of Malawian immigrants in clothes production or curio selling, of Zimbabweans and Mozambicans in both motor car repair and curio selling activities, and West Africans in ethnic businesses related to clothes, food retailing and the operation of restaurants. Also observed was the dominance of non-SADC migrants in the cluster of import-export businesses that were included in the sample. The link of the French-speaking entrepreneurs to ethnic businesses confirms the suggestion of Bouillon that many "new" immigrants are involved in promoting the Francophone African culture and exploring market opportunities linked to the growing presence and influence of the French language in South Africa.³¹

Business growth, development and performance

The arrival and entry of foreign immigrants into Johannesburg's SMME economy is a phenomenon of relatively recent origin. As is evident from Table 4, the majority (61 of 69 responses) of businesses have been functioning in the city for less than five years. Moreover, because of their later arrival, it is evident that most of the SMMEs established by non-SADC entrepreneurs have been in operation for two years or less. The longest-established businesses of both categories were linked to the activity of curio selling. In most cases the kind of SMME that was established in Johannesburg reflected the entrepreneur's prior work history in the home country. Overall, the research disclosed that 45 of 69 respondents were involved in like activities or businesses in their home country; no notable differences were found on this in the patterns of responses of the two subgroups of SADC and non-SADC migrants.

The question on the origin of start-up capital for the SMMEs elicited some significant contrasts between businesses run by SADC and non-SADC migrants. Of the 37 SMMEs in the former group, most had been funded from personal savings built up from previous work in South Africa. Commonly, the previous work had been in the same type of activity as that of the SMME; in 22 cases (of 36 responses) migrants had been working as employees for other businesses prior to initiating their own SMMEs. In a further 10 cases the start-up capital had been built up either from savings (8) or from family (2) in the home country. Illustratively, one curio retailer from Malawi stated that the source of start-up capital was "My savings from working in the farms in Malawi". Finally, three respondents cited "friends" as the source of start-up capital and in one case the entrepreneur had taken over

a business which had been initiated by her mother. Significantly, none of our sample of 37 businesses run by SADC migrants were operating SMMEs in the home country or elsewhere.

The limited international network of connections among the SADC group of migrants was confirmed in the patterns of residence of other household members. With only two exceptions, the household relations of the group of SADC immigrant entrepreneurs were working either at home, in South Africa or in other SADC countries. Typical responses were: "My brother works on the mines in Rustenburg" (immigrant from Mozambique); "My sister works at a clothing store in Johannesburg" (Zimbabwe); "My uncle sells clothes in Mozambique" (Malawi); and "My brother works in Pretoria in a car-making factory" (Swaziland).

A different pattern of sourcing start-up capital and international networking was observed in the businesses that were run by the group of non-SADC migrants. Once again, several entrepreneurs had saved money from prior work in South Africa before founding their businesses; of our sample of 33 SMMEs, 13 had funded all or part of their start-up capital from previous work in South Africa. Most commonly the type of employment was as panel-beater, car-repair mechanic, seamstress or street vendor. The most striking finding was, however, the much higher proportion of businesses that were financed from funds brought in from outside South Africa. In total, 20 of the 33 businesses had followed this particular financing route. The outside financing strategy of these migrants took on a variety of forms. In many cases, this group of migrants were able to fund their start-up capital from their other business interests either in the home country or elsewhere. In contrast to the group of SADC migrants, one-third of non-SADC migrants had been established SMME entrepreneurs prior to their arrival in South Africa. Their South African businesses could therefore be funded partially or wholly from the monies from these other business operations. For example, a Congolese (PR) restaurateur used funds from his existing restaurant at home to assist in the start-up of the Johannesburg restaurant. Likewise, several of the import-export businesses were linked to similar businesses which were functioning in other parts of Africa. In some cases, the other businesses were far-flung

and included a beauty agency in France and an import-export business for cosmetics based in Réunion. In one case, start-up capital for a Kenyan-operated curio shop was furnished by bringing goods into South Africa.

The above findings indicate that the non-SADC migrants are integrated into a set of extended international networks which assist in the start-up and functioning of their business enterprise in South Africa. Further support for this is provided by a picture of the international household networks of non-SADC migrants. In contrast to the limited international household connections of the SADC migrants, non-SADC entrepreneurs exhibit a wide international network. Almost half of the group (15) have relatives living or working in other countries. Their wider international connections are exemplified by the following cases: a Nigerian restaurateur with an elder brother in the USA (a doctor) and one in the United Kingdom (an engineer) and a younger brother and sister both in South Africa; a Ghanaian curio retailer with two sisters in Canada running a cafe; a Gambian traditional eye healer with a brother in Congo PR and another brother in Ghana, both working in the same business; and a Malian clothes retailer with brothers in Gabon and Congo PR, both involved in trading in clothes. There were many others who had links to France, USA and a range of other non-SADC African countries.

Starting a business enterprise in South Africa is associated with several problems. The interviewees were asked to identify the major and minor problems that they encountered in starting up their SMME activities. In common with South African SMME and international experience, by far the most common problems surrounded financing and access to finance.³⁵ This factor was by far the most frequently cited as the major problem that confronted both the SADC and non-SADC immigrants. The second most important set of problems are more specific to the position of immigrant entrepreneurs: those related to securing necessary work permits and licences or dealing with customs. Once again, these were common to both subgroups in the overall interview sample. In a surprising finding, the problems of securing a visa were more strongly felt by the SADC migrants than their non-SADC counterparts, possibly because of the high propor-

Table 4 Length of establishment of immigrant business

PERIOD IN RSA	SADC	NON-SADC
<1 Year	4	11
1-2 Years	13	17
2-5 Years	12	4
>5 Years	7	1

Note: One non-response from an SADC entrepreneur.

Source: Johannesburg Survey

tion of refugees and asylum seekers in the non-SADC community. Problems of harassment by police and local officials were frequently aired by both groups of entrepreneurs. Typical responses were: "Problems with police as they favour locals over us in the case of conflict" (Malawian tailor); "Discrimination especially when I want to rent premises" (Zimbabwean hairdresser); "The city council does not want us to establish business here" (Zimbabwean motor repair mechanic); "Harassment by false policemen" (Malawian tailor); and "Police harassment because you are a foreigner" (Ghanaian car mechanic). A very specific set of problems related to the difficulties immigrant entrepreneurs encountered with banks and the opening of local accounts: "We can't deposit money in the banks because of our illegal situation" (Mozambican panel-beater); "We are paying everything in cash" (Malian clothes retailer); and "Problems with bank to open an account" (Malian importer-exporter). Finally, among other issues that were raised as problems were those of crime, access to premises and, in the case of one Nigerian clothes producer, of securing a "competent labour force".

In terms of the critical issue of job creation, a detailed analysis was undertaken of the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in employment generation. The key finding emerges that immigrant entrepreneurs do create jobs for South Africans. Overall, among the 70 SMMEs interviewed, there existed a total of 227 job opportunities or an average of 3.33 jobs per business. The two largest enterprises employed 11 workers alongside the entrepreneur; these businesses were both involved in clothing production and were run by a Nigerian and a Guinean entrepreneur respectively. One significant finding was the larger size of SMMEs that were operated by non-SADC than SADC entrepreneurs: in total, besides the entrepreneurs, the 37 SADC businesses provided 93 jobs or 2.65 jobs per enterprise; the 33 non-SADC businesses produced 134 jobs, an average of 4.06 jobs per enterprise.

Table 5 provides a detailed breakdown of the structure of the existing workforces of the 70 SMMEs in the Johannesburg study. Once again, certain differences emerge between the two subgroups in the sample. Three points are of note. First, within SADC migrant businesses the majority of workers (in-

Table 5 Employment structure of immigrant businesses

	SADC	NON-SADC
Immigrants from home*	49 (53%)	36 (27%)
Immigrants not from home	7 (7.5%)	31 (23%)
South Africans	37 (40%)	67 (50%)
TOTALS	93	134

* Note: This category includes family members from the home country.

Source: Johannesburg Survey

cluding working relatives) are from the home country; indeed, 53% of employees are from the home countries of entrepreneurs. By contrast, in non-SADC migrant businesses the corresponding proportion of workers drawn from the home country is far lower, at 27% of the total. Second, immigrant workers not from the home country of the entrepreneur form a noteworthy segment of the workforce of businesses in the non-SADC sample, more particularly amongst the group from countries in French-speaking West Africa. Third, and very significantly, among the non-SADC businesses, South African workers compose 50% of the workforce. By contrast, in the smaller SMMEs run by SADC migrants, South Africans constitute only 40% of the workforce.

Further information gleaned in the interviews provided a deeper understanding of the different employment structures of SADC and non-SADC run enterprises. A general finding is that at start-up, most entrepreneurs employ relatives or fellow immigrants from the home country. Only after a period of consolidation and business growth does a growing proportion of employment go to South African workers. The responses of several of the SADC group of entrepreneurs appear to support this analysis:

- "Yes, I began with family members only. After two years I employed different people from Angola, Zaïre, and South Africa" (Mozambican motor mechanic).
- "In the beginning only me and my wife. After the business grew I was employing South Africans and Malawians" (Malawian clothes producer).
- "Yes, I started with one Zimbabwean. When business grew I employed one person from Senegal, two South Africans and another Zimbabwean" (Zimbabwean car repair mechanic).
- "We don't employ South Africans because our business is still new" (Angolan panel-beater).

A similar pattern of observations was

made by the group of non-SADC entrepreneurs:

- "It (the SMME) was started entirely by Nigerians. Now we have more South Africans" (Nigerian producer of traditional African clothes).
- "I started with two Zaïreans. After some time I employed South Africans" (Congo DR hair salon operator).
- "I started with one Malian. After two months I employed a South African. Now, I employ two Congolese, one Zimbabwean and one Ivorian" (Malian panel beater).

South African labour was not viewed in a positive light by many SMME entrepreneurs. Negative sentiments towards the employment of South African workers were expressed in the following selection of comments drawn from interviews with SADC and non-SADC entrepreneurs.

- "They don't want to work hard and expect to get paid a lot" (Lesotho restaurateur).
- "The employees do not have any respect for foreigners as they know that the law will always defend them" (Malawian tailor).
- "They tend not to be as hardworking as people from home (Zimbabwean hairdresser).
- "Yes, they are lazy" (Zimbabwean curio seller).
- "When I dismissed one of my (South African) employees because he is not serious in his job he called me to the labour office" (Malian car mechanic).
- "In the beginning they work good. After some time they always complain of family problems, sickness, etc" (Guinean tailor).
- "Theft and irresponsibility" (Ghanaian clothes trader).
- "They are not serious about the job" (Guinean tailor).

A parallel set of negative comments on the qualities of South African workers were obtained from those SMMEs which were not employing South Africans. The following comments are typical responses that were obtained.

- "From my experience, I know that they're not serious in their job" (Mozambican retailer of office equipment).
- "They are lazy and not serious in their job" (Mozambican car repair mechanic).
- "They are lazy. If you pay them they don't come to work until that money is finished" (Zimbabwean car repair mechanic).
- "Because South Africans are not skilled for the job we require" (Guinean embroiderer).
- "From my experiences of working with them I know that they are not enthusias-

tic about their job" (Malian panel beater).

These negative comments on South African labour should be set against the findings in Table 6 concerning working hours. On average the immigrant SMME entrepreneurs work an average of 64 hours per week, with the majority of businesses working six days per week. Long working hours are a common feature of both businesses run by both SADC and non-SADC entrepreneurs, with the former working an average of 66.1 hours per week, the latter of 61.3 hours per week.

Responses to questions on the major problems encountered by immigrant entrepreneurs in Johannesburg clearly highlighted, once again, the question of xenophobia. In the SADC group of respondents, harassment by gangs "presumed to be policemen", xenophobia from locals, police harassment and problems with Home Affairs were the most frequently cited responses. In dealing with these problems the response of these entrepreneurs was either to be passive and just "accept it" or, in some cases to take proactive action in the form of bribery. A very similar set of replies were offered by the group of non-SADC entrepreneurs. Once more, strong xenophobic reactions were experienced; harassment from police and local gangs were again frequently mentioned problems. Drawing inner support from religious convictions, or on the other hand resorting to bribery, were common coping mechanisms for dealing with these problems.

Despite their various problems experienced with start-up financing, visas, labour, hostility from South Africans and so on, the overwhelming majority of immigrant SMME entrepre-

neurs expressed very positive sentiments about their business and its short-term prospects in Johannesburg. Only 4 of 66 respondents were operating businesses that were not already profitable. Considerable and varied efforts were made by entrepreneurs to improve the performance of businesses, by advertising or other forms of promotion, getting more equipment, improving services and simply "working harder". Another key indicator of positive sentiment was that at least half of respondents were reinvesting capital into the further expansion and/or diversification of their Johannesburg businesses. Among those entrepreneurs who were experiencing problems with opening bank accounts, reinvestment took the form of purchasing new equipment, motor cars or property. Only 18 of the 70 SMME entrepreneurs stated that they were sending money back to their country of origin. In this case, money was remitted on a regular basis, which varied from once a month to every six months. In the case of SADC entrepreneurs, money was commonly remitted on home visits.

General sentiments about their business and the climate for SMME development in Johannesburg were openly positive. The only negative comments were those obtained from some curio sellers who complained of a downturn in tourism, and one operator of an ethnic restaurant who noted that business was in decline due to increased competition. The following responses are illustrative of the widespread optimism shared both by entrepreneurs from SADC and non-SADC origins.

- "Yes, because I get more customers and I am pushing myself" (Malawian tailor).
- "Yes, growing fast because I am working hard and my customers are satisfied" (Malawian clothing producer).
- "Yes, it has improved" (Swazi motor mechanic).
- "It is getting better because of hard work" (Malian maker of traditional clothes).
- "Yes, it has improved because of the good work I am doing" (Senegalese clothing producer).
- "It's growing because we are making money every day with our special food" (Nigerian restaurateur).
- "Yes, it is growing. I am putting more money into it" (Guinean clothing producer).
- "Yes, it is getting bigger" (Nigerian clothes producer).

look on their Johannesburg businesses and possible future prospects in South Africa emerged in responses to questions on future plans. Sixty-seven of the 70 entrepreneurs wish to remain in South Africa and more particularly in Johannesburg. Further, the majority of entrepreneurs wish to consolidate their residence in South Africa by bringing out their family members: 41 entrepreneurs wish to bring their family members to Johannesburg to unite them, whereas only 23 said that they did not wish their family to join them.

Among SADC migrants the prime reasons for staying relate to the perceived bright prospects for their businesses. Typical responses were that the "Market is big"; "Business is expanding"; and "It's much better than my home place". Other comments included assessments on an improving national political and local crime situation. Although similar opinions were offered from the non-SADC immigrants, their major emphasis was on the considerable opportunities for growth and expansion offered both in Johannesburg and more widely in South Africa as a whole. Asked for their reasons for staying in South Africa, the following were typical responses from the non-SADC group of entrepreneurs:

- "The economy is stable. I believe the crime situation will change" (Senegalese clothes producer).
- "It's a stable country politically and economically" (Congolese PR restaurateur).
- "There is enormous potential for my type of business here and for black-owned business" (Nigerian clothes producer).
- "South Africa is a good place for my business" (Guinean clothes producer).

Final endorsement of the positive business climate for immigrant SMME development emerged from responses to questions on whether entrepreneurs would encourage other business persons from their home country to establish businesses in South Africa. Once again, the overwhelming response was positive; of 61 responses (9 no response), 51 said yes and only 10 were negative. Reasons offered for investment in South Africa were "stability"; "the best country in Southern Africa"; "better than our own country"; "a good country for business"; "big market"; and that "South Africa is as Japan in the African continent". Negative responses were invariably linked to issues of crime, insecurity and harassment.

Further endorsement of a positive out-

Table 6 Length of weekly working hours of immigrant entrepreneurs

HOURS	SADC	NON-SADC
40-49	4	6
50-59	9	4
60-69	6	11
70-79	8	2
80-89	7	3
90-99	—	—
100	1	1

Note: Eight non-responses, 2 from SADC and 6 from non-SADC entrepreneurs.

Source: Johannesburg Survey

Conclusion: key findings and policy issues

During the past five years, businesses owned by foreigners have become a component of the rapidly changing economic and social complexion of Johannesburg, South Africa's largest urban centre. More specifically, businesses owned by immigrants from various parts of Africa have become a distinctive feature of the SMME economy of Johannesburg's inner city.

Typically, these new immigrant businesses are run by entrepreneurs who work long hours and often endure considerable hostility towards both themselves and their businesses. Despite this difficult local climate in which to operate, most immigrant entrepreneurs express optimism and work towards further growth in their existing business enterprise. The majority of immigrant businesses cluster in and around the production or retailing of clothes and curios, motor-car repairs and panelbeating, the selling of specialist foods and the running of restaurants, hairdressing salons, and import-export enterprises.

Overall, the research points to a number of marked differences that exist between SMMEs operated by migrants from SADC countries and those from non-SADC countries. At least four key differences must be recognized. First, that many businesses operated by migrants of non-SADC origins are integrated into and supported by wider international migrant networks than those of the SADC-owned businesses. Second, possibly partly because of this situation, the businesses run by SADC immigrants are smaller and seemingly less well capitalized than those of their non-SADC counterparts. Third, part of the diversity and strength of the non-SADC-run businesses derives from their exploitation of income niches as "ethnic businesses" and of Franco-phone culture in general. Fourth, the group of immigrant entrepreneurs from non-SADC countries show both considerably higher levels of educational qualifications and wider horizons in their business development strategies than those from SADC countries.

It is increasingly agreed that immigration policy in South Africa needs to be refocused and reconceptualized as a national issue of growth and development.³⁶ Against this background, the most important set of policy-related findings in this investigation relate to

the role of foreign-owned SMMEs, irrespective of origin, in terms of employment creation. It is evident that these small foreign-owned businesses are contributing directly to local job creation in Johannesburg for South African workers. In many cases, the growth trajectory of the SMME is one in which initially family or migrants from the home country are engaged; once established, however, the major beneficiaries in job creation are South Africans. This suggests that in the long-term, given the continuing prosperity and growth of these enterprises, they will be able to absorb an ever-increasing proportion of South African workers. In ameliorating the xenophobia that surrounds foreign-owned business, it is essential that national and local policy makers more fully appreciate and openly acknowledge the positive role — both existing and potential — of these businesses. In particular, this issue will be crucial to future job creation and local economic development planning for Johannesburg. Indeed, given the concentration of immigrant businesses and entrepreneurs' residences in the inner city areas of Johannesburg, the potential role of these SMMEs in the economic and social regeneration of inner-city Johannesburg must not be overlooked by local planners and policy makers.

Notes and references

- 1 This is a modified version of a paper originally prepared for the Southern Africa Migration Project. In extending the research, the financial support from the Richard Ward Endowment Fund is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are due to my research assistant, Talibe Toure, who administered the questionnaire survey, and to Sally Peberdy for generously allowing use of her collection of press clippings.
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South Africa and Egypt

The foreign policies of regional powers in search of African security

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Introduction

South Africa and Egypt are two of Africa's regional powers, both aspiring to play peacemaking roles in their respective regions — Egypt mainly in the Middle East, especially in the Arab/Israeli political disputes, and South Africa (since 1994) in various trouble spots in sub-Saharan Africa, most recently in the former Zaïre. Experience dictates that the outcomes of these initiatives are to a large extent determined by the contexts of these peacemaking roles. The main variables in this respect appear to be whether they act bilaterally, or in conjunction with regional partners, or whether they do so at the behest of the USA. In peacemaking, the behaviour of both South Africa and Egypt shows some resemblance to middlepowermanship (see page 277). But are they really typical middle powers, only slightly weaker than the great powers? To what extent do they manage to utilize UN institutions, as real middle powers do, or do they represent the regional consensus? And how independent are they of American interests? In other words, are they fighting for the cause of peace, for their own interests, or for foreign powers? Are they not perhaps like lightweight boxers punching in the wrong weight division? Can the same be said about both of them, and if not, where do the differences lie? And finally, where and in what ways can they learn from one another?

South Africa and Egypt are two of Africa's most prominent states. South Africa has the largest economy on the African continent with a total GNP of US\$125 billion in 1994, with Algeria second (US\$46 billion) and Egypt third (US\$40 billion) in the same year.¹ But Egypt is one of the oldest states in the world, dating from long before the

Christian and colonial eras.² Alone among African states, it "extends into Asia through its foothold on the Sinai Peninsula",³ and thus is a Middle Eastern state (in Asia Minor) as well.

Egypt's membership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Arab League confirms this perception. These two bodies draw their membership from Asia, the Middle East and Africa, especially from the Arab parts of these regions. The Egyptian official *Year Book* of 1996 states: "Egyptian foreign policy has many circles, the most important of which is the Arab circle, which will always reflect the feeling of belonging and of reaffirming the unity of history, language and culture."⁴ In terms of the challenges of globalization and the centrality of international capital and trade flows within the global order, Egypt is also a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO), and has observer status within the Maghreb Union, a forerunner to trade bloc formation in North Africa.

While not a member of any other sub-regional groupings within the OAU and Africa — illustrating its Arab rather than African identity, Egypt is nevertheless supportive of the principle of African continental coordination, in bodies such as the OAU's Mechanism for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts, and through Egypt's own Cairo Center for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa.⁵

Otherwise, Egypt's greatest foreign policy priorities are not African, although interests in the Nile Basin and Horn of Africa⁶ are important, mainly for reasons of the politics of water supplies of the Nile — one is reminded of Herodotus, who described

Egypt as the "gift of the Nile".

In contrast to Egypt, South Africa is a product of colonial partition, settler politics, conflict between black Africans and white colonists, and between Boer and British interests. These legacies created the foundations for an eventual multi-ethnic state, where white minority power dominated throughout the apartheid years until the constitutional transition of 1994.⁷ This shift necessitated a fundamental redesign of South Africa's foreign policies — from isolation to a wider choice of global and regional policies.

New perspectives and priorities came to the fore, and may be listed under three headings:

- strengthening and extending (new) bilateral relations, especially the maximization of benefits;
- the promotion of moral issues in international relations, including respect for human rights, promotion of democracy, support for humanitarian relief, and promotion of peace and security, mainly but not exclusively in Africa; and
- better utilization of South Africa's membership of multilateral institutions in the quest for African security, its role as a regional power in Southern Africa under UN, OAU and SADC auspices, the repositioning of its role in wider multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Commonwealth, the World Trade Organization, the IMF and World Bank, to name but a few.⁸

In practice, South Africa resumed (or concluded for the first time) full bilateral relations with virtually all of Africa,

the Middle East and Asia (with the People's Republic of China only from the end of 1997). It also introduced moral issues into foreign policy, with attempts to punish Nigeria over human rights abuses, insistence on end-user conditions in South African armaments sales policies, and promotion of peace and security in the Great Lakes and Zaïre, while taking up an international role in multilateral institutions that suggested strongly that South Africa was opting for a leadership role in the South.⁹ This suggests a multifaceted foreign policy and a possible tension between idealism (human rights, democracy and peace) and the realistic aspects of upholding pragmatic international economic relations, which also means a good working relationship with the USA as the strongest state in the West.¹⁰

How this contrasts with Egypt's foreign policy will be sketched briefly hereunder, especially in the light of their respective security policies, whether in the Middle East or in Central and Southern Africa.

Convergence in foreign policy behaviour?

Egypt's foreign policy dates since the early 1950s, when it became independent. As will be explained, it has changed quite significantly since then, especially on the issue of peace in its own neighbourhood.

South Africa's foreign policy has also changed, mainly from a realist-based, isolation-driven foreign policy, to something based on assumptions of morality and peace as well as economic interests that are to be pursued bilaterally and multilaterally.

One of South Africa's major foreign policy strengths since 1994 has been the Mandela factor, with the moral authority of a man who commands international respect as a conciliator of disparate interests in a fragile post-apartheid society, who won peace prizes and risks his reputation in the quest to mediate peace in troubled African nations — for example in Lesotho after democracy was interrupted in 1995, and most recently in Zaïre. Whether this was conducted bilaterally, regionally, multilaterally, or in co-operation with the USA, will be analysed in this paper.

In the Middle East, the late Anwar Sadat of Egypt played a similar kind of role in the Arab-Israeli peace process during the late 1970s. How Egypt did

this will also be analysed.

Since the South African elections of 1994, Egypt and South Africa have established full diplomatic and other relations. Synergies in foreign policies have developed, especially in multilateral institutions. Two examples are the non-proliferation debate and the debate about African security — mainly, but not exclusively, within the OAU.

The debate on nuclear non-proliferation dates back to 1995, when discussion was about review and extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Although this treaty was indefinitely extended, South Africa brokered the compromise to have it regularly reviewed. This was a typical consensus-building exercise. Earlier, in 1992, South Africa decided to abandon the part of its nuclear programme that had military implications. The emphasis was now only on peaceful purposes. Another step in this process, in which South Africa and Egypt co-operated, was the establishment of the African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology in 1995. This was the Pelindaba Accord, related to waste disposal; food preservation, irradiation processing, nuclear instrumentation, environmental radiation detection and safety procedures followed from this.

However, the need for regular review of the treaty cannot be over-emphasized in volatile regions of the world such as the Middle East, where countries such as Israel, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq have proven nuclear capabilities, but without being signatories to the NPT.

The other issue where convergence occurred in multilateral forums is South Africa's and Egypt's respective behaviours in the OAU on African security problems. Both states seem to support preventive diplomatic efforts in order to contain crises before they turn violent — in other words, both emphasize peacemaking and conflict resolution in their African foreign policies.

But do they have the capacity to sustain such policies? Are they strong enough and sufficiently influential to conduct these policies bilaterally, or only within multilateral frameworks? Are they sufficiently independent to pursue policies autonomous of US interests?

By African standards,¹¹ both have large populations: in 1997, Egypt had 61.4 million people, South Africa 43.5 million, as opposed to the African

average of about 15 million per state. Their GDP in 1997 was also far above the African average of only about US\$10 billion, with Egypt's at US\$74 billion and South Africa's at US\$136 billion. Their per capita income is likewise above the African average of about \$650, with Egypt's at \$1 220 (up from \$695 in 1994) and South Africa's at \$3 130. Urbanization percentages are also higher than the African average of 37%, with Egypt's at about 50% and South Africa's at 62%. On the comparative human development index (HDI) both fall into the "medium" category globally, with South Africa in the fifth position in Africa (after Mauritius, Libya, Tunisia and Seychelles) and Egypt seventh (behind Algeria in Africa's sixth position). Globally, South Africa is 93rd and Egypt 110th. The profiles are therefore distinct, but not that different.

The point really is this: these social and economic factors indicate that although Egypt and South Africa are relatively well-ranked in the African context, neither is really rich, and both are challenged by often unfavourable domestic conditions in the quest to grow economically and consolidate democratically. And as national interests perforce take precedence over altruism, material resources for financial and technical cooperation are constrained. The alternative is to behave multilaterally.

Although South Africa's profile on socio-economic indicators is on the higher end of the African spectrum, the quoted national percentages conceal worrying inequalities. Pat McGowan¹² reminds us that the South African per capita income in 1993 translated into a white average of \$12 500 (the same as Spain), as opposed to about \$700 for blacks (lower than Congo Brazzaville but higher than Zimbabwe and Egypt). These inequalities have to be seen as further constraints.

However, the regional profiles of South Africa and Egypt tell similar stories. Both are regional powers, and both have a special status in their region: Egypt is an African and Middle Eastern country, controlling the Suez Canal, and a hub in north-eastern Africa, while South Africa is the southern gateway to sub-Saharan Africa, also linked to the Indian Ocean Rim countries.

Underlying the multilateral synergies referred to earlier, South Africa and Egypt are both regarded as members

of the "new South", a loose grouping of states which possess economic and security complementarities on account of their size and strategic importance, and also share a concern about the need to reform the United Nations system.¹³ This is one area, however, where competition may arise, as both aspire to a seat on an extended and reformed UN Security Council,¹⁴ a position that would have clear advantages for improved status and power in international affairs.¹⁵ The other serious contender for an African seat on the UN Security Council is Nigeria.¹⁶ No doubt, Egypt will rely on the "Arab circle" for support in this contest.

Egypt's claims to leadership in peace initiatives are much older than South Africa's. The Camp David process of the late 1970s is one example. Nor have Egypt's leadership policies in the Middle East gone unrewarded by the West, the USA in particular. For example, in return for Egypt's support in the Gulf War, its Western allies wrote off debt of \$15 billion, easing the severity of structural adjustment policies prescribed by the IMF in 1991, with the added bonus of reducing budget deficit (down to only 1% in 1997) without devaluating the Egyptian pound, increasing foreign investments, increasing growth to 5% GDP, and reducing inflation from 20% to only 5%.¹⁷ But at the same time, Egypt remained a major recipient of US aid, which was estimated at \$11,6 billion in 1992.¹⁸

The key to an understanding of this situation is the American strategic interest in the Middle East; that is, to retain access to Gulf oil, uphold the security of Israel as a bulwark of American interests in this part of the world, maintain US-friendly relations with key Arab states (of which Egypt is one), and apply disincentives to UN-unfriendly states in this region, notably Iraq, Iran, Libya and Syria.¹⁹

After a non-aligned stance by Nasser during the fifties and sixties — including friendly relations with the USSR and war against Israel in 1973 — Anwar Sadat had the vision to make peace with Israel in 1978, signing the Camp David Peace Accord.²⁰ This alienated Egypt temporarily in the Arab world.²¹ However, after the Gulf War, 13 years later, Egypt rejoined the Arab world politically, as it resumed its role in the Arab League and continued with its membership of the Organization of Islamic Countries.

At no time did these policies really affect Egypt's standing in Africa, as it

continued to play an important role in the OAU. And yet, its role in Africa has not always been that comprehensive, as its interests have never been totally focused on Africa (apart from being fully supportive of the OAU's erstwhile decolonization and contemporary peacekeeping policies and except for water procurement policies to its south). Contemporary water projects between Egypt and Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and even Kenya illustrate this concern.²²

Apart from this, Egypt's most significant international relations remain with Arab states in the Middle East, with the USA and with Israel. Recently, it entered into an asymmetrical bilateral free trade agreement with the Euro-Union, thus establishing new commercial ties with an important bloc in world trade. Its proximity to Europe was therefore institutionalized by cementing stronger economic ties with a northern neighbour, as this may be regarded as beneficial for the faster growth of Egypt.²³ However, these ties are peripheral to the much more important relations with Arabs, Americans and Israelis.

This does not make Egypt's leadership role in the Middle East any easier, however, especially in relation to the problem of Israel. The US path towards Middle East peace has been "consistently inconsistent"²⁴ between the appeasement of Arab concerns over Israel's settlement policies and staunch defence of Israel on the one hand, and with matters of Israel's national security, including boundaries with the Palestinians, on the other. This staunchness has consistently been manifested in US vetoes in the UN Security Council on resolutions that might condemn Israel,²⁵ which undoubtedly undermine American credibility in the region²⁶ and, as such, embarrass Egypt.

As a fellow "new South" power in the world, South Africa faces similar dilemmas on relations with the USA in general, and with some of America's enemies in the Arab world and further afield in particular. This has indirect implications for Egyptian-South African relations.

Unlike Egypt, which experimented with real non-alignment during Nasser's days in the fifties and sixties, South Africa faces the same present realities as Sadat and Mubarak: it is not only undesirable to oppose the USA in the international system, it is also imperative not to jeopardize good rela-

tions with the world's only superpower. That is common sense. In this part of the world, the Israeli and Palestinian and Iranian and Syrian questions are central to this debate. In South Africa's case, it concerns arms sales policies to third parties, particularly in the Arab world, as well as to controversial states such as Syria, which the Americans would want to prevent.²⁷

Neither Egypt nor South Africa can therefore escape from pursuing totally sovereign foreign policies, independent of the USA. And as the Zairian crises in Africa recently illustrated, American influence is pervasive, not least in sub-Saharan Africa. This turned out to be crucial for the momentum of the South African-driven mediation process between the Mobuto and Kabila camps. Success or failure in this respect depended very much on whether this peacemaking process remained a bilateral South African initiative, or whether South Africa succeeded in multilateralizing the process. For South Africa, this was a dilemma of sorts: faced with the prospect of minimal diplomatic support from SADC ranks, it had to share this responsibility with the USA, despite America's very late change of mind about Mobuto, whom it had steadfastly supported as an anti-Soviet ally during the Cold War. There is therefore reason to believe that the Kabila camp might have had reservations about American even-handedness. Incidentally, Egypt remained uninvolved, although it pledged support for the OAU initiatives that, however, never really got off the ground.

Likewise, South Africa has not been involved in the Middle East process, adopting the position of falling in line with OAU and UN policies in this regard.²⁸ So the shift is not towards partisanship, but towards internationalism. However, South Africa's friendship with Cuba, Libya, Syria and Iran is fraught with contradictions, as its own foreign policy has a strong moralistic basis emphasizing the promotion of human rights and democracy at a time when some or all of those countries fall short of the standards normally accepted in the West. The USA strongly disapproves of relations with these states, labelling some of them as "terror states".

Whether South Africa's peacemaking role and middle power status will be enhanced or not, could depend on whether the USA allows this to happen. Here, there is one big difference:

South Africa is not nearly as dependent on American aid as Egypt is. South Africa, therefore, has perhaps more autonomy in this respect. But the dilemma still remain.

Recently, South Africa joined the Euro-Union in slating the Helms-Burton initiative in the USA on business relations with Cuba. Together with the EU, South Africa complained about trade restrictions that would follow from this initiative.²⁹ Part of the dilemma is how to co-operate in an uneasy relationship. To be sure, South Africa did not win its position as "the major diplomatic power in sub-Saharan Africa"³⁰ only as a result of support from the USA, but also because of its independent-minded behaviour in multilateral bodies such as the UN Commission on Human Rights,³¹ where South Africa often voted with the West, and sometimes against the West. Does this mean that South Africa's "independent" behaviour in global bodies is evidence of an idealist stance, especially in multilateral institutions, such as is often ascribed to middle power states such as Canada and the Scandinavian countries? Was the South African mediation and peace promotion in the Great Lakes and Zaïrian regions a manifestation of this kind of "middle powermanship"?

A note on "middle powers"

What has been described above seems pretty consistent with "middle power behaviour".³²

The history of peacekeeping suggests that nations aspiring to include peacekeeping in their foreign policies are usually middle powers. To be sure, not all middle powers are peacekeepers, but most peacekeepers (with the exception of superpower USA, and small powers such as Tanzania and Botswana) are typical middle powers.

For Cooper and Higgott,³³ middle power status is not necessarily related to economic calculations but to aspects of political leadership. They argue that leadership is the result of attitudes to diplomacy and international conduct, which for them means that middle power leadership is typically geared towards conflict reduction, consensus-building and international cooperation, with Canada and Australia being good examples of this; in other words, it depends on how well middle powers apply their capacities. A policy of destabilization (in a region) would thus be a disqualification. This is why South

Africa could not qualify as a middle power during the 1980s, despite being relatively powerful.

"Middlepowermanship" is therefore characterized by a functionalist foreign policy, also driven by the moral dimension of conflict mediation, preferably not bilaterally, but through the use of UN and other multilateral and/or regional institutions.³⁴

In addition to Canada and Australia, middle powers with peacekeeping track records are some Western European countries such as The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, and some regional powers such as Brazil and India.³⁵

But the question is really whether Brazil, India, Egypt and South Africa can be compared to Canada, Australia, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden? Based on GDP and per capita incomes, the answer is clearly in the negative. The latter are high-income states; the former are middle- and even lower income states. The latter have nonetheless also come to dominate peacekeeping operations.³⁶

Of late, other-than-middle-power states have appeared, aspiring to play similar "multilateral" roles in the quest for peace and security. This is where South Africa and Egypt come to mind.

Both Egypt and South Africa³⁷ have also been keen to engage in preventive diplomacy and international mediation in multilateral peace-efforts;³⁸ in Egypt's case, not only in the Middle East, but in Africa as well.³⁹ Both countries are also fully supportive of the OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Resolution, created in 1994. In Southern Africa, South Africa's role goes further than OAU initiatives: it extends fully into the creation of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, set up in 1995. South Africa is, however, not yet keen on troop contribution to the UN or the OAU.⁴⁰ SADC has also, as yet, not formulated a policy position on Zaïre because it is neither a direct SADC issue, nor is there political consensus on this issue, as SADC is under Nelson Mandela's chairmanship and the Organ is under that of Robert Mugabe, who does apparently not share the enthusiasm for close cooperation with South Africa.

The difficulties with the Zaïrian initiative, as well as Mandela's failure to get the Commonwealth and other African states to design effective punishment policies for Nigeria's human rights violations, may come as a sober-

ing lesson: there is a limit to bilateralism, even for so-called regional powers. Nigeria's own controversial role in West African Peacekeeping Forces demonstrates this dilemma.⁴¹

Conclusion

South Africa's effort to promote the idealistic and moral dimensions of its new foreign policy was severely tested in Zaïre. It took the lead mainly for two reasons: first, evidently, because the size of the South African economy made it the uncontested leader in the region. It was therefore unavoidable that strong bilateral tendencies would prevail, making the new South Africa's foreign policies reminiscent of the realist aspects of old South Africa's foreign policies. Second, South Africa undoubtedly assumed a leadership role as a result of Mandela's moral authority in the world. The way in which the Clinton administration encouraged South Africa to play this role in Zaïre underlines the global appeal that this factor enjoys.

But did this translate into a "middle power role" for South Africa? For an answer to this question one has to return to an essential requirement for middle power leadership, namely the utilization of multilateral institutions.⁴²

In all fairness, the new South Africa has never styled itself a middle power. South Africa sometimes behaves like a middle power — as in the 1995 NPT and 1997 human rights debates and the recent peacemaking processes in Zaïre. But here South Africa acted without the required multilateral network, which was not consistent with the standards and expectations set forth in middle power theory.⁴³ On this issue, South Africa's greatest disqualification (in addition to the fact that it is only a middle-income state, not comparable with Canada and Australia), is the fact that its sojourn into Zaïre was without the consent of the region,⁴⁴ which means that whatever took place was not a multilateral initiative. Regional interests, as shown in the role played by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia and Angola, were as powerful if not more so than South Africa's in pressuring Mobutu to abdicate. But South Africa seldom co-operated with them during this initiative.

Then there is also the suspicion that South Africa acted in conjunction with the USA, which is something that did not apply to the neighbouring states mentioned above. Throughout this ex-

ercise, Mandela was supported by the Clinton administration. But given the USA's late change of mind on Mobuto, one wonders whether America was not interested in a post-Mobuto regime in the Democratic Republic of Congo that still offered access to that country's minerals. For the sake of perspective it may be said that South Africa, especially on account of its policies on Cuba, Libya, Syria and Iran, is much less beholden to US interests than Egypt.

Egypt is therefore far less of an autonomous actor in international relations than South Africa is. Even so, some commentators wrote that the Zairian lesson also teaches that although SADC was not a party to the Zairian crises, other regional partners were, and that South Africa could and should have acted more in concert with them than with the USA.⁴⁵ If it does not, South Africa risks pushing Africa back into the straightjackets of the Cold War — that is, making African states pawns, once more, of the great powers outside Africa. How to reconcile this with American interests, without dovetailing with the USA, is certainly one of South Africa's major foreign policy challenges in future.

Behaviour on human rights, on non-proliferation, and on states that the USA dislikes, proves that South Africa's foreign policy is far from actually dovetailing with the USA. Egypt may well learn from South Africa on this issue. But if Egypt has a lesson for South Africa, then it is this: South Africa should not punch with the big boys in a weight division above its ranks.

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Tourist trends in the Indian Ocean Islands

Denis Fair, Fellow of the Africa Institute, has compiled this account of tourist trends in Mauritius, Réunion, Madagascar and the Comoros from recently published reports.

Over the past 25 years tourism (for leisure and business) has been the world's fastest growing economic sector. However, Africa's share of tourist arrivals was only a modest 3,5% in 1994 compared with Europe's 60% and the Americas' 20%. Tourists going to Africa chose mainly North Africa (45%), southern Africa (26%) and East Africa, including the Indian Ocean islands, 17%. Only 8% went to West Africa and even fewer (2%) to the countries of Middle Africa. A previous article by the author in this journal dealt with tourist trends in East Africa, including the islands of Zanzibar and the Seychelles.

The four islands dealt with here suffered a fall in the number of tourists in 1991 due to the Gulf War but have enjoyed a resurgence of interest since then. The point has been made that whether it is developed to a high degree as in Mauritius and Réunion or still at the embryonic stage as in Madagascar and the Comoros, "tourism is one of the region's major resources and areas of potential growth".

Mauritius

Growth

Mauritius is a "luxury beach holiday destination". Ninety per cent of arrivals come for holiday purposes and 95% of tourist accommodation is on or fairly close to the beach. The island, only 1 865 km² in extent, also has some beautiful scenery, coral reefs, rare species of fauna and flora and a lush vegetation. It became independent from Britain in 1968 and in 1995 its population numbered 1,13 million.

A White Paper in 1988 set clear targets for the tourist industry followed

by a World Bank study in 1992 and in a National Development Plan (1992–94) government rated tourism a vital component of its economic strategy. Growth has been remarkable, from 27 650 arrivals in 1970 to 149 000 in 1985 and to 487 000 in 1996, representing an average annual rate of 11,2% over the past 11 years compared with a world average of 5,5%. Prospects for 1997 are bright with arrivals expected to grow by 12,5% over 1996. Receipts from tourism have increased by 20,2% over the 11-year period compared with a world average of 12,6%. Direct employment in the industry has more than doubled from 6 974 in 1988 to over 14 000 in 1996. Tourism is now the island's third largest foreign exchange earner. However, gross receipts from tourism are offset by the rise of costly imports, especially foodstuffs, to meet tourist needs, thus giving a lower figure for net earnings. Unlike some other African countries, the industry in Mauritius is not dominated by foreign companies. There are certainly some but the industry is mainly locally owned.

Sources and access

Fifty-eight per cent of arrivals came from Europe in 1996 with France (27%) the major contributor. Eighteen per cent came from Réunion, a French overseas Department 190 km to the southwest, and a "staging post for French holidaymakers". South Africans accounted for 11%. Numbers from Southeast Asia, Australia and the Americas are comparatively small due to their easy access to their own tropical beaches. Vigorous promotion, improved air links and the depreciation of the rupee have contributed to the rise in tourists from new areas such as



the Benelux countries and Scandinavia.

Access is a critical factor not only in attracting tourists but also in diversifying the source areas. Especially important have been the direct long-haul, low-cost flights, operated by French airlines, from Paris to Réunion and the medium- and short-haul flights from South Africa and Réunion. About 15 national airlines serve the island but Air Mauritius carries over half of total passenger traffic. It has extended its network to Europe, Africa and the Far East and has clearly served the island well.

Policy

The stated policy in the government's 1988 White Paper and through it that of the government tourist office (MGTO) was the creation of a "low-impact, high-spending tourism". This "up-market profile" would guarantee acceptable environmental standards and avoid social pressures that a down-market strategy would seriously jeopardize. Thus, the ratio of tourists to population was fixed at 1 to 3, building heights were restricted and the maximum size of resort hotels confined to 200 rooms. Consequently, while long-haul charter flights and mass tourism may be discouraged, serious competition from other areas may require the government to review this approach from time to time and to appreciate the need for charter flights during off-peak periods.

Accommodation

It is in this field that moves away from stated policy are most evident. In 1992 the World Bank pointed to the laxity in handing out hotel construction certificates such that capacity became seriously out of line with the defined targets for tourists. Between 1988 and 1996 the number of large hotels increased from 64 to 95 and the number of bedplaces from 7 005 to 13 833. As a result of this rate of growth occupancy levels have fallen slightly. The World Bank had in fact pointed to "a gradual shift down-market" in response to relatively high room rates at luxury hotels and the desire for smaller, cheaper hotels and self-catering holiday bungalows, guest houses and rented private rooms.

The MGTO promotes mainly the medium-sized and large luxury hotels yet less than half of all tourist accom-

modation is of this class, the rest being in the middle and lower end of the market. Now, hotel and restaurant owners are calling for tighter controls on the independent bungalow sector which has increased substantially over the past decade, the number of bedplaces now being three times those available in large hotels. The claim is that the bungalows tarnish the image of the tourism sector and that they are a potential threat to the island's environmental quality.

Constraints

As tourism expands, Alladin emphasizes that one of the island's main problems is space. Policy is to confine hotels to "pockets of development" around the coast but since the pockets comprise only 51.5 km of good sandy beaches along the 161 km of coastline their protection is urgent. He states also that the coral reefs surrounding the lagoons are being threatened while the lack of adequate waste disposal has added to the threat of water pollution. The present sewerage system is unable to cope during heavy rainfall and cyclones and the tendency for tourist development to concentrate in the northern part of the island has placed a strain there on water supply.

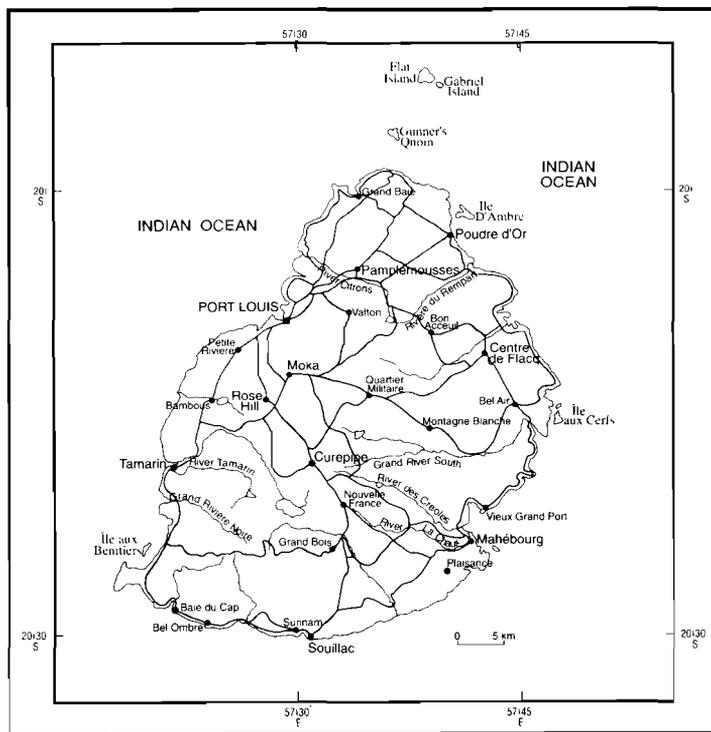
With the government keen to allow the industry to expand on average by 10% a year, "the effects on the environment and on society have not gone

unquestioned". While Mauritians accept the importance of tourism they do feel the impact of higher prices for goods, shortages of fresh produce and fish from time to time which, in some cases, give rise to negative attitudes and behaviour towards tourists. Alladin maintains that "it seems the industry has gone ahead too fast with little thought to environmental and social impact". However, thought has been given to the problem. Projects to rectify sewerage and solid waste disposal problems together with others to restore and protect the northern coastline have been undertaken and financed by international agencies.

Tourist growth has certainly put services under pressure. At the only international airport the volume of traffic and passenger congestion at peak periods has been serious. There is also a shortage of trained staff, particularly at middle-management level. A government hotel and catering training school seems unable to meet the demand. The University of Mauritius offers a two-year diploma in hotel management.

In 1992 the World Bank pointed to "the relatively meagre spending on promotion at a time when many competitive destinations have been stepping up theirs". But in the budget for 1995-96 the government increased the MGTO grant by 30% and declared 1996 the Tourism Year.

MAURITIUS



Potential

Analysts indicate that in order to get the full benefits from tourism there is a need to increase significantly the amount that tourists spend locally. A number of possibilities exist. There is a growing interest in exploring the interior by way of forest trails and Land-Rover treks into the mountains. The Royal Botanic Gardens at Pamplemousses and the wild-life sanctuaries in the outer islands such as Rodrigues add to a growing interest in eco-tourism, all helping to diversify the island's tourism product and its markets.

The World Bank makes much of improving and increasing shopping facilities for visitors along with tours, sports and inland activities. In fact over the past decade backward and forward linkages between tourism and other sectors have greatly improved with the growth of small retail shops, car rental firms, tour operators and travel agencies. The government in its Rational Development Plan stressed the encouragement of handicrafts for the tourist market as a priority. These possibilities and others come together in a tourism master plan aimed at a long-term strategy.

Réunion

The island has a population of 665 000 (1995), over half of whom are of Afro-Malagasy origin, the rest being Europeans, Indians and Chinese. As opposed to the beaches of Mauritius Réunion's tourist attractions are its mountainous landscape and its French cuisine, language and culture. It is a volcanic island 2 512 km² in area. The volcanic masses occupy three-quarters of the island and rise to over 3 000 metres above sea level. One of the volcanoes, Piton de Fournaise, is active. St Denis (population 122 000), the capital, is a modern town richly endowed with restaurants and bistros, nightclubs and theatres. "France in the Indian Ocean" is how the island is described.

Actively promoted, tourist arrivals increased from 182 000 in 1989 to 245 000 in 1994. The sector contributed 3-4% to gross domestic product (GDP). Nearly 80% of arrivals are from Europe, France alone accounting for 75%; 11% are from Mauritius and 5% from Madagascar. While the majority of tourists come for holiday purposes, the number coming for business and professional reasons is increasing lar-

gely due to attendance at conferences for which the island is becoming popular. There are now over 2 000 hotel rooms in both luxury and cheaper hotels. All visits to the island are by air and international flights connect with Paris, Antananarivo, Mauritius and Johannesburg.

Madagascar

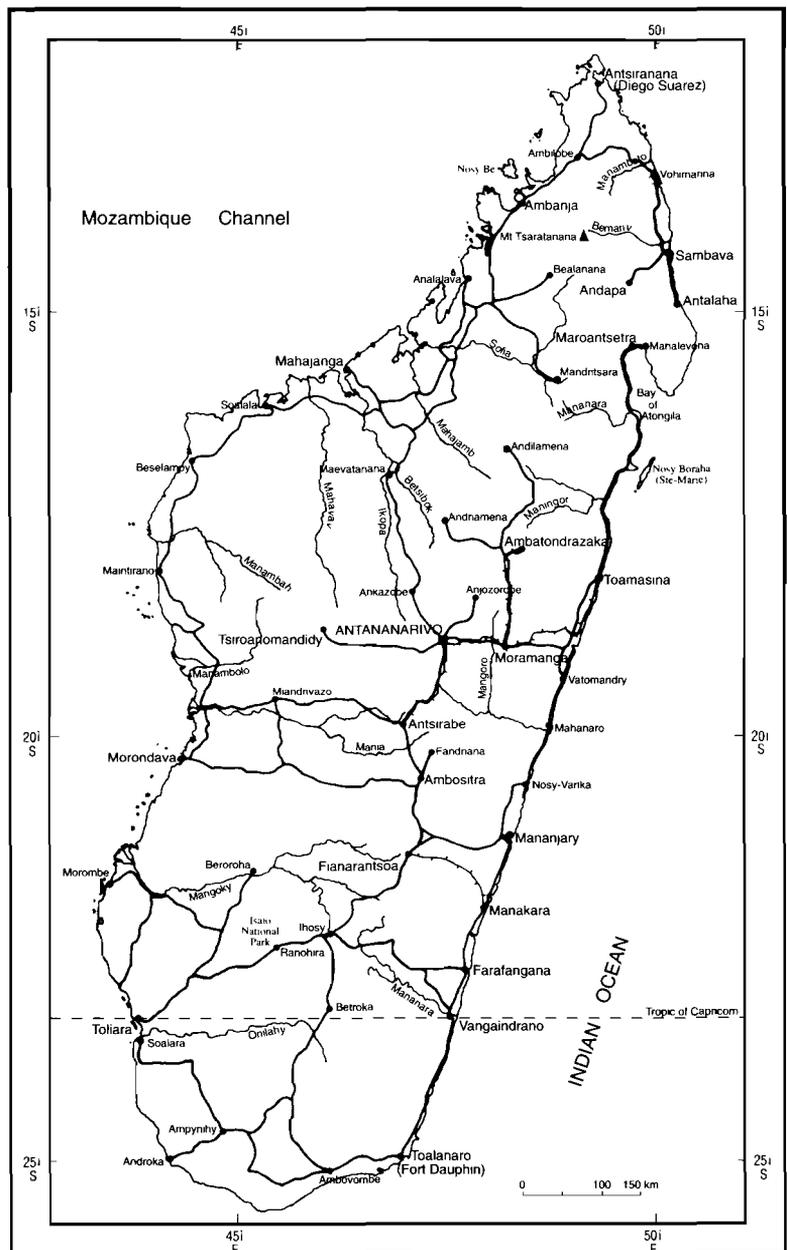
Unlike that of Mauritius, Madagascar's tourism is largely undeveloped. Yet the island has enormous potential for both holidays and eco-tourism. It is 587 000 km² in extent with a population of 13,5 million (1995). It has 5 000 km of tropical beaches, deep-sea and underwater fishing, rainforests and a wide variety of landscapes. It

has a rich biodiversity of rare animals, birds and plants resulting from its geological separation from the African continent 165 million years ago. Seventy-five per cent of its plants and animals are found nowhere else in the world.

Growth

Tourism has increased from only 23 000 arrivals in 1985, followed by a setback in 1991 as a result of the Gulf War and internal civil disturbances, to 83 400 in 1996. This is five times less than visitors to Mauritius in that year. It represents an average annual growth rate of 12,4% (Mauritius 11,2%) but from a very low base. Growth in tourist receipts has been much more sub-

MADAGASCAR



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stantial. Foreign exchange earnings from this source, now the second largest producer, have grown from a mere \$5 million in 1985 to an estimated \$77 million in 1996. This rate of growth places Madagascar in the top three countries of Africa. Tourism's contribution to GDP is only about 2% but is growing and is overtaking coffee and vanilla as the main export earner.

Sources and access

Tourists come primarily from Europe, half from France and Germany alone, followed by Italy and Switzerland. The United States and Canada account for nearly 10%. A fair proportion are businessmen. Access to the island is mainly by air. Until recently Air France and Air Madagascar had a monopoly on flights but the government has now deregulated the international connections and this should open the way for cheaper fares and low-cost charter packages up to now largely ignored in favour of middle-to-high income earners.

Policy

An independent Ministry of Tourism was recently created and an action plan published aimed at attracting 250 000 tourists by the year 2000. The plan emphasizes the beach holiday facilities, the eco-tourism potential and opportunities for "open-air adventure" holidays. Tourism is to be promoted in Europe and North America, a necessary exercise since the country clearly needs "an image boost". Hotels, too, are being encouraged to stay open beyond the peak December and July-August seasons. In time the plan envisages tourism being well established as the country's chief foreign exchange earner.

Constraints

Since Madagascar "has not even begun to exploit its full tourist potential" much obviously remains to be done. The action plan will begin to correct the deficiencies. Infrastructural weaknesses are the most serious constraint, the country having "a long way to go before it can rival the other Indian Ocean destinations in the luxury tourist market". The capacity of its regional airports is limited, its internal air transport network needs much improvement and its road system, especially at the coast, is inadequate to meet the needs of a modern tourist industry.

Development aid being limited, the government has the choice of either expanding its airport capacity and improving air services or upgrading and expanding the road system which, in addition, will benefit the local economy. Both, in time, will have to be tackled if the tourism potential is to be reached. A start has been made in airport expansion at Nosy-Be and Toliara and internal air services are currently being liberalized.

Accommodation

The provision of more and better hotel accommodation will also have to be met in order to ensure continued growth in tourism. There are 220 hotels but only one, in Antananarivo, is 5-star. Investment in the hotel industry has been encouraging in the past few years and the average length of stay has increased from 12 days in 1990 to 18 in 1995. Occupancy rates, however, are still comparatively low in classified hotels. A number of state-owned hotels have been transferred to private ownership and at the end of 1994 the government opened local property markets to foreign interests, thus al-

lowing them to invest in hotels and resorts. Mauritian interest in Madagascar's hotel and tourism industry began in the 1980s, flagged after the disturbances in 1991, and is now being revived following a delegation to the island in 1996.

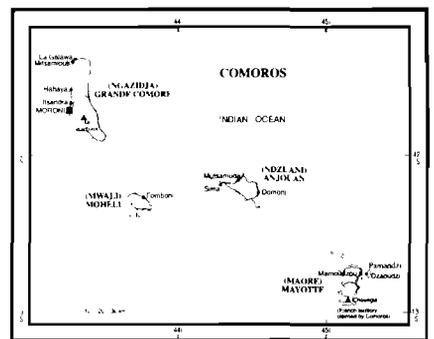
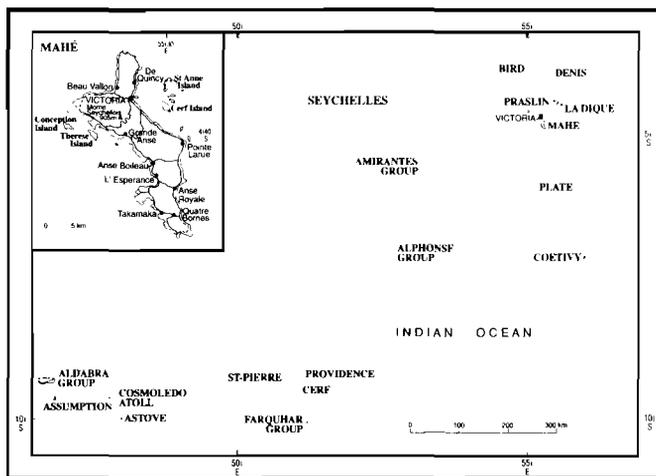
Potential

Two distinct markets influence the country's investment potential. The one is high-priced eco-tourism; the other is beach holidays. The latter is much more price-sensitive in view of the competition offered by East African and other Indian Ocean destinations. The Economist Intelligence Unit believes that the former has been overplayed and that a more profitable future lies in the "cheaper and more orthodox" beach holiday sector, necessitating further investment in coastal infrastructure.

The tourist industry will certainly benefit from the lower air fares following the deregulation, from the abolition of visa requirements and from discarding the dual tariff system which meant that foreigners previously paid double the hotel rate offered to nationals. Moreover, an advantage that Madagascar enjoys in being a latecomer to the tourism business is that it is "in an excellent position to benefit from the apparent 'saturation' of other tourist destinations in the Eastern African region".

The Comoros

The Comoro archipelago comprises four volcanic islands and numerous islets strung along a 300-km line from northeast to southwest between the African coast and Madagascar. The Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros comprises three islands — Grand Comore or Njazidja, Moléti or Mwali and Anjouan or Mwanzi. France recognized their independence in 1975. The fourth island, Mayotte or Mahoré, remained as a French Overseas Territory. The is-



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lands, 1 862 km² in area, are densely populated, inhabitants numbering 560 000 in 1995. Tourists are attracted by the spectacular scenery including Mt Karthala (2 440 metres) which erupted in 1977, and by its luxuriant vegetation and varied marine life. It has some fine beaches but much of the lava coastline is rocky and parts are inaccessible. A distinctive feature is its Islamic cultural heritage, similar to that of Zanzibar, which is attracting tourists from the Gulf Oil states.

Like that of Madagascar, the tourist industry of the Comoros is also embryonic but with good growth potential. Only in the late 1960s did government and private investors begin to show an interest in investing in tourism. By the early 1970s the number visiting the islands was only some 3 000 a year. Interest then flagged during a period of revolutionary government from 1975, when France recognized its independence, to a military take-over in 1978. However, of the 1 300 visitors recorded in 1978, the majority were businessmen. Subsequent disturbances and the assassination of the president in 1989 again set back the tourist industry, as did a further attempted coup in 1995. These events are unfortunate for a country which is among the poorest in sub-Saharan Africa and which depends heavily on external aid and for which tourism could add so much to its foreign exchange earnings and employment levels.

Tourism growth has in consequence been slow. By 1994 arrivals had increased to only 27 000 of which 52% were tourists, 39% family visitors and 7% business and professional people. Of the tourists 68% were from Europe, mainly France, and 29% were from South Africa.

In the 1980s all four hotels were in the hands of the state-owned parastatal Comatel but more recently the government has been attempting to privatize some of them. In 1989 South African interests opened the luxury 194-room Galawa Sun hotel on the northern tip of Grand Comore and about 10 km from the international airport at Moroni, the capital. The hotel had to close soon afterwards following the coup and the imposition of high customs duties on supplies. It reopened at the end of 1990 with help from the South African government. There are now only 294 rooms in hotels of international standard and about 90 in small family-registered pensions.

International flights to the islands from Europe are meagre and expensive but the competition to Air France now being mooted by other companies, notably Nouvelle Frontières, which will offer package tours to Moroni, will provide a fillip to the tourist industry. A scheduled air service now operates between the islands and the Gulf Oil states.

In its policy framework paper (1991–93) the World Bank confirmed that the potential for tourism had been largely unexploited and that growth in the sector remained low. The government needed to embark on an overseas promotional campaign, it said, since the current operating budget was too modest. It also indicated that the government should limit its role to promoting tourism and disengage completely from hotel involvement.

Mayotte's economy is in no better shape than that of its neighbour. It has a population of 106 000 and is also densely populated. The tourism sector recently did see the expansion of the Caribou hotel and the construction of a holiday complex at Kongo Point.

Regional groupings

Regional groupings between the islands of the Indian Ocean hold out considerable benefits for tourism. In 1982 the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) was established comprising the four islands dealt with here along with the Seychelles. In 1993 the European Commission of the European Community made funds available for tourism development and environmental protection in the member countries of the IOC. The aid is aimed at furthering a regional tourism development programme, the view being that the tourism resources of each of the islands complement rather than compete with one another. Then in 1995 Mauritius joined the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and has taken a leading role in promoting the concept of an Indian Ocean Rim grouping, the core states of which are South Africa, India, Australia, Singapore, Oman, Kenya and Mauritius. In addition all the independent IOC states belong to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa).

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Madagascar

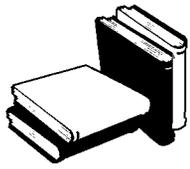
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The Comoros

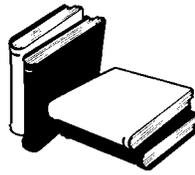
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Regional Groupings

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Bookshelf



Africa's emerging maize revolution, edited by Derek Byerlee & Carl K. Eicher, Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997. 301 pp. (pbk) ISBN 1 55587 754 0

As opposed to the situation in the 1960s, many African countries are now dependent on food imports. Increased food production is critical to the achievement of food security, peace and democracy in Africa in the 21st century.

This book is based on a workshop bringing together 13 studies on the African maize economy, and reflects the debates among the 30 workshop participants from Africa and major food research programmes.

The first two chapters give a general overview and are followed by case studies of the evolution of the maize economies of six African countries. All of the case studies are based on extensive fieldwork among thousands of farmers. The third part of the book relates policies and technologies to specific aspects such as the maize seed industry and fertilizer distribution. Part four draws together the main findings to identify the crucial decisions that must be taken to increase maize production in Africa in the next 20 years.

The chapters have been written by both social scientists and maize specialists, but are accessible to the non-specialist. The book is provided with a good analytical index and a number of statistics, charts and diagrams. A well-produced, informative and objective study.



The dilemmas of Africanization: Choices and dangers for sub-Saharan Africa, by L. Dalton Casto, Moraga, CA: African Ways Publishing, 1998. 280 pp (hardcover) ISBN 0 9659830 0 5

The author states that he has worked as a business and economic consultant for the government of Ghana, assisted business entrepreneurs in East Africa, Kenya and Uganda and acted as a consultant for other African governments. In this volume he describes what he sees as the disappointing results of the policy of commercial "Africanization".

The countries discussed, in varying depth and detail, are Ghana, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.

The book should perhaps be seen as a collection of personal, anecdotal essays on the various countries as they were perceived by the author at the time when he visited them in his travels from 1971 onwards. The reader unfamiliar with African current affairs might be confused by the time frame; the author writes of the regions as they were at the time of his visit — the "tour of the South African homelands", for instance, took place in 1981 — with partial updates, while the section on "Mandela and the African National Congress" does not reflect developments in the last two to three years.

The book has a strong personal bias, but contains some trenchant observations. The conclusion sums up the author's views on the policy of Africanization throughout the continent, the role of the UN and the prospects for South Africa and Southern African regional cooperation.



Contested lands in Southern and Eastern Africa: A literature survey, by Robin Palmer, Oxford: Oxfam UK and Ireland, October 1997. An Oxfam Working Paper. 306 pp. (pbk) ISBN 0 85598 391 4

The author works for Oxfam UK and Ireland as Land Policy Adviser for Africa. He has collected and summarized over 300 recent books, chapters of

books, articles, academic theses and reports of conferences and workshops dealing with questions of land tenure and land reform. A great many of the texts support his major thesis, which questions the formerly accepted wisdom of the World Bank and others, that redrafting indigenous land tenure laws, privatizing land and granting individual title would give security of land tenure, improve agricultural performance and develop a market in land. On the contrary, many of the writers claim that in Africa this has not been the case, and that indigenous tenure systems are more suited to Africa and more adaptable to demographic and economic change than Westernized practices of individual title.

The texts are divided into the following five categories: land tenure; land reform; land and pastoralism; land and women; and land: miscellaneous. These categories are arranged first in a general section, and then in regional (Southern and East Africa) and in country-specific sections.

Summaries range from a paragraph to several pages detailing the argument. Bibliographic details of the source text are given, but unfortunately not the ISBN where applicable. An author index would have been helpful but might have delayed publication. However, this is a timely, wide-ranging and informative survey on an issue vital to Africa.

Transition without end: Nigerian politics and civil society under Babangida, edited by Larry Diamond, Anthony Kirk-Green and Oyeleye Oyediran. Boulder, CO. and London: Lynne Rienner, 1997. xii + 515 pp. ISBN 1 55587 591 2

This collection originated in a project, begun in 1989, exhaustively to study the programmes for establishing demo-

cratic government and reforming the economy that the military head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida, had initiated in 1986. A large team of prospective authors was recruited, both in Nigeria and beyond, and conferences on the project were held at Stanford in August 1990 and at Lagos in January 1991. There was talk of publication in three volumes, to coincide with the termination in October 1992 of the transition from military rule. Yet this transition was already regarded sceptically. The programme structurally to adjust the economy (the SAP, to use the familiar Nigerian acronym) had been given up in some respects by 1988, and in most respects by 1990; in the volume now published it is allowed only one chapter. The political programme had already been subjected to bewildering changes in its rules and timetable, and more were to follow. A prevalent opinion among Nigerians was that the withdrawal of the military from power in 1992 would be temporary: the top brass would soon find reason again to "save the nation" from itself. Ironically, this prognosis turned out to be less pessimistic than the outcome warranted. For Babangida's transition was followed by Abacha's, and in 1998 Nigeria is still governed by the military as it has been since 1984. The three or four years preceding publication are dealt with, however, only in the editorial introduction to this book and in a postscript by Diamond.

In the aftermath of disappointed hopes, many participants in the project were quietly dropped (as they will now discover) and the present volume is the work of twenty survivors. They are mostly Nigerian political scientists, with a leavening, significantly, of journalists. The editors themselves contribute chapters as well as a lengthy introduction. Thus Oyediran has two chapters on the Political Bureau, the appointment of which began the transition and of which he was a member. In neither does he mention what to an outsider seemed the most remarkable features of the Bureau's report in 1987. First, its profoundly undemocratic recommendation, accepted by the government, that only two parties should be allowed to contest elections, and that the difference between them should lie only in how they proposed to attain supposedly given "national objectives". Second, its recommendation—grotesquely inopportune for a government embarked on structural

adjustment, and therefore dropped like a hot coal—that Nigeria should adopt a "socialist socio-economic system" and nationalize the "commanding heights" of the economy.

Other chapters in the first part of the book cover the military as political actors, the making of the 1989 (and earlier) Constitutions, and the incongruous campaign to mobilize, under authoritarian rule, popular acceptance of a democratic political culture. The second part is concerned with the formation of the parties and the elections at local, state and federal levels in 1988–93. The third part is headed Problems of Governance—among which the most glaring is surely the military government's contemptuous disregard of legality, detailed by Clement Nwankwo in what the editors rightly call "a concise but chilling analysis". Fourth are chapters on civil society. Adebayo Olukoshi discusses the vibrancy of associational life in reaction not so much to military dictatorship as to the SAP, but fails to observe that the associations that sprang up to defend "the masses" were formed of better-off groups—including, notably, the Manufacturers' Association—themselves particularly threatened by the removal of price distortions. Two valuable chapters on religion show it to have been more politically divisive in the predominantly Muslim north than in the south-western States where Christians and Muslims are more equally represented.

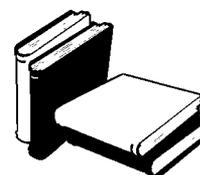
The limitation of the authors to Babangida's transition, in their perceptions as well as in their narratives, reduces the value of this book to readers concerned with the current situation of Nigeria. Presumably the frustrating task of revising the work in light of a continuously shifting political kaleidoscope was abandoned in 1993. Even within this limitation, it is regrettable that nothing was written of Ernest Shonekan's Transitional Council of 1993, now seen in Nigerian business as the start of a paradigm shift in policy-making. A chapter on the National Electoral Commission does not even go beyond 1988, when its author, Eme Awa, was pushed out of the Commission's chairmanship. Another curiosity is the inclusion of a chapter on "indigeneity" and "federal character" by the French scholar Daniel Bach. Notwithstanding its interest and Bach's analytical acumen, this chapter has more to do with the constitution of 1979, outcome of an earlier period of military

rule, than with Babangida's transition.

Unsurprisingly in such a large and many-handed work, some blemishes have escaped the scrutiny of the editors. No one will credit that external debt service in 1992 was greater than the GNP (p. 261). The naira in 1993 cannot have been "massively undervalued" (p. 295) if its exchange value in the official auction was double the parallel market rate (p. 325). On p. 269 it was unnecessary to cite a private estimate of turnout in the presidential election as less than 30 per cent, when a calculation from the author's own tables shows the figure to have been over 37 per cent; and obtuse to explain the low turnout partly by the abstention from voting of the Ogoni in Rivers State, when the same tables show turnout in that state to have been nearly 53 per cent, far above the national figure. The amendment in 1990 of the notorious Decree no. 2 of 1984—authorizing detention without charge or trial—is represented as a success for civil associations on p. 397, but made no difference in practice according to p. 355.

In addition to government publications and some secondary literature, the principal sources of information used for this book are Nigerian newspapers and news-magazines. This feature suggests two reflections. First, the lack of other sources where there is no parliament and no recognized political opposition, and where the principal political actors are off-limits to scholarly enquiry. Second, the survival of journalistic courage and integrity, notwithstanding continual harassment and repression; notwithstanding too the internal weaknesses of the press reviewed in a severely objective chapter by Tunji Dare. For this reason military governments in Nigeria, while unhesitating in their intimidation and skilful in their co-optation of possible opponents, have been unable to complete the circle of despotism by monopolizing the flow of news and comment.

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Cities under siege: Urban violence in South, Central and West Africa, edited by Antoinette Louw and Simon Bekker. Indicator Press, University of Natal, April 1996. 96 pp. ISBN 1 86840 155 3

The papers collected in this volume were presented at the International Symposium on Urban Management and Violence in Africa, held in Ibadan, Nigeria in November 1994. Chapters 2–7 cover a variety of topics: the use of urban space in Central African cities, the link between macro-level economic policies and violence in Nigeria, street violence and religious conflict in Nigeria, the role of the state in violence in Togo and conflict and reconstruction in the East Rand areas of South Africa. Chapter 8 discusses ways of analysing violence, and there are introductory and concluding chapters by the editors.

Comparative studies drawing on research from different parts of sub-Saharan Africa are welcome, and there is some interesting material in this slim volume. However, the papers themselves vary not only in approach and focus, but also in academic quality, with some of the authors failing to present a coherently structured argument accompanied by supportive evidence. For example, Piermay (chapter 2) raises pertinent questions about the relationship between urban spaces and violence, and provides a description of spatial models found in colonial African cities; however, he gives virtually no detail about the nature of the urban violence in these cities and hence fails to answer adequately the questions he seeks to address.

It is unfortunate that the editors did not rectify many of the shortcomings, some relatively minor, before publication. For example, for the reader who would wish to follow up on some of the often sweeping generalizations—such as Bako's assertion (p. 41) that the urban classes in Nigeria have been much more inclined to embrace religion than the rural population, or that religion has been manipulated by the ruling classes (p. 45)—there is a paucity of references. Some of the language used could be clearer: what, for

example, is meant by the "anarchical practices" of traditional chiefs (p. 15)?

Another example of inconsistencies which could have been corrected in the editing process is found in chapter 6. While Koffi provides a useful chronology of politically linked violence in Togo, there are striking contradictions in the text. In the opening paragraph the reader is told that Lomé *is* (my italics) a harmonious city (but is informed in the same sentence that the state is responsible for urban violence), a fact that is explained by a somewhat idealized description of Ewe society, which constitutes the dominant ethnic grouping. However, the latter part of the article details a history of violence post-1960 including torture, massacres by soldiers and the throwing of journalists out of windows (p. 60).

These criticisms aside, there is much of relevance in this volume, including Bako's overview of religious conflict in urban areas of Nigeria and Shaw's discussion of the pre-1994 elections conflict on South Africa's East Rand. Given the dearth of comparative material on gang activities in African urban areas, Omitoogun's qualitative study of the "Area Boys" gangs of Lagos is of particular interest, and could provide a useful basis for a comparative study of similar gangs in the streets of Cape Town or Chicago. Both Omitoogun and Adewumi—who provides an overview of the close link between violence and macroeconomic policy in Nigeria—draw attention to the role of the economy in eruptions of violence.

Important as economic factors are in any analysis of violence, causes of violence are far more complex. As Margurat correctly notes (p. 88) in his discussion of perspectives on violence, "The analysis of violence should be carried out within the context of each society: its peculiar conception, its cleavages and its conflicts, and its specific norms and history". There is an unfortunate tendency in some of these papers to focus rather too narrowly on the economic factors, and to shy away from a critical examination of the crucial political variables at work in the conflict described. It may, of course, be that discretion is the better part of valour in academics from countries

lacking democratic governments. However, even Shaw's paper on the East Rand violence tends to skirt around the whole issue of state involvement, and reinforce misperceptions that the carnage on the Reef, as elsewhere in the country, was merely an extension of "black-on-black" conflict (as in his use of the term "internecine" on p. 72) and that economic growth in itself would bring peace.

In line with Margurat's reminder about context, one further caveat is in order: valuable as studies of urban areas are, great care must be taken not to isolate them analytically from rural areas. There is a wealth of social science research in Africa that has shown the inextricable links between rural and urban, as manifest, for example, in patterns of oscillating migration and social networks, which have to be taken into account in understanding the dynamics of both urban and rural areas, and formulating appropriate development policies for the country as a whole. The omission of this broader context has limited the insight that might otherwise have been gained into the nature of some of the violence described; for example, in South Africa's East Rand, the role of hostel dwellers can only be fully understood when linked to the imperative of maintaining their ties with rural areas.

Finally, the importance of context is not limited to that of the country in which the research takes place. The drug problems encountered on the streets of Lagos or Lomé are similar to those experienced in other cities of the world, including those of South Africa (and, increasingly, the rural areas of the country), and are doubtless linked to global problems of drug trafficking and organized crime. It is to be hoped that the fruitful inter-disciplinary and inter-continental debate reflected in the publication under review will continue, and will engender some lively exchanges about such global violence-linked phenomena and their impact on Africa in its quest for peace and democracy.

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