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African war crimes

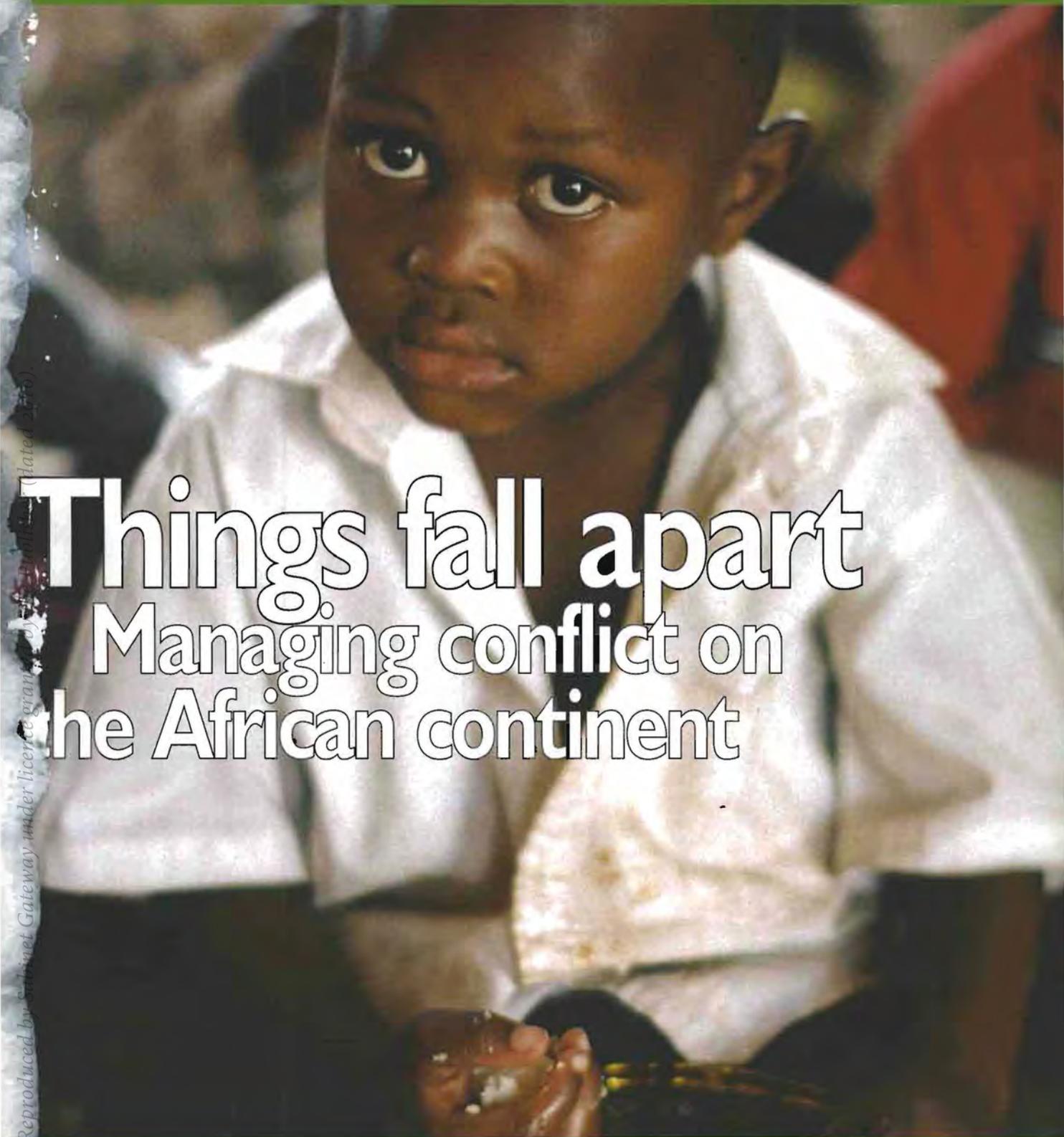
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# Africa Insight

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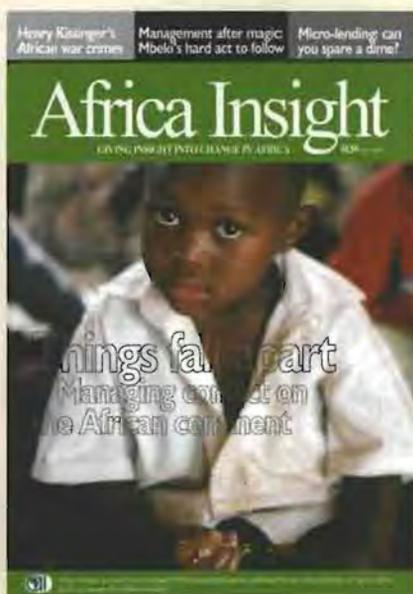
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## Things fall apart

### Managing conflict on the African continent



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# Africa Insight

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**Editor** Elizabeth le Roux  
**Cartographer** Elize van As

**Executive Director** Dr Eddy Maloka

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**Design and layout** Brainchild Communications  
+27 82 457 4337 peter@brain-child.co.za

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# Confronting the 21st Century

By Elizabeth le Roux

July 2002 will be remembered as a significant date in African history, as it marks the transition from an ageing and increasingly decrepit Organisation of African Unity to the much heralded and much needed African Union. African leaders have shown remarkable political will and a vision for the future in creating this Union.

The AU's much wider mandate than the OAU speaks of working together to promote sustainable development (a key concern at the time of the World Summit on Sustainable Development), achieving a workable partnership with the countries of the north, and promoting good governance in an African context. The body also has a responsibility for the resolution and management of conflicts on the continent.

Indeed, some have argued that the true test of the African Union will be to see how it handles dissent and conflict among its member states. Observers are keen to see whether errant states will be punished – as per the principle of “peer review” and the red card system – or whether they will continue to function much as they have since the time of independence, for better or worse. An early indication that the continental body intends to take a hard line against undemocratic regimes could be seen in its refusal to allow Madagascar's disputed president, Marc Ravalomanana, to attend the inaugural summit in Durban. However, at the same time, leaders from far less democratic states, such as Libya, were permitted to attend. This sends a confused signal to the peoples of the continent, many of whom hardly understand the need for a new continental organisation at all. It will be imperative for the

AU to find a way to bring the different forms of governance on the continent together if Africa is to confront the 21st century on its own terms.

Apart from this key challenge, the African Union will also have to deal with wide disparities in economic growth on the continent. According to the latest Economic Report on Africa from UNECA, African economies grew faster than expected last year, spurred on by better macro-economic management, good agricultural production and an end to conflicts in several countries. This is good news – African countries averaged 4.3% economic growth in 2001, which is an increase from 3.5% the previous year. However, the report cautions that the performance is still insufficient to meet strategic targets in the fight against poverty.

Looking forward, the report highlights the importance of credible mechanisms to reduce the risk of policy reversals and implementation failures, as a key to fostering economic well-being in African countries. In this regard, the setting up of the African Union and the acceptance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) are obviously of crucial importance. It is heartening to note the general support for the AU and NEPAD in recent months, especially from significant partners such as the G8. “Ultimately, though, Africa's future depends on how it addresses economic and political governance, resolves civil conflicts, and responds to the need for deeper economic and social reforms,” the report says. It is the African Union that will take the continent forward in all these aspects, and that will strive to claim the 21st century as Africa's own. ■

## Is there an easy explanation for the Continent's "Resource Wars"?

By WJ Breytenbach

# Rulers, Rebels and Mercantilists

The end of the Cold War in 1989 created the expectation that the end of East-West rivalries, the redemocratisation of many African states and the introduction of economic structural adjustment policies would serve to make the post-1989 conditions on the continent more stable, more affluent and more democratic. However, when the new millennium dawned Africa's stability was seriously compromised as there were more conflicts and wars than in 1989 when the Cold War came to an end. The end of the Cold War therefore did not enhance stability and conflict reduction in Africa.

Africa's conflict states are located in two areas: the first an arch from Eritrea on the Red Sea, through Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to Congo Brazzaville and Angola; and the other in West Africa. In West Africa, Sierra Leone became embroiled in a civil war that lasted for a decade, until intervention by United Nations peacekeepers led to the return of peace at the end of 2001. In addition, there is secessionism in the Casamance region of Senegal (driven by militants in Guinea-Bissau) that threatens the stability and the endurance of Senegalese democracy, at a time when religious and sectarian conflicts in a redemocratised Nigeria also threaten to split Nigeria's territorial integrity apart, let alone to consolidate its fragile democracy.

This article attempts to seek explanations for these contemporary wars. Analyses of these wars reveal recurring characteristics. William Reno has identified three such characteristics: they happen in weak states, non-state actors such as rebels are prominent, and the privatisation of interstate relations is relevant.<sup>1</sup> We conceptualise this as a triangle of interrelated forces with three types of role-players: weak-state rulers, rebels and mercantilists who capitalise on the profits of scarce resources. This triangular mindmap can assist in understanding Susan Strange's question: who benefits?<sup>2</sup> Unless proffered solutions also address this question, all peace plans may remain insufficient. However, this paper is not about solutions, but about a better understanding of the problem.

One of the major problems is to assess whether these conflicts of the 1990s were resource wars, as is often alleged (for example, over diamonds and oil) and whether other factors are relevant too. The question is really whether the economic explanations are sufficient.

In dealing with "spoils politics", as it is known, Chris Allen highlights the issues of warfare, violence and state collapse in Africa when he summarises five lines of explanations: the "new barbarism" accounts associated with Robert Kaplan; the "economics of war" theories of Jean and Rufin, Keen and Reno; approaches rooted in the nature of African political systems associated with the thinking of Chabal and Daloz; the "globalisation" approaches of Mary Kaldor and Duffield; and finally, the approaches using social and cultural factors as explanations associated with the thinking of Richards, Ellis and Ferme.<sup>3</sup> Such an overview suggests that economic explanations may indeed be necessary but not sufficient.

As the focus of this paper is on finding explanations for these conflicts, the methodology will be to compare these countries economically and politically – taking note of relevant cultural and global issues, so as to establish common characteristics. That may elucidate the question.

In his paper, *The role of war economies in the understanding of contemporary conflicts*, Sagaren Naidoo concludes that contemporary conflicts can be better understood given the dynamics of war economies (quoting Paul Collier's study for the World Bank in 2000), but he also refers to both the political and global dimensions as well.<sup>4</sup> On the political issues, Naidoo states that the new armed conflicts are predominantly intra-state and that they are sustained by both political elites and rebel movements without explaining exactly why. This article will focus on the interplay between economics and politics in weak, but resource-rich conflict states. With regard to the global context, Naidoo makes the point that the belligerents, and often the elites as well, have now turned to external support and trade networks. But he also makes another point related to globalisation and that

## RESOURCE WARS

is that the small arms industry has become more vibrant since the fall of the Soviet Union because there is a massive surplus of arms today. African wars have become obvious arms markets, and for rulers and rebels alike who can afford them.

But are these wars driven solely by the interrelationship between rulers, rebels and mercantilists, or do these variables also depend on other factors? This is an important question in light of the fact that not all wars are resource wars – there are also non-economic causes of African wars (religious and identity conflicts come to mind); while not all foreign mining and minerals companies are involved in conflict-generating activities (for example, in Botswana, Namibia, Ghana, or South Africa); and not all rebels, either warlords (who plunder) or insurgents (who want to seize power), are necessarily the main causes of the conflicts, but rather the rulers in undemocratic states who may rely on patronage for wealth and power.

This paper does not revisit the views of Allen or Naidoo, or indeed the World Bank. Instead, it tries to bring fresh insights into the question of why some states have turned out to be more risky than others. This is also not about assessing why peace agreements such as the Lusaka Ceasefire of the war in the DRC failed for so long. This is rather about why conflicts endure in special circumstances. On the basis of that, conclusions will be made.

### Poverty and Uneven Access to Resources

The wars in Angola (over resources such as oil and diamonds), the DRC (diamonds, gold and other minerals such as columbite-tantalite, as well as the land rights of the Banyamulenge in Kivu), Sierra Leone (diamonds) and Sudan (oil) are obviously resource wars. However, in Sudan, the recent oil wars were preceded by age-old religious differences between Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>5</sup>

In its recent report, *The Scorched Earth*, Christian Aid tells of companies from China, Malaysia, Canada, Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, France and Britain who have interests in oil exploration in Sudan.<sup>6</sup> The Sudanese government has gained from these revenues since 1999. Such revenue has led to expensive arms acquisitions which the state forces are using in their war with the Southern rebels – in whose territory oil has been discovered. In this way, a religious war has become a resource war as well.<sup>7</sup>

The quest for resources is also at the centre of conflicts in Congo Brazzaville (oil), Senegal and Guinea Bissau (food and rice), and in Somalia (food aid).<sup>8</sup> What these states have in common is that per capita incomes are low, in some countries less than one dollar per day. The common characteristic is therefore widespread poverty, and uneven access to wealth-creating resources. William Thom and KY Amoako have noted that poverty is at the root of many African conflicts.<sup>9</sup> This may explain why the majority of contemporary wars are more internal than international and why resource wars have become a feature of many poor states. It will be indicated that a particularly vulnerable poor state is the undemocratic regime, perhaps because of the pervasive nature of either exclusion or of patronage, or both, in such countries.

**Table 1: Population and Per Capita Incomes and Human Development Rankings during the 1990s**

State	Population (Millions) 2001	Per Capita Income (US \$)			HDI Ranking		
		1989	1998	2000	1994	2000	2001
Angola	12.9	620	340	220	155	160	146
Burundi	6.1	220	140	120	152	170	160
Congo Brazzaville	2.8	930	690	670	140	139	126
DRC	52	260	110	110	123	152	142
Eritrea	4.1	—	200	200	—	159	148
Ethiopia	64.1	120	100	100	161	171	158
Guinea-Bissau	1.2	180	250	160	164	169	156
Nigeria	123.3	250	300	310	139	151	136
Rwanda	8.3	310	230	250	153	164	152
Senegal	9.5	650	530	510	143	155	145
Sierra Leone	5.2	200	140	130	170	174	162
Somalia	10	170	120	—	165	166	—
Sudan	29.5	420	390	330	151	143	138
Uganda	23.3	250	320	320	154	158	141
Average	24.5	352	275	263	140	159	147

**Note:** HDI is calculated by the United Nations Development Programme, based on three criteria: life expectancy, adult literacy and adjusted real income (i.e. purchasing power).

**Source:** PW Esterhuysen, *Africa at a Glance*, Pretoria: Africa Institute, 1992, 1995/96, 2001/02; UNDP, *Human Development Report*, New York: Oxford University Press; 2000, 2001; World Bank, *World Development Report 1999/2000*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Moreover, Phil Williams and Doug Brooks make the telling point that formal economies in poor states offer limited opportunities for wealth-making, therefore shifts occur away from the legal and formal to the illicit and informal sectors, where prospects for money-making are much better.<sup>10</sup> Table 1, which describes per capita incomes and human development, indicates that the 14 states primarily involved in the twelve conflicts under discussion (excluding the involvement of external parties) have at least two significant economic conditions in common: (a) they are poor nations with declining per capita incomes; and (b) they are also low-ranking in terms of HDI. All, with the exception of Congo Brazzaville (which is ranked medium), are in fact ranked as low HDI countries. Most of the countries have moved down the HDI ratings over the years, with some fluctuations. The HDI therefore reveals not only poverty, but stagnation as well. And there is evidence that societal conflicts are also fanned by an uneven distribution of incomes.<sup>11</sup>

The table also suggests that, while states with small or large populations are equally prone to poverty, those countries with a large population (e.g. DRC, Ethiopia and Nigeria) are more likely to suffer from low per capita incomes. The average per capita income of these countries of US \$352 in 1989 dropped to an average of only US \$275 in 1998 – well below the cut-off line of one dollar per day. In that year, the range was between \$100 for Ethiopia, \$110 for the DRC and \$120 for Somalia at the lower end, and \$390 for Sudan, \$530 for Senegal and \$690 for Congo Brazzaville at the higher end of the spectrum. The general conclusion is therefore that conditions are deteriorating.

An important variation of the “war of economics” theme, is the discourse about food aid and water. Solomon and Turton’s publication makes an important contribution to the debate about water wars and ask the question as to whether this is in fact an enduring myth or an impending reality. In this publication, Anthony Turton and Peter Ashton conclude that “water wars” are

**BALLOT BOX BLUES** *There is an explicit link between conflict, poverty and the absence of democracy in Africa.*

unlikely to ever occur in Southern Africa.<sup>12</sup> Yet the competition for control over a scarce and unequally distributed commodity such as water is a potentially explosive issue in Africa. In the past there has been tension between Egypt and Sudan and between Sudan and Ethiopia over the waters of the Nile. There has also always been low-intensity conflict between the pastoral and agricultural rural communities at the northern fringes of the West African tropical forests. In the Lake Chad area this conflict might on occasion have turned ugly, but sensibilities prevailed and four states now have legal access to the fresh water and fisheries of this lake.<sup>13</sup> In the East African Rift Valley, similar tensions over access to and the use of fresh water prevail.

In Southern Africa, the desire to have access to the Zambezi River was a major motivation for imperial Germany to create the Caprivi Strip, as an extension of north-eastern Namibia, wedging in between Angola and Zambia in the north, and Botswana in the south. At the eastern point, the Chobe River that runs mainly through Botswana flows into the Zambezi River. Recently, there was almost a military confrontation between two of Southern Africa's multi-party democracies – Botswana and Namibia – over the control over an island (important for cattle grazing) situated in the Chobe River on this boundary. An international judgement prevented the tensions from escalating further.

What are the reasons for the absence of water wars, especially in light of the fact that water is one of the greatest contributors to human security? Is it because water is not a high value commodity, or is Kadar Asmal (former South African Minister of Water Affairs) correct when he, as chair of the World Commission on Dams, said that water is a catalyst for peace, and will not be the cause of wars?<sup>14</sup> The answers, so far, are inconclusive.

The debate about food aid as an unequally distributed, scarce and politically-elevant instrument of power and patronage is

clearer. The famine and hunger in Africa's drought-ridden areas such as in Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia have caused much hardship and food insecurity, but to date not a "food war" anywhere in Africa. Quite often there is conflict, but that is generally over the distribution of charity-supplied food aid, such as in Somalia where warlords recruit armies on a clan basis and then become the "food lords" when food is stolen and distributed for profits or for patronage.<sup>15</sup>

The above analysis of current conflicts suggest that the struggle for access to and control over scarce resources is a necessary explanation for these conflicts, but it is not sufficient. Another important dimension is the polarisation that takes place. This polarisation means that war is related to wealth accumulation in poor countries, hence the apt description of these conditions as "spoils politics". Politically, this translates into a contest for power and wealth between rulers and rebels (often the included and the excluded), with mercantilists siding with either or both.

#### **Rulers and Rebels in Weak Non-Democratic States**

It is revealing that in only three of the 14 states in the table are there multi-party systems with functioning parliaments, namely Nigeria, Ethiopia and Senegal. The rest are non-democracies – that is, there is an absence of participatory and freely elected institutions, which is a very significant correlation. This could lead to the conclusion that contested states are mainly poor but also non-democratically contested states. This indicates a strong link between conflict, poverty and the absence of democracy.<sup>16</sup> Williams and Brooks make the explicit link.<sup>17</sup>

One particular feature of this absence of democracy is the exclusion of citizens from meaningful public participation, let alone free parliamentary contestation. For instance, René Lemarchand argues that the epicentre of the crisis in the Great



AFRICA'S CONFLICT STATES



ELIZE VAN AS/AISA

Lakes region is Rwanda, and that the basis of that is the politics of exclusion relating to the Tutsi/Hutu relationships in that part of the world.<sup>18</sup> Allen also reminds us that such states (read: political elites) often initiate violence – they either recruit militia, or create monopolies in the world of commodity extraction, or grant exclusive export contracts, or set up their own national defence forces as military-industrial enterprises, or even invite foreign armies to assist them fighting their own rebels at home.<sup>19</sup> Examples of militia in the region include the Interahamwe and Mai-Mai who are recruited from former armed forces such as Hutu-based groups fighting the Tutsi-based regimes in Rwanda

and Burundi. They became instrumental in helping former DRC president Laurent Kabila in his war against the Rwandan-Ugandan coalition.<sup>20</sup> Examples of monopolies linked to ruling elites are Sonangol (the Angolan oil corporation) and Ascorp (the Angolan diamond selling corporation). These corporations channel huge amounts of money to MPLA elites.<sup>21</sup> In the case of the DRC, an Israeli firm was contracted by the government to export its diamonds to world markets during 2000–2001.<sup>22</sup>

Zimbabwe, in turn, provides an example of the National Defence Force venturing into mining: it has joined forces with the Minerals and Mining Corporation and the Mining

Development Corporation in Zimbabwe (this enterprise is known by the acronym of Osleg – Operation Sovereign Legitimacy) together with DRC-based mining companies in the extraction of minerals in the DRC on the invitation of former President Kabila. This joint DRC/Zimbabwean company is, according to Francois Misser, mining Kimberlite diamonds in the Mbuji-Mayi region of the DRC.<sup>23</sup>

In this way, the Zimbabwean army is simultaneously acting like a multinational corporation undertaking foreign investment, and like a private military company in the garrison town of Mbandaka, offering protection in exchange for rewards. Kabila not only invited the Zimbabwean Defence Force to extract minerals in the DRC, but also Angola to exploit offshore oil and Namibia to operate the diamond mine at Tsikapa. This Namibian enterprise was known as “August 26th”, after the date when the SWAPO insurgency began in the late 1960s. However, this operation was never very large, and once the United Nations deployed peacekeepers in the territory of the DRC, the Namibian forces withdrew.<sup>24</sup>

The key concept in the above regard is patronage.<sup>25</sup> It flourishes in a system where accountability is compromised. This is easier to accomplish in non-democracies. It is therefore no coincidence that over 85% of present-day conflicts in Africa take place in poor, weak, and non-democratic states; to be sure, most could even be said to be collapsed states.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, these conflicts are largely civil wars which are characterised by internal rebellion against the rulers. The reasons are as much political as they are economic. Generally, there are two types of rebels in Africa’s “resource wars”: insurgents who fight for political control, and warlords.

An example of the former is Unita in Angola. As to the latter, John Mackinley has remarked that warlords are not interested in capturing the state.<sup>27</sup> They act only when the state has become weak, and they can then continue without interference from the state.

They rely less on military efficiency than on greed and scavenging. Good examples include Charles Taylor in Liberia before he became president in 1997, “General” Farah Aideed in Somalia, and Foday Sankoh, former leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone. One common feature of insurgents and warlords alike is that although not all of them want to capture the state, they all compete for access to the resources of the state.<sup>28</sup> In this quest, mercantilist partners are useful.

### Mercantilists in African Conflicts

The analyses above reveal that the end of the Cold War indeed brought to an end the East-West rivalry in Africa and redemocratised African politics, but because of liberalisation and the outsourcing of state functions, state security has often been externalised, thus impairing the workings of state security and the criminal justice system.<sup>29</sup>

The 1998 World Investment Report found that the major reason for foreign companies to invest directly in Africa is “resource-seeking”.<sup>30</sup> This report mentions the significance of oil and gas reserves, diamonds and gold, while other important reserves include platinum, palladium, cobalt, copper, chrome, titanium and dioxide.<sup>31</sup> But investors hardly make a distinction

between democracies and non-democracies. At a time, for example, when neither Angola nor Nigeria were democracies, they were leading recipients of foreign investments due to their oil reserves.

A newly discovered metal in Africa is columbite-tantalum, which is used in high-technology and cellular telephone manufacturing. Its value has increased many hundreds of times, while it has co-incidentally been found in some of Africa’s poorest countries such as the DRC, Burundi and Rwanda.<sup>32</sup> The sites in the DRC are mainly in Kivu, where rebels and their Rwandan backers have been mining coltan, as it is known, since 1999.<sup>33</sup> A UN Expert Panel Report published in April 2001 referred to this as the illegal exploitation of the Congo’s resources, and blamed Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.<sup>34</sup> It names five key minerals in this conflict: coltan, diamonds, gold, cobalt and copper. Rebels and mercantilists are the major beneficiaries in this regard.

Unlike the case in Sudan where foreign companies exploit the oil reserves, the war in the DRC is not sustained by external commercial enterprises physically present in the country. Here, it is local exploitation (through Sonangol and Ascorp) that feeds into lucrative foreign trading networks, such as the Israeli firm, International Diamond Industries. This raises the issue of one particular form of commercial intervention in Africa: the private military company (PMC). This is an unfinished debate as its causes may either be the weak state that outsources security functions, or a new kind of mercantilism spawned by globalisation, in the wake of the end of the Cold War.

The end of the Cold War after 1989 brought with it an emphasis on arms control and disarmament in the West and the

former East Bloc, leading to force reductions and demobilisation.<sup>35</sup> Suddenly, former military professionals were available for employment in the private sectors of developed countries, quite often as security advisors and as private military companies where foreign direct investors from the West sometimes needed protection for their investments against warlords or militias fighting for or against the rebels.<sup>36</sup>

US and British companies dominate this market, although South African companies are also active. This has led to a trend of collusion between security companies, multinational corporations

involved in mainly mineral exploitation and the ruling state élites, whose interests might be served by outsourcing security functions.<sup>37</sup>

One unintended consequence of the collusion of such interests is the rather bizarre example of foreign commercial interests fighting one another in the same country, as when the RUF rebels and dissident soldiers in Sierra Leone were supported by a Ukrainian military company and the government forces and their traditional allies, the Kamajors, were supported by another company, first Executive Outcomes (a South African private military company), then by British Sandline. This complex web became the combatants in this country, but they were also foreign mercantilists.

Doug Brooks makes a useful distinction between non-lethal service providers, private security companies and private military companies (PMCs).<sup>38</sup> For us the question is what role they play in Africa’s resource wars: are they stabilising or destabilising the states where they do business?

**The Zimbabwean army is simultaneously acting like a multinational corporation undertaking foreign investment, and like a private military company offering protection in exchange for rewards.**

Those who take a positive view include Doug Brooks. He argues that by using private armies the slaughter of Africans can be ended, on the basis that African militaries do not have the capability to end African wars. Peter Cullen, too, argues that PMCs are different from mercenaries and that their major value is efficiency while the major problem is accountability.<sup>39</sup> If they are accountable to home state as well as host state laws and regulations, then PMCs are no different from any other company doing business in foreign lands. Herb Howe echoes the same sentiments.<sup>40</sup> Although William Thom does not defend PMCs, he makes the point that by Western standards, today's African armies are lightly armed, poorly equipped and badly trained, and thus dependent on external aid where outsourcing and privatisation make sense, as these trends tend to improve efficiency in weak states.<sup>41</sup>

However, other authors such as Comfort Ero, Xavier Renou, Bernedette Muthien and Ian Taylor, and Emmanuel Aning are more critical.<sup>42</sup> They argue that PMCs lack transparency, may be legal only in a vague sense, and are usually operating in rogue states. Moreover, because they work for money and not morality, their activities may prolong rather than end resource wars. Examples cited include Angola and Sierra Leone, where wars actually resumed after PMCs withdrew, challenging the view that PMCs really have the capacity to end wars in Africa.<sup>43</sup> However, Thirion notes that the South African PMC Executive Outcome altered the course of war in Sierra Leone and forced the rebels to the negotiating table, and suggests that to blame PMCs for the lack of lasting peace in Sierra Leone and Angola, is to underestimate the complexities there.<sup>44</sup>

The jury is still out on these matters. A tentative conclusion is that proper regulation is required, not only in the host state, but also in the home state, and by the United Nations and regional security organisations. In this, the UN should take the lead in formulating guidelines for the universal regulation of PMCs and for regional organisations to follow. The Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel landmines may be a useful example to follow. Another example of home state accountability is the South African Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act of 1998 that defines and bans mercenary activity, but creates legal space for security and military service providers to do precisely that but only after authorisation by the National Conventional Arms Control Committee.<sup>45</sup>

Without any regulation, this problem may become a "free for all" with uncontrollable mercenaries plundering Africa. If there is an "FDI regime" today (within the rules of the World Bank), there might just as well be a "PMC regime" (within the rules of the UN Security Council) tomorrow. The point is that anything that regulates

**SPOILS POLITICS** *Violence and reward become mutually rewarding - but there's nothing in it for the poor*



illicit trade, such as the attempted diamond certification schemes and the UN's proposed embargo on diamonds from rebel-controlled areas in Sierra Leone, and that regulates "mercenaries" and the spoils attached to it, is better than nothing.

## Conclusion

Economics, politics and globalisation may have conspired to create the deadly triangle of diamond and other resource wars in Africa. But more specifically, Chris Allen finds there is a thread that runs through all these threats to security and state survival in Africa: spoils politics.<sup>46</sup> He places this in the context of violence associated with the process of state collapse.

For him, this has degenerated into "spoils politics" where violence and reward become mutually reinforcing. It is almost inevitable that this would be the case in poor societies where valuable resources are scarce and where the weak state hardly functions, let alone where democracy thrives. To blame globali-

sation for all ills in Africa as is fashionable in some circles is therefore not necessarily fair or informed.

This is a multi-faceted problem underlined by the fact that there are many answers to the question of "who benefits". It is in this context that recent initiatives that set out to regulate the trade in illicit diamonds are steps in the right direction. But unless such processes involve all the profit-makers, including rulers, rebels and mercenaries, they will remain insufficient. This is an important dimension that should not be forgotten. It is the combination of poverty and scarce resources that brought them all together. Moreover, democracies cannot work where warlords are rampant. This is why "solutions", not based on a better understanding of the nature of Africa's conflicts, will not produce peace. ■

Prof WJ Breytenbach is in the Department of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch. He is also a Research Associate of the Africa Institute of South Africa.

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# Ethnic Conflict Management in Nigeria

**Real challenges remain if Nigeria's fractious ethnic groupings are to be managed successfully.**  
By Sally Matthews and Hussein Solomon

From Chiapas to Chechnya, from India to Indonesia and from Algeria and Angola to Afghanistan, the world is witnessing a return to the “cult of origins” where difference often means destruction, destitution, despair and death. This was most graphically illustrated in the killing fields of Rwanda in 1994 where almost one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. Ironically, the Rwandan genocide took place at a time when South Africans were freeing themselves from the last vestiges of apartheid and where differences were exalted in the notion of a “rainbow nation”. This irony, however, underscores an underlying truism: that the politics of identity can be both benign and malign. It is natural for people to associate with each other. One way in which people associate is through ethnic groups. These groups provide people with a sense of belonging and identity and can thus play a vital role in modern society where many people feel lonely and alienated. However, ethnic groups can be a source of division and strong ethnic identities have frequently led to conflict and bloodshed. Nigerian society has seen many upheavals over the past century and ethnic identification and ethnic conflict have been causes as well as outcomes of much of the uncertainty and instability in Nigeria.

## Examining Ethnicity

The term ‘ethnic group’ is usually used to describe a group of people who have some idea of being united as a result of certain shared characteristics. Thomson describes an ethnic group as “a community of people who have the conviction that they have a common identity and common fate based on issues of origin, kinship ties, traditions, cultural uniqueness, a shared history and possibly a shared language”.<sup>1</sup> He notes that the focus of the concept is on sentiments rather than on geography. Morris-Hale discusses ethnicity, saying that it encompasses some combination of race, religion, culture and group identity, while Schrire

says that the essential component of ethnicity is “assumed common descent, real or mythical”.<sup>2</sup> Ethnicity is subjective rather than objective – it is a perceived sense of common origins and interests.<sup>3</sup> It is also, at least to some extent, the choice of the individual involved. Individuals of a similar background may have different ethnic identities and different levels of identification with an ethnic group, and levels of ethnic identification may differ from one historical period to another.

There are a number of different theories regarding ethnicity. Each of these theories views the nature of ethnicity differently and has different approaches to the resolution of ethnic conflict. Three prominent theories are the primordialist, the instrumentalist and the constructivist approach. Primordialism sees ethnicity as a fixed characteristic of individuals and communities.<sup>4</sup> Primordial attachments supposedly arise out of a sense of natural affinity rather than from social interaction.<sup>5</sup> Supporters of primordialism claim that ethnic affiliations and identities are natural and ancient, and that modernisation tends to eliminate such identities. Ethnic identities are thus seen as fixed, and ethnic conflict is viewed as the natural outcome of these identities.<sup>6</sup> However, this approach has been criticised by many and refuted by sociological evidence.<sup>7</sup> Primordialism tends to explain conflict between ethnic groups as ‘natural’ and therefore does not try to address the underlying causes of the conflict as ethnic tensions are taken as normal.<sup>8</sup>

Instrumentalism, in turn, looks at the way in which ethnic identities and affiliations have been manipulated for political and economic gain.<sup>9</sup> Ethnicity is viewed as a tool which is used by certain groups or individuals in a society in order to gain something. The instrumentalist approach does not see ethnic identification and ethnic conflict as different from any other type of political identification or conflict, and therefore ethnic conflict can be resolved in a similar way to other conflicts between com-



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peting groups. Critics of this approach would argue that ethnicity is different from other types of political affiliations because individuals cannot at will decide which ethnic group they belong to as ethnic identifications are embedded and to some degree controlled by the society in which they occur.<sup>10</sup>

Thirdly, constructivists attempt to bridge these and other theories of ethnicity.<sup>11</sup> Ethnicity is seen as a social phenomenon which is not entirely the choice of the individual and is more than a tool to achieve a political or economic goal, but is also not immutable and unchanging. Ethnicity evolves with society. It is a process rather than a condition and should be studied in the specific context in which it developed.<sup>12</sup> Ethnic conflict can therefore only be resolved through an understanding of the specific context in which it occurs. The analysis of ethnic conflict undertaken in this article will follow a constructivist approach.

It is important to note that ethnic identification is not synonymous with ethnic conflict. Rothchild notes that “[m]ost ethnic groups, most of the time, pursue their interests peacefully through established political channels”.<sup>13</sup> In pre-colonial times there are many examples of ethnic groups in Africa which coexisted peacefully, trading and intermarrying with each other.<sup>14</sup> It is thus not ethnic identification itself which is a problem, but the conflict which often, but not inevitably, ensues from such identification.

**Ethnic Conflict in Africa**

The last four decades in Africa have been witness to several civil wars, many of which have an ethnic basis. In just the last decade over two million people have died in such wars.<sup>15</sup> Ethnic conflict is thus an issue that cannot be ignored in Africa. The Western media seems to often explain such conflict as being the result of African “tribalism”.<sup>16</sup> Ethnic conflict is seen as an inherent characteristic of African society implying that no further explanation of such conflict is required. This perception needs to be challenged and a deeper exploration into the nature of ethnic conflict in Africa should be undertaken. Ethnic conflict in Africa has origins which stretch back into the colonial era and even earlier, and is a result of a number of interacting factors.

Several writers have drawn attention to the role played by colonialists in the development and promotion of ethnic identification. Leroy Vail notes how ethnicity in Africa was crafted by European missionaries and intellectuals, by colonial administrative officers and by ordinary people living in colonised areas.<sup>17</sup> Missionaries and anthropologists were involved in grouping various fairly disparate groups together and often assisted in the creation of a common language for groups of people from similar, but distinct, kinship and language groups.

The use of indirect rule by many colonial administrators in order to govern their territories also promoted and rewarded ethnic identification. This system involved the use of chiefs and headmen in the African communities to govern over their territories in exchange for income and patronage.<sup>18</sup> The ordinary people living in colonised areas helped entrench the ethnic identities manipulated by the colonists by adapting to this situation because it was in their interests to do so.<sup>19</sup>

The end of colonialism left African states with a number of manipulated ethnic groups and little idea of nationhood. The

struggle against colonialism involved the identification of a common enemy which united the people of a colonised area.<sup>20</sup> However, the end of colonialism removed this unifying force and ethnic groups began competing with one another. While some African leaders tried to promote national unity and break down ethnic divisions, others manipulated ethnic conflicts for their own political gain. The colonial legacy, as well as modern political actors’ manipulation of this legacy, has contributed to the proliferation of ethnic conflicts across the continent of Africa. The weakness of African states, Africa’s global marginalisation and the poverty that has characterised much of the continent has exacerbated these conflicts by providing a basis for fierce competition for resources and influence.<sup>21</sup>

**The Ethnic Composition of Nigeria**

The boundaries of the state of Nigeria were, like the boundaries of many other African states, drawn up in an arbitrary manner by imperialists. The colonisation of Nigeria by Britain began during the second half of the 19th century and continued until independence in October 1960.<sup>22</sup> The boundaries of Nigeria were consolidated in 1914 with the creation of the Nigerian federation.<sup>23</sup> These boundaries resulted in the modern state of Nigeria being the most populous African state by far and consisting of over 250 ethnic groups.<sup>24</sup>

The colonial administrative division of Nigeria into three regions (North, East and West) led to the development of three dominant ethnic groups out of the diversity of ethnic groups existing in the area at the time.<sup>25</sup> The creation of three regions encouraged the ethnic groups in those regions to organise and unite because the power of the region depended upon it.<sup>26</sup> As a result, some of the many minority groups in Nigeria became consolidated into the three ethnic groups which have dominated politics in post-independence Nigeria. These three are the Hausa-Fulani, which consists of 30% of the population; the Yoruba, which makes up 20% of the population; and the Ibo people who make up 17% of the population. The Hausa-Fulani are a Muslim group of people who live in the North and include a further 29 ethnic divisions. The Yoruba people live in the Western Region and include approximately 12 further ethnic divisions. The Ibo live in the East and consist of about 32 separate ethnic groups. Both the Yorubas and Ibos are predominantly

Christian, although other religions are also practised. There are also a number of minority ethnic groups living in each of the three regions, as well as members of each of the dominant ethnic groups who do not live in the region where their group dominates.<sup>27</sup>

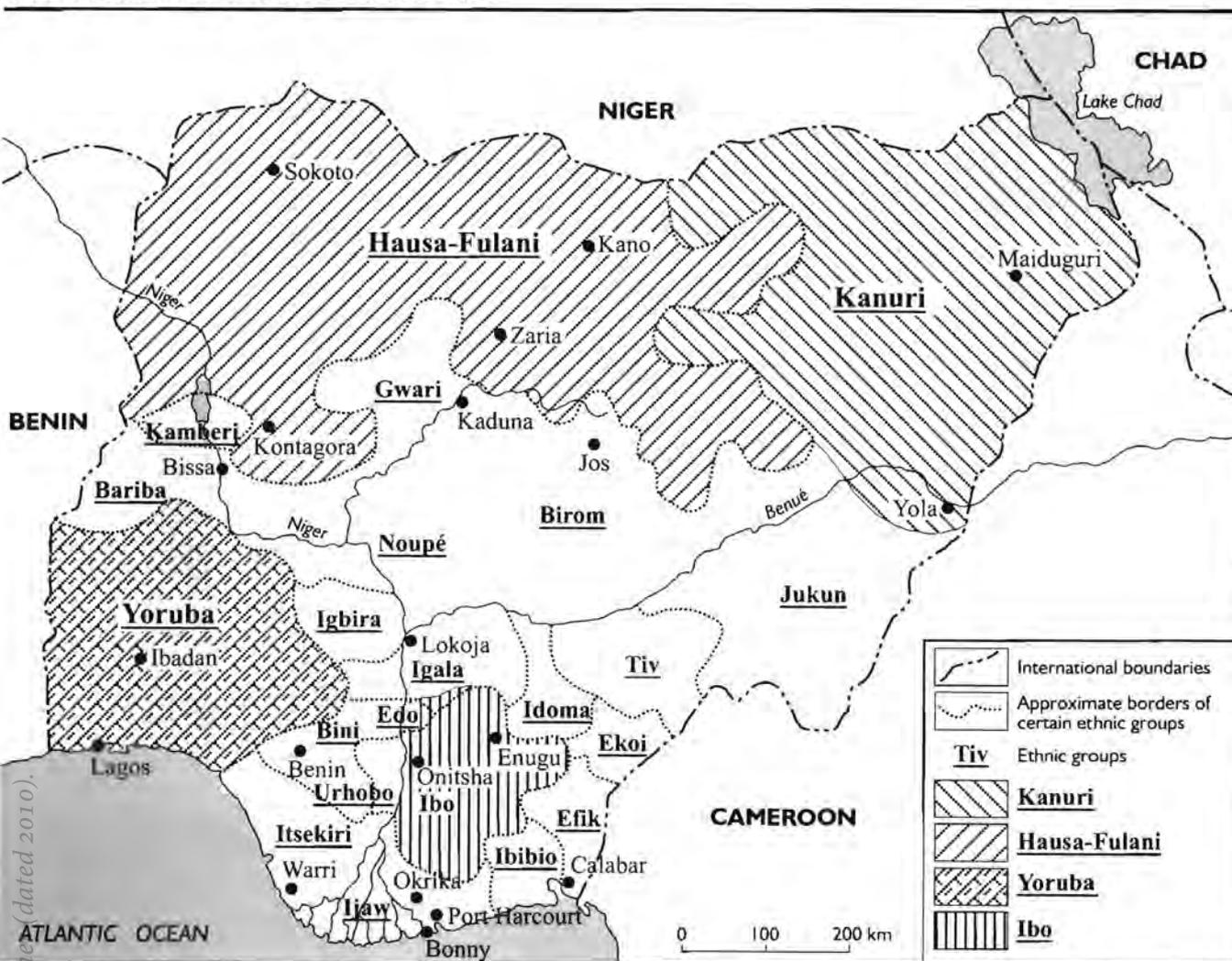
Christian, although other religions are also practised. There are also a number of minority ethnic groups living in each of the three regions, as well as members of each of the dominant ethnic groups who do not live in the region where their group dominates.<sup>27</sup>

**An Overview of Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria**

Nigeria’s multi-ethnic nature makes it especially vulnerable to the outbreak of ethnic conflicts. The history of Nigeria includes many examples of such conflicts and failed attempts to resolve these conflicts. Akinrinade notes that at some point in time every major ethnic group in Nigeria has threatened secession and that some of the worst periods of conflict in Nigeria were a result of ethnicity.<sup>28</sup> Rothchild produces figures to show that over two million people have died in ethnic-related conflict in Nigeria since independence.<sup>29</sup>

**Islamic fundamentalism is playing an increasing role in ethnic-related conflict in Nigeria. Much of the conflict has to do with the introduction of Sharia law in several states in Nigeria.**

### THREE MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS IN NIGERIA



ELIZE VAN ASJAISA

#### Colonialism and its long-term influence

The seeds for ethnic conflict in post-colonial Nigeria were sown by colonial administrative practices. Under colonial rule, Nigeria was divided into three regions, which were not equal in size or in population and were not treated equally. The Northern Region, for instance, was considerably bigger than the Southern Region. Until 1914, the two territories were administered separately, but even after they were amalgamated the British administrators allowed them to develop along different lines.<sup>30</sup> The Muslim emirs in the North were allowed relatively free rein over the region and the North was generally shielded from Western influences. As a result, by independence there was a great disparity in education and development between the North and the South with the people from the South being better educated and more politically developed.<sup>31</sup> This meant that at independence the Northerners felt threatened by the more developed and educated Southerners and the Southerners felt threatened by the more populous Northern Region.<sup>32</sup>

#### Post-colonialism and ethnic conflict

At independence the division of Nigeria into three regions was maintained, with Nigeria structured as a federation.<sup>33</sup> The political parties which took part in the election for Nigeria's first parliament were largely organised along ethnic lines, with each of three dominant ethnic groups being represented by a political party. This meant that ethnic divisions in Nigeria were rein-

forced by both the regional divisions of Nigeria and the party cleavages. Ethnic and regional tensions were rife from the beginning of independence. These conflicts included ethnic-related coups and attempted coups; ethnic tensions as the result of dubious census results in 1963 and 1973; civil war as a result of the attempted secession of the Eastern Region; and several regional and religious conflicts with ethnic characteristics.<sup>34</sup>

#### Religion as an exacerbating factor

Islamic fundamentalism is playing an increasing role in ethnic-related conflict in Nigeria. There were serious incidents of Islam fundamentalist uprisings against the government during the 1980s, and some reports suggest that such conflicts will only get worse.<sup>35</sup> Much of the conflict has to do with the introduction of Sharia law in several states in Nigeria. Riots and protest marches have left hundreds dead and destroyed much property.

The religious conflicts in Nigeria have an ethnic dimension. The Hausa-Fulani ethnic group is predominantly Muslim with Christianity and other religions being dominant among the Ibo and Yoruba. Hausa-Fulani elites have attempted to use Islamic bonds to consolidate political power in the North with Christianity being used as an ideology of counter-mobilisation by various Northern ethnic minorities.<sup>36</sup> This has meant that it is very difficult to distinguish between ethnic and religious conflict in Nigeria as many conflicts have an ethno-religious nature.

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### The military and ethnic conflict

The military has played a very dominant role in Nigeria, with about three quarters of Nigeria's forty years of independence under military rule. Under military rule, conflicts are likely to be suppressed rather than resolved through bargaining and political changes. This results in a situation where minority groups are violently suppressed by military governments and turn to the use of violence themselves in an attempt to pursue their interests. Military governments often worsen ethnic loyalties as illustrated by the numerous acts of ethnic and religious manipulation which occurred under the military governments of Generals Muhammad Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha.<sup>37</sup>

The instability of the various military governments in Nigeria also contributed to ethnic conflict. According to Rothchild and Groth, the displacement of one regime with another frequently worsens intergroup tensions.<sup>38</sup>

Violent changes in government add to insecurity and uncertainty in a country, which makes people more likely to turn to ethnic affiliations in the pursuit of their interests, as there is no legitimate government that can be expected to respond to the needs and demands of the people.

### Theories of Ethnic Conflict Management

Ethnic conflict results in death, disruption and insecurity. Ryan lists a number of negative results of ongoing ethnic conflict, noting that the longer conflict continues the more likely it is to lead to destructive processes which cause even more conflict.<sup>39</sup> Because of the unpleasant outcomes of ethnic conflict, many suggestions have been made as to how to address such conflict. Different theorists have called for conflict elimination, conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict transformation and a variety of other impressive-sounding ways of dealing with such conflict.

Conflict elimination simply means to get rid of conflict. This need not occur through resolving or transforming the conflict, but may simply involve suppressing a conflict. Attempts to eliminate an entire ethnic group through genocide could even be considered a form of conflict elimination. Forcefully suppressing rebellions by ethnic groups is another way of eliminating conflict (at least temporarily) without adequately addressing the problem. This approach to addressing ethnic conflict leads to as many negative outcomes as the conflict itself and is unlikely to be a permanent solution.

The idea of conflict resolution implies that conflict can be solved. Ethnic conflict is thus seen as a temporary state of affairs which can be brought to an end. This perspective has been criticised by recent analysts of ethnic and other conflict. Lake and Rothchild point out that while ethnic conflict can be contained, no final resolution for such conflict can be found.<sup>40</sup> The development of ethnic conflict is a process and so addressing ethnic conflict should also be a process rather than a finite event. Galtung criticises the idea of conflict resolution for privileging Occidental time cosmology by seeing time as linear and thus assuming that conflict has a finite life that can be definitively ended.<sup>41</sup>

The concepts of conflict management and conflict transformation are two recent and fairly similar perspectives on address-

ing conflict. The idea of conflict resolution is rejected and instead the response to conflict is seen as an ongoing process – conflict must be continually managed or gradually transformed. According to Lake and Rothchild, conflict management is “a continuing process with no end point or final resolution”.<sup>42</sup> They add that conflict management is an imperfect process and that it is not possible to eliminate all threats of future ethnic conflict in a multi-ethnic society. Rupesinghe describes conflict transformation as a “flexible, yet comprehensive process, by which ultimately a culture of negotiation and accommodation displaces a culture of violence”.<sup>43</sup> Both concepts suggest that the response to ethnic conflict needs to be long-term, but they differ in that conflict transformation does allow for the possibility of a conflict-free future, whereas conflict management is more cynical about the possibility of eliminating conflict.

### Practical Ways to Manage Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria

#### Procedures for addressing specific ethnic conflicts

The management of ethnic conflict resolves skillful negotiating and a careful assessment of each group's demands and fears. The management of specific incidences of ethnic conflict usually involves a mediator or negotiator who should be skilled in promoting co-operation. Such mediators could be internal mediators or from the international arena. Individuals and groups playing this role need to pay attention to the variety of practical methods of managing conflict between ethnic groups that have been suggested by experts in the field.

Mediation involves providing positive incentives and threats of punishment.<sup>44</sup> Information is made available to both sides and changes in their strategies are facilitated. Rewards are given for compliance and opportunities to save face are provided. Diplomatic pressure may be exerted and economic sanctions or military intervention can be threatened to encourage co-operation between conflicting groups.

The Harvard Negotiation Project produced four basic practical principles that should guide negotiation.<sup>45</sup> Firstly, people should be separated from the problem: negotiators need to encourage groups to see their opponents' point of

view and to see their opponents as people with needs. Secondly, negotiators ought to focus on interests rather than positions as this facilitates the identification of shared or compatible interests. Thirdly, options for mutual gain should be invented by negotiators; and finally negotiators should insist on objective criteria.

Negotiation techniques are valuable in the confrontation of specific conflicts and can lead to an end or reduction in violent conflict. Such techniques should be taken into account when resolving the incidences of ethnic conflict that regularly break out in Nigeria. However, skillful negotiation alone is inadequate for the successful management of ethnic conflict in Nigeria for two reasons. Firstly, because each ethnic conflict occurs in a specific context, general negotiation skills need to be contextualised before they can successfully be applied.<sup>46</sup> Secondly, ethnic conflict must be seen as a result of the interaction of several broad factors. Certain general political and economic situations in a state can be conducive to the proliferation of ethnic conflict. While negotiation skills may result in the termination or abatement of a particular conflict, ethnic conflict will be inevitable if

Violent changes in government add to insecurity and uncertainty in a country, which makes people more likely to turn to ethnic affiliations in the pursuit of their interests



**CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM?** *Unlike many past leaders, Obasanjo's support does not come mainly from his own ethnic group.*

can create incentives for ethnic co-operation through encouraging people to see themselves as belonging to a greater and more important whole, rather than being one group competing for resources and power in a particular territory.

#### Autonomy arrangements

Awarding an ethnic group increased autonomy is a less threatening alternative to secession.<sup>52</sup> Where ethnic divisions coincide with regional divisions, as in Nigeria, giving regions increased autonomy is a possible way of resolving conflict. This can increase the confidence of the ethnic groups concerned and allow them to feel less threatened by other ethnic groups. It also appeases demands for secession. Federalism is a way to award regional autonomy, which has been used in Nigeria to address ethnic conflict. It involves the devolution of power by the centre to regional units and a formal distinction between the powers of the central government and the powers of the federal units.<sup>53</sup> Various forms of federalism have been adopted in Nigeria while other forms have been suggested as possible solutions to ethnic conflict in this ethnically-divided land.

At independence in 1960 Nigeria adopted a federal character. The three regions established under British rule were maintained.<sup>54</sup> Over the years a number of other regions have been established, many of them in response to the demands of ethnic groups. The division of Nigeria into an increasing number of states has had some success in reducing ethnic conflict but has also been criticised.

In 1963, a Mid-West Region was carved out of the Western Region in an attempt to resolve inter-party and inter-ethnic rivalry.<sup>55</sup> The creation of this region held a slight advantage for the minority ethnic groups because they had previously felt victimised by the Yoruba-dominated government of the Western Region.<sup>56</sup> Under the rule of General Gowon, the number of states was increased from four to twelve in 1967 and then to 19 in 1976.<sup>57</sup> The 1967 subdivision was a result of demands for increased regional power and the realisation that the country was on the brink of disintegration. The 1976 subdivision of Nigeria was in response to memoranda demanding the creation of states as part of a transition to civilian rule. The creation of more states in 1967 and 1976 was beneficial to minority groups in Nigeria and gave them increased federal power.<sup>58</sup>

In 1989, Babangida increased the number of local government areas dramatically and also added two new states. In 1991 the number of states in the federation of Nigeria was increased once again, this time to 30 states. This exercise was partly in response to demands from various ethnic groups, and partly an attempt to increase support for Babangida's regime. Abacha's rule saw the creation of even more states – in 1996, six new states were created bringing the number of states in Nigeria to 36. This followed the submission of almost 100 demands for new states.<sup>59</sup>

Whether or not Nigeria's adoption of federalism was a suitable and successful solution to Nigeria's multi-ethnic nature has been the subject of many debates. There have been various differing perspectives on the success of federalism in Nigeria. Some thinkers express strong support for the use of federalism. Diamond describes the federal system as a "crucial resource" for Nigeria and argues that decentralised power and local autonomy are essential.<sup>60</sup> Akinrinade agrees, stating that the Nigerian experience illustrates the need for "the development and practice of true federalism".<sup>61</sup> He sees the devolution of power and respon-

certain political and economic changes are not made. Several broad issues need to be examined before ethnic conflict can be satisfactorily managed. Some of these and their relevance to Nigeria are discussed below.

#### Addressing questions of statehood and national unity

Many ethnic conflicts centre around demands for secession. This has been true of Nigeria, where a three year civil war was waged as a result of the Eastern Region's attempt to secede.<sup>47</sup> Some ethnic conflicts have been managed (with varying degrees of success) by allowing one of the ethnic groups involved to secede. Examples include the independence won by Lithuanians, Eritreans and Ukrainians.<sup>48</sup> The dissolution of the current state of Nigeria has been seen as a possible solution to ethnic conflict in Nigeria. Herbst suggests that the problems experienced by Nigeria are inevitable given the nature of the state and proposes that Nigeria's boundaries be called into question and alternative arrangements be debated.<sup>49</sup> Welsh draws attention to the general failure of the nation-state idea in sub-Saharan Africa and suggests that radical solutions such as a reassessment of boundaries may be needed.<sup>50</sup>

If Nigerian boundaries are to remain intact, it is imperative that attention be given to issues of national unity as the boundaries of a state which has little national cohesion are always at risk. It is possible to reduce ethnic conflict by promoting a sense of national unity. A sense of belonging to a greater whole is encouraged to counter narrower ethnic identification. An example of this approach is the way that Julius Nyerere used the consolidation of national unity to address ethnic tensions in Tanzania. Currently, Nigeria has low levels of national cohesion which means that the idea of national unity cannot be used to address ethnic conflicts.<sup>51</sup> This situation makes ethnic tensions in Nigeria more difficult to resolve as an overarching national identity cannot be appealed to when managing such conflicts.

The promotion of a national identity in Nigeria could encourage alignments based on interests rather than ethnicity and

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sibilities to federal units as vital and criticises the Nigerian federal system for having a central government with too much power. Rothchild sees federalism as a possible way to make politics in Nigeria less threatening and to encourage co-operation between groups, but notes that federalism as a solution to ethnic conflict is undermined if ethnically exclusivist regional governments refuse to allocate resources equitably and act repressively.<sup>62</sup>

He notes that when carefully crafted, federalism and other systems of decentralising authority can place necessary limitations on central authority and promote confidence among regional leaders. However, federalism can increase conflict and worsen inter-ethnic relations if it is not introduced carefully.<sup>63</sup> Osaghae does not believe that federalism, as implemented in Nigeria, was an adequate response as it favoured majorities and powerful minorities at the expense of smaller ethnic groups. While ethnic groups ought to be given increased autonomy, Osaghae does not believe that awarding particular regions increased autonomy sufficiently addressed the needs of ethnic minorities.<sup>64</sup>

### Power-sharing

Power-sharing gives minority ethnic groups more power and influence without necessarily awarding specific regions a degree of autonomy. Ethnic minorities are given a proportionate share of power in the cabinet, civil service and/or other institutions which encourages co-operation and alleviates feelings of insecurity.<sup>65</sup> Electoral, constitutional and government structural arrangements can ensure that power is shared.<sup>66</sup> Some power-sharing initiatives did receive support in Nigeria.

The 1979 constitution included the principle of proportional representation, which aimed to ensure that Nigeria's ethnic diversity was reflected in the composition of all levels of government. This system was, however, undermined by a number of factors and eventually led to the marginalisation of minorities instead of true power-sharing. In 1994 a constitutional conference was held which formulated a draft constitution which included a system of rotational presidency which would give different ethnic groups increased executive power.<sup>67</sup> However this system was only accepted after considerable adaptation.

### The allocation of resources

Ihonvbere draws attention to the material basis of ethnic politics. When countries experience periods of economic crisis and cannot provide people with resources, the people may mobilise according to ethnicity in order to compete for the scarce resources which are available.<sup>68</sup> It has been observed that the mobilisation of ethnic groups frequently occurs with the aim of achieving a proportional share of public resources. Where certain ethnic groups benefit in the state's allocation of resources, tensions between ethnic groups are inevitable. Ihonvbere discusses the indifference of the Nigerian state to the social welfare of its citizens. Because of this indifference Nigerians organise in voluntary associations, especially ethnic groups, and use these groups, rather than the state, to achieve their goals.

In Nigeria there have been several ethnic conflicts with a clear material basis. The competition for access to economic resources, especially the income generated from oil sales, has resulted in several incidences of conflict in Nigeria. The Niger Delta region has been especially volatile in this respect. Although most of the crude oil in Nigeria comes from this area, the people of this area are impoverished and politically marginalised.<sup>69</sup> The process of oil extraction in the region has not brought them financial or political benefits and has led to the environmental degra-

ation of the land upon which they live. The ethnic groups in the area feel that the major Nigerian ethnic groups have exploited them. This has resulted in a situation where some interest groups in the Niger Delta which were fighting for their interests with regard to oil-production have degenerated into violent ethnic militias which sabotage oil pipelines and abduct officials.<sup>70</sup>

In order to address ethnic conflict in Nigeria, the question of oil-production and who benefits from this production needs to be examined. The issues of an equitable distribution of resources and an adequate approach to social welfare in Nigeria also require attention.

### Ethnic Conflict in the Obasanjo Era

In 1999 Olusegun Obasanjo was elected president of Nigeria, ending years of military rule. The death of Sani Abacha and the dawning of democracy in Nigeria gave many Nigerians and international commentators hope that the future of Nigeria would be more peaceful and stable than its past. It was also hoped that the election would alleviate ethnic tensions in the land and pave the way for a Nigeria free of ethnic conflict.

There are some hopeful signs that this optimism is not completely unfounded. Unlike many past leaders, Obasanjo's support does not come mainly from his own ethnic group. Obasanjo, a Westerner, won most of his votes from Northern Hausa-Fulanis, Eastern Ibos and minority ethnic groups.<sup>71</sup> This shows that it is possible for Nigerians to overlook ethnic loyalties in their choice of political leader. Obasanjo has introduced several new measures, some of which can be seen as attempts to alleviate ethnic tension by addressing the root causes of tension. For example, he has introduced measures to end the corruption in the fuel industry and to rehabilitate the ecology.<sup>72</sup> These measures both relate to the oil-related issues which have been leading to ethnic conflict in the Niger Delta.

But the election of Obasanjo has certainly not signalled the end of ethnic conflict. Just seven weeks after Obasanjo assumed power, violent ethnic conflict broke out in South-Western Nigeria between the Hausa and Yoruba.<sup>73</sup> More than 100 people were killed and many Hausas were forced to flee the area. Retaliatory violence broke out in Kano in the North, leading to even more deaths. Despite changes introduced by Obasanjo with the hope of appeasing the ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta, violence still regularly breaks out in the area.<sup>74</sup>

Ethno-religious conflicts centring around the introduction or proposed introduction of Sharia law in several states have also arisen since Obasanjo's assumption of power. Thousands were killed during conflicts in the Northern city of Kaduna which then ignited conflicts in several other areas in Nigeria.<sup>75</sup> In February 2002 ethnic clashes erupted in Lagos between local Yorubas and Hausa-speakers from northern Nigeria. Dozens were killed and thousands more displaced.

In March 2002, violence erupted between the Apiapum and Ufatura communities in Nigeria's southeastern Cross River State, leaving at least 40 people dead. President Obasanjo has not introduced any urgent measures to address these conflicts, believing that they will soon "fizzle out".<sup>76</sup> He has been criticised for lacking the decisiveness and political will to deal effectively with the situation.<sup>77</sup> Clearly a more proactive approach is needed to deal with these problems.

### Conclusion

The nature of the Nigerian state makes it susceptible to ethnic conflict. It consists of hundreds of distinct ethnic groups, which are regionally based and unequal in terms of power and

resources. Given this combination of difficult factors, Nigeria can be commended for having survived 40 years of independence with only one period of civil war and without any territory successfully seceding.

It is important to note that while ethnic conflict has been a feature of Nigerian politics, many of the measures introduced to address this conflict have had some success. Horowitz praises Nigeria for the way it has addressed its multi-ethnic nature and suggests that its measures for producing incentives for ethnic realignment, balancing and toleration make it a model for other African states.<sup>78</sup> It is clear that Horowitz believes that Nigeria has coped relatively well with the very difficult situation it inherited from the colonial powers.

However, while Nigeria's approach to its ethnic divisions can be given some praise, it is still possible to identify problems

in Nigeria which encourage the development of ethnic conflict. The unfair distribution of resources and power, as well as the lack of a cohesive national identity provide real challenges to the management of ethnic conflict in Nigeria. The election of a democratic government and a few policy changes will not be sufficient to successfully tackle ethnic conflicts in Nigeria. The broader underlying situations discussed in this paper as well as the recent increase in ethno-religious conflict need to be tackled before Nigeria can truly be seen as a model for the successful management of ethnic conflict in an African state. ■

Sally Matthews and Hussein Solomon both lecture in the Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria. Hussein Solomon is also a Research Associate of the Africa Institute of South Africa.

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## Africa can learn from the way the former Yugoslavia managed its ethnic conflict.

By Daniella C Iordanova

# Lessons from Yugoslavia

As banal as it seems to start every study with the end of the Cold War, it is a truism that the collapse of communism signalled the advent of a new age. An age guided by universal rules and principles – those of democracy and human rights. The reinstatement to prominence of the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a main governing document of interstate relations whereby countries were forced to recognise human rights, seemed to be a crucial point for the emergence of a new turbulence: that of ethnic conflict. As universal human rights were being appraised and individuals all over the world celebrated, ethnic groups and communities realised that it was time to affirm their collective rights as universal and inalienable.

It was time for ethnic groups to openly speak and act against authoritarianism, discrimination and inequality. After all, the principle of non-discrimination was part of the International Bill of Rights, and ethnic minorities in this light could not act as individuals single-handedly, but had to protest collectively.<sup>1</sup> It was time to establish a new identity in a New World Order that permitted and promoted it.

What came to the fore of the international political agenda with the end of the Cold War was the need to institutionalise group rights and minority rights, and protect them collectively and not individually. This is an aspect that international law does not cover and is still under construction. Criticism has often been levelled that “protection is not afforded to minority groups as such, but rather to persons belonging to minorities”.<sup>2</sup> In this light it is completely understandable why ethnic groups all around the

world protest against discrimination and why there is indecisiveness as to what rights they should possess. It is easy to see that the lack of a definition of ethnicity impedes the international community when it comes to the successful handling of ethnic conflicts.

It is not enough to confirm that Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights proclaims that: “All peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”.<sup>3</sup> It is important to be able to determine what constitutes the self, peoples, ethnic groups – what are their rights and what can their legal claims be? This leads to an attempt to define ethnicity and ethnic identity.

### The Term Ethnicity

To be able to define and manage ethnic conflict, one needs to understand the roots that cause it, namely to grasp the meaning of ethnicity. In general, ethnicity is hard to define, with some authors using the terms nation and ethnic interchangeably. The word ethnic was first coined by the Frenchman Georges Montadon to denote a “natural group with delimitations of somatic, linguistic and cultural properties”.<sup>4</sup> Most authors, however, agree that ethnicity should be understood in a narrower sense than nation.

Although Griffiths claims that nationalism, which means both ethnicity and nation, is a “tool of exclusiveness and justifi-

cation for the messianic mission of a chosen group”, he differentiates a nation by claiming that it has “objective characteristics: territory, language, religion”.<sup>5</sup> The objective characteristics of a nation are countered by the subjective ones of ethnicity, such as “common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements”.<sup>6</sup> Obviously, this subjective, symbolic or emblematic use of ethnicity strengthens the closed nature of the group discussed.<sup>7</sup> Ethnicity, it appears, is inborn, hereditary, relating to the blood. Ethnicity is the “exclusive nationalism” that seeks to purify and homogenise the state by returning it to the original and literal meaning of the concept nation-state: one nation – one state.<sup>8</sup>

Isn't this “in-group”, then, against globalisation and the values of the New World?<sup>9</sup> In other words, how dangerous is ethnic identity? Should it be treated as a “Trojan horse” or is its power simply a myth based on all its symbolic and emblematic characteristics?<sup>10</sup>

It is enough to take as an example the Rwandan genocide and the politics of ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia to prove the point that ethnic identity and kinship can, indeed, be very dangerous if taken to extremes. This might successfully prove Bohe's thesis that “group allegiance is much older than one based on territorial jurisdiction”.<sup>11</sup>

### Approaches to Ethnic Identity

There are three basic approaches to the study of ethnicity and ethnic conflict. The first – the primordialist approach – takes ethnicity to be a “fixed characteristic of individuals and communities ... a *sui generis*”; the second is the instrumentalist approach which assumes that “ethnicity is a tool used by individuals, groups and elites to obtain a larger material end... ethnicity has little independent standing outside the political process”; and the constructivist approach claims that ethnicity is “constructed from dense webs of social interactions... it is a social phenomenon”.<sup>12</sup>

These three approaches to the study of ethnicity and conflict actually help to explain the process of ethnic mobilisation and action – is it the result of primordial attachments that are currently resurfacing, is ethnicity an instrument to achieve specific political, economic and social gains or is it just a construction of the “world patterns of changes”, a response to the wind of change?<sup>13</sup>

A single stand on ethnicity can seldom be taken. If one looks closely at Yugoslavia and the Slovenian, Croatian, Bosnian and Macedonian identities, one can see that they can be treated both as primordial and constructivist. It can be argued that the Serbs, Slovenes and Croats were Southern Slavic tribes that have inhabited the area known today as the former Yugoslavia prior to any state formation, which would render them primordial. However, one can also promote the argument that if the Ottoman Empire had not existed, the majority of Bosnians would not be Muslim today and perhaps would not be called Bosnians, or for that matter if Hitler had won World War II, Macedonia today could be part of Bulgaria, and Serbia part of Croatia. In this light one can argue that ethnic identities are constructivist in nature. Moreover, Kosovars have an instrumental identity – they desire political autonomy, a specific political end.

**In Rwanda, all the inhabitants were united under a central monarchy, spoke the same language and shared the same cuisine, culture and religion until the Belgians arrived**

The same combination of approaches towards the construction of ethnic identity is true for the majority of Africans. Although it can be argued that the majority of ethnic groups in Africa are instrumentally driven to the attainment of economic resources and political power, as Connor claims, “power is at the heart of international conflict”, there are exceptions.<sup>14</sup> In fact one can argue that the majority of African identities were constructed by the colonialists to facilitate the “divide and rule” principle, and in this sense they would fall under the constructivist category. As Gurr and Harff point out, “ethnically divided and stratified societies have always been a fertile ground for conquests and conflicts”.<sup>15</sup>

Rwanda, in this sense, is a typical example where all the inhabitants were united under a central monarchy, spoke the same language and shared the same cuisine, culture and religion until the Belgians arrived. The present Tutsi-Hutu hatred originated when the Tutsis were more eager to collaborate with the Belgians in exchange for power and privileges.<sup>16</sup> Welsh also points to the fact that the formation of Igbo identity in Nigeria and Kikuyu in Kenya was post factum colonial rule and the Ngala in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) evolved as a result of a “mistaken imputation”.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, a major link can be derived between the former Yugoslav and African identities – the fact that they were all constructed as a result of mixed factors and today form a combina-

tion of primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism. On this basis it can be argued that the ethnic conflict management methods applied in the former Yugoslavia can be transported to the African states torn by violent ethnic conflict. With regard to Africa, primordialism is not always as strong as in the former Yugoslav republics because it has been rooted out by constructivism, as is the case with the previous united “Banyarwanda” tribe in Rwanda that no longer exists.<sup>18</sup>

### Ethnic Conflict

Conflict of any kind occurs when incompatible interests collide. As

Stavenhagen states, ethnic conflicts involve a “clash of interests or a struggle over resources”.<sup>19</sup> Mitchell adds a new dimension to the picture, involving time in the sense of continuity and change: “ethno-nationalist conflicts take place between parties whose goals are quite different, one party being intent upon major change and the other favouring the defense of the status quo”.<sup>20</sup>

This definition is particularly relevant in the case of Yugoslavia and the majority of African countries. In Yugoslavia, the republics were against the hard-liner Slobodan Milosevic, and unwilling to succumb to the forces of democratisation; while in the DRC rebels are fighting for political power, but also to defend their human rights; in Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rejects the imposition of the undemocratic Sharia law; in Angola dos Santos's pro-communist government is challenged by Unita; and in Rwanda the government is afraid of a repeat of the 1994 genocide. One need not name other regimes such as Sierra Leone where human rights abuses continue both by the rebels and the government.<sup>21</sup>

The picture thus drawn looks grim for the future of ethnic conflicts, for as Mitchell notes, the “nature of deep-rooted con-

flicts within the territorial and jurisdictional boundaries of a state along ethno-linguistic lines is protracted".<sup>22</sup> Could the reason for this protracted struggle be the irreconcilable, exclusivist interests and demands that render the conflict more than anything else a "zero-sum game"?<sup>23</sup> Can an ethnic conflict ever be transformed into an all-sum game? The experience of Yugoslavia shows that it both can and cannot be. At a macro-level, the secession of all the Yugoslavian republics (except Montenegro) shows that ethnic conflict could not be resolved internally and, therefore, external self-determination was sought.

The fact that referendums were held in both Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 showed that differences had not been reconciled and the proposed "looser confederation" could not be formed.<sup>24</sup> On a micro-level, stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is improving, although monitoring forces are still present and statistics show that the biggest United Nations force and international force is still located in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which casts doubt on the prospects for peaceful coexistence between Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Muslims.<sup>25</sup>

### Ethnic Conflict Management

Cohen refers to ethnic conflict management as the "capacity of political institutions to contain ethnic conflict within their mechanisms, routines and procedures for resolution".<sup>26</sup> According to Fox, "conflict management and resolution can be undertaken by one, two, three or no parties, in other words by force, negotiation, third party mediation or conciliation".<sup>27</sup> In Yugoslavia, conflict management has involved all these aspects, starting with force and ethnic cleansing and ending with third party mediation. Perhaps what is still required is some sort of conciliation between the former and present republics of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) – a local version of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

According to Boutros-Ghali's Agenda for Peace, there are four main responses to ethnic conflict, namely, "preventative diplomacy, peace-making, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building".<sup>28</sup> In Yugoslavia all four have been attempted, but not all have been completed.

Also in response to Gurr and Harff's approaches to ethnic conflict by means of the theory of modernisation, it can be argued that primordial conflict can be avoided by affirming that modernisation or globalisation do not pose a threat to ethnic identities and the instrumentalists could be reassured that modernisation does not increase economic divides, leading to ethnic conflict.<sup>29</sup> If the international community manages to reassure the developing world that these two hypotheses are true, then ethnic conflict may decline.

The main pillar of this paper, however, is McGarry and O'Leary's study on the political regulation of national and ethnic conflict. This specific approach has been chosen because it is all-encompassing with regard to the techniques used to manage ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia and most realistically reflects the initiatives that have been undertaken.

According to the authors, eight macro methods of conflict regulation exist, four aimed at "eliminating ethnic or national differences" such as genocide, forced mass population transfers,

partition/secession (self-determination), and integration/assimilation; and another four aimed at "managing ethnic or national differences", including hegemonic control, arbitration/third party intervention, cantonisation/federalism and consociationalism.<sup>30</sup> It is upon these grounds that economic conflict is examined and evaluated in the former Yugoslavia.

### Ethnic Conflict Management: The Yugoslav Experience

The regulation of ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia has entailed the use of most of the macro methods of ethnic conflict noted by McGarry and O'Leary. Since the former Yugoslav republics previously comprised one nation, but currently possess different ethnic identities, speaking from Serbo-Croatian to Albanian and Macedonian languages, using different scripts (Cyrillic and Latin), and practising different religions (Islam, Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity), they are treated as ethnic groupings and not nations.

#### Conflict Regulation aiming to Eliminate Ethnic Differences

##### 1. Genocide

The gravest form of conflict regulation aimed at eliminating ethnic differences employed by the former Yugoslavia has been the practice of genocide or ethnic cleansing. Genocide meaning "literally the killing of a race".<sup>31</sup>

Genocide or ethnic cleansing occurred particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. At the end of March 1994, Bosnian Serb forces launched an infantry and artillery offensive against the UN in Gorazde, as well as a counter-offensive in the Bihac region, both resulting in casualties. According to UNPROFOR, in March 1993 Bosnian Serb paramilitary units attacked several cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Srebrenica, where 30 to 40 persons were dying daily from military action and lack of medical treatment. The ethnic cleansing around

Srebrenica only stopped on 17 April 1993 after an agreement for the demilitarisation of the Bosnian Serbs was signed.<sup>32</sup>

The list of massacres is a long one, including 46 Albanians from Kosovo in the Drenica region, 45 ethnic Albanians in the village of Racak, 1 500 Albanians reported killed in the villages of Likosane, Cirez and Drenica, and 54 killed in Donji Pekaz and hundreds reported missing, in contrast to only 100 Serbs and Montenegrins unaccounted for by the end of 1999.<sup>33</sup>

Due to these atrocities and massacres, in 1995 the International Tribunal indicted Bosnian Serb leaders Karadzic and Mladic for crimes against Bosnian Muslims in the areas of Srebrenica, Zepa, Banja Luka and Sanski Most.<sup>34</sup> Bax has described how the Croat army in the area of Medjugorje "purified" and "thoroughly cleansed" the Defterovci village of Serbs, slaughtering at least a third of the inhabitants, although the local people remained "disappointed" that the Muslims were unharmed.<sup>35</sup>

Bax also indicates that both Bosnian Serbs and Croats tried expanding their territory by "homogenising" it. This strategy seems to have been employed not only in Yugoslavia, but also in Rwanda when in 1994 more than 800 000 Tutsis were massacred by Hutu soldiers and militia.<sup>36</sup>

As the statistics show, genocide has not put an end to ethnic conflict, but has rather aggravated it, instilling permanent hatred

Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi's Tutsi minorities, despite being restored to power democratically, operating within a system recognised internationally, still fear a repetition of the 1994 Rwandan genocide

among the populations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Kosovo. It is doubtful whether any peaceful coexistence can occur in the future. Kosovars continue with massacres and atrocities despite international presence at the scene. A comparison can be made with Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi whose Tutsi minorities, despite being restored to power democratically, operating within a system internationally recognised, still fear a repetition of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and are, therefore, taking part in “Africa’s First World War” in the DRC.<sup>37</sup>

## 2. Forced mass population transfers

Another method of conflict regulation employed in the former Yugoslavia was forced mass population transfers, where people are forced to leave their homes.<sup>38</sup> In March 1994 in the city of Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina), there were 200 000 refugees. As a result of fighting 35 000 Muslim refugees were displaced from the Bihac region and in December 1991 the total number of refugees and displaced amounted to 500 000. In 1993, 4.26 million people needed humanitarian assistance, with more than half residing in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>39</sup>

In Kosovo, between 1966-1989 about 130 000 Serbs left the region due to harassment.<sup>40</sup> In October 1998, there were already 450 000 Albanian refugees of whom 150 000 were in the open with no access to necessities.<sup>41</sup> By the end of the year 2000 around 200 000 Serbs were estimated to have fled Kosovo, whereas of the 900 000 Albanian refugees, 822 000 had returned.<sup>42</sup> It appears that the UN High Commission for Refugees has spent a total of \$225 million to help the 850 000 refugees from Kosovo, but just \$127 million for more than 4 million African refugees and victims of war.<sup>43</sup> Obviously, a huge disparity exists in international involvement and funding when it comes to African and European refugees and displaced persons in equal need of humanitarian assistance.

Similar to the effects of genocide, forced mass population transfers have not really solved or managed the conflict – the result being that now thousands of refugees are returning to their plundered homes, trying to re-establish and legalise their identities. As a result, the Croatian authorities in 1997 alone issued 145 000 citizenships and 126 000 passports.<sup>44</sup> The whole effort has proved to be totally stressful and non-humanitarian ensuing additional costs to the government and the individuals.

## 3. Secession/self-determination

A significant method of conflict regulation that has occurred in Yugoslavia is that of secession or self-determination of its republics, a resolution based on the “principle of divorce”.<sup>45</sup>

Slovenia and Croatia were the first republics to opt for divorce from the FRY in early 1991. They were recognised as independent in January 1992 by the European Community, together with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Macedonia’s recognition came later, after it amended its name to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.<sup>46</sup>

The problems that followed from the self-determination of the four republics were numerous, including war, ethnic cleansing and flows of refugees. From a juridical point of view, however, the EC did not apply its principles for recognition uniformly

amongst the republics. A major rule for granting independence was the “guarantee of ethnic and minority rights”.<sup>47</sup> This principle was unobserved in Bosnia and Herzegovina where not only were Serb concentration camps uncovered, but all belligerent parties to the conflict were committing crimes against humanity. Moreover in 1992 Rugova, the leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army, announced the independence of the republic of Kosovo, an act that the Serbs were unwilling to accept.<sup>48</sup>

The current situation in the former Yugoslav republics is not that optimistic, with the exception of the ethnically homogenous Slovenia where 90% of the population is Slovenian.<sup>49</sup> The Kosovo Force established in June 1999 is still in FRY with a renewed mission – to contend with the recently-developed conflict between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians along the Macedonian border so as to prevent further spillovers of the conflict.<sup>50</sup> Doubt is thus cast not only on the initiatives of international organisations, but also on the success of ethnic self-determination in establishing peace and stability in the region.

Will Macedonia remain independent and in peace? Will it be drawn into a large-scale war against ethnic Albanians? In this sense, can ethnic self-determination be recommended to the Katanga province or the Caprivi strip? The answer is not a wholehearted “yes”, for Yugoslavia’s experience has shown that ethnic conflicts continue even in internationally recognised independent states. It seems that ethnic self-determination is not always linked to democratisation, peace and stability, especially where primordial and instrumental ethnic identities continue to coexist.

Forced mass population transfers have not really solved or managed the conflict – the result being that thousands of refugees are returning to their plundered homes, trying to re-establish and legalise their identities

## 4. Integration/assimilation

Conflict management can also be achieved through integration and/or assimilation of communities in one nation.<sup>51</sup> The fact that over 50 000 Serbs have returned to Croatia, for instance, may be an indication of a gradual commencement of integration.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, an exacerbation of ethnic conflict can be seen in Kosovo following the refusal of the Serbian authorities to grant citizenship, residence or education rights to 700 000 Serb refugees from outside the FRY.<sup>53</sup>

Overall, integration is functioning well in Slovenia where multipartyism has paved the way for peace and stability through democratic means. The same can be said of South Africa’s system and the TRC. Such a “consociational model of democracy” would also benefit not only the DRC, but Angola, Sudan, Sierra Leone, and all African states currently under the guise of dictatorship and human rights repression.<sup>54</sup> Although South Africa might seem a better option for Africa in exporting its democratic model to other states, Yugoslavia’s ethnic conflict management seems to be more suited to those areas that are currently experiencing war and fighting, since South Africa had a relatively peaceful revolution through negotiations.

## Managing Ethnic Differences

### Hegemonic control

A condemned version of ethnic conflict management, connected to human rights’ violations, is that of hegemonic control. African countries under colonial rule have been subjected to hegemonic control and centralisation. Milosevic also subjected

different ethnicities to hegemonic rule. By suspending the 1974 federal constitution of the country and reinstating centralisation in 1989, he attempted to divert public opinion from his authoritarian rule by organising the Serbian population against the “Albanian menace” of Kosovo and by declaring those republics that wished to secede in the name of democracy like Slovenia and Croatia “anti-Serb” and “traitors”.<sup>55</sup>

The response to hegemonic control is, of course, that sooner or later the system collapses due to internal and international boycotts and sanctions; for almost a decade the FRY was subject to military and economic sanctions. In Africa, Mobutu Sese Seko’s regime also came to an end eventually. The ideal would be, however, to have accommodation of diversity instead of the toppling of a regime through violence.

**Arbitration through benign third-party intervention**

A powerful instrument of post-Cold War ethnic conflict regulation is arbitration through benign third-party intervention where the arbitrators assume the role of mediators in the conflict.<sup>56</sup>

Internal arbitration aimed at seeking a local resolution to the conflict undeniably failed when negotiations instigated by Slovenia and Croatia to form a looser confederation of Yugoslavia proved to be unsuccessful and consequently they declared their intentions to secede.

The subsequent Brioni Agreement of July 1991 and the decision to suspend Croatia’s and Slovenia’s declarations of independence for three months did not alleviate the situation – instead, federal troops were installed on the republics’ territories.<sup>57</sup> Unable to resolve the conflict from within, the Yugoslav republics directed pleas for help to the international community.

The first international actor to become involved in the Yugoslav crisis was the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, previously known as the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, representing a joint effort by the European governments in June 1991.<sup>58</sup>

In September 1991, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 713 and joined the CSCE in Yugoslavia. The efforts of the CSCE, however, were unsuccessful, obstructed by the requirement for unanimous decisions. This resonated in a neglect of the Bosnian crisis in 1994, and the CSCE remained on the sidelines between 1993 and 1995.<sup>59</sup>

In search of a political solution, several plans were discussed. The Carrington Plan offered preferential economic treatment to all former Yugoslav republics if a cessation of hostilities was agreed upon, but this plan was rejected by Serbia. In turn, the Vance Plan established the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in February 1992 to operate in five former republics and have a liaison presence in Slovenia.

UN Protection Areas were designated where Serbs resided in Croatia; additional “pink zones” controlled by the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and inhabited by Serbs outside the UNPAs were given to UNPROFOR.

A number of plans failed subsequently (Vance-Owen, Owen-Scholtenberg, Contact Muslim Plan) due to rejection from one or more of the belligerent parties. Thus, a proposal to establish a tri-federation in Bosnia failed.<sup>60</sup>

The aims of UNPROFOR were to demilitarise JNA and the UNPAs and to achieve an overall political solution to the crisis in Croatia. Following the signing of a Peace Agreement for Croatia in March 1994, several organisations were established: in 1995 the UN Confidence Restoration Operation for Western and Eastern Slavonia and Krajina; in 1996 the UN Military Observers Prevlaka co-operating with the international stabilisation force; in 1997 the UN Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium which successfully implemented a “soft border” and helped refugees and displaced persons; and in 1998 a UN Civilian Police Support Group took over from UNTAES.<sup>61</sup>

Following the Dayton Accord of November 1995 whereby a peace agreement was reached for Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNPROFOR withdrew and a NATO-led multinational implementation force continued the establishment of the “rule of law” together with the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>62</sup> In Macedonia, UNPROFOR was replaced by the UN Preventative Deployment Force along the border to ensure confidence and stability.<sup>63</sup>

In June 1999 a UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo was established to collaborate with the Kosovo Force and foresee Kosovo’s autonomous administration. With regard to the UN missions and peacekeepers, one can generally observe

that they have been successful in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially after the signing of the peace agreements. Although initially UNPROFOR was obstructed by Serbians in Bosnia, since 1995 and the Dayton Accord there have been no serious breaches of the peace – something which cannot be said for the Lusaka Peace Accord or the DRC’s initial non-cooperation with the UN Observer Mission for the DRC (MONUC).

What is also striking is the massive number of observers, peacekeepers and peace-makers that have been sent to the former Yugoslavia, especially after the signing of the peace agreements – police

and administrations have been assigned the tasks of reintegrating former Yugoslavia in the democratic world, which points to the relative success of the mission, following signs of co-operation from the belligerents themselves. UN peacekeeping forces have also been successful with the delivery of humanitarian aid.<sup>64</sup>

Of course, NATO’s involvement should not be forgotten – the large-scale operation that commenced in March 1999 and entailed 20 000 dropped missiles and bombs, destroying 40 bridges, 120 tanks, 100 aircraft, 5 000 Yugoslav troops and police, killing 1 200 Serb civilians and displacing one million Albanian Kosovars.<sup>65</sup>

Compared to UN’s peace initiatives, NATO’s violence definitely stands out and is not one that would be recommended for the solution of African ethnic conflicts, no matter how violent the conflict.

As Fortmann et al point out, international involvement in the former Yugoslavia proved that international organisations can exert coherent action without serious disagreements to the achievement of one end – political change and humanitarian relief – the notion that humanitarian crises are inseparable from international involvement, supported not only by Europe and the UN, but the United States as well.<sup>66</sup>

**International involvement in the former Yugoslavia proved that international organisations can exert coherent action without serious disagreements to the achievement of political change and humanitarian relief**

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### How does this relate to the African context ?

Taking into account the unsuccessful UN Observer Mission in the DRC (MONUC) since November 1999, it is obvious that peace-making forces in the DRC should be employed similarly to the Kosovo Force or UNPROFOR.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, what is striking about the DRC is the lack of US or European involvement. If the Europeans can be excused on the grounds that the conflict is beyond their region, the US has just as much responsibility to intervene in the DRC in the name of democracy and human rights, as it had in Kosovo.

Bearing in mind that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) lacks the financial capacity to support peacekeeping operations and that "African solutions to African problems" have failed in the face of ECOMOG in Sierra Leone and SADC in the DRC (due to lack of funds in the first instance and lack of consensus in the second), the only reliable option remains the international community.<sup>68</sup> Yet, how does a force of 500 MONUC observers compare to one of 2 057 in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone?<sup>69</sup> The DRC has a bigger territory and larger population. Thus, it becomes obvious that in constructing ethnic conflict management mechanisms for Africa, the international interest has to be secured first as this will ensure an adequate amount of funds and resources.

#### Federalism and consociation

The last two aspects of ethnic conflict management as suggested by McGarry and O'Leary are federalisation and consociation, or power-sharing.<sup>70</sup> Federalisation at this point exists only within the FRY and is under threat due to Kosovo's desire to secede and Montenegro's doubts as to whether to remain in the alliance with Serbia. Consociation or power-sharing exists in the relatively homogenous Slovenia, but is also beginning to develop in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia with the gradual disappearance of ethnic violence.

Glickman's eight principles of ethnic conflict management present an ideal outcome to ethnic disputes. They refer to federalism, consociational democracy, rotation of power, constitutionally prescribed party systems, bicameral legislature, cross-ethnic constituencies, proportional representation and privatisation.<sup>71</sup> However, these principles are perhaps more applicable to states where ethnic diversity has not transgressed into violent conflict – such a phase would refer to Yugoslavia in 1990 or in Africa immediately after independence.

Nigeria is an example where the politics of democratic consociationalism and integration failed due to the present-day desire for secession of the North and the South.<sup>72</sup> What, then, is the path to follow?

#### Evaluation

Throughout this study, limited comparisons have been made between ethnic conflict management in the former Yugoslavia and Africa. The majority of African states in conflict have become ethnically divided – even Angola that was once torn by an ideological conflict today seems to be split between the Northern cities supporting the government and the Southern rural areas favoring Unita.

"The politics of soil" or ethnicity seems to be the only stable ground left in a world that is torn between democracy and authoritarianism, pushed by globalisation in an unknown direction and for many developing countries that cannot keep up not much is left other than to protest in a violent way against starvation, hunger, repression and abuse.<sup>73</sup> It is well and good to propagate consociational democracy from a First World perspective when one's basic needs are met, but in the Third World ethnic identity has become synonymous with survival.

Having closely examined ethnic conflict management in the former Yugoslavia, two options for Africa emerge. The first is ethnic self-determination, which has been successful in ethnically homogenous Slovenia, but not so in the diverse Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This option is reluctantly recommended, bearing in mind that the OAU Charter prohibits territorial changes and that even if ratified and implemented, a clause on the change of borders would imply the redrawing of the entire African map. Since only in rare instances have primordial identities presented themselves as strongly as in Slovenia, even in newly-formed states heterogeneity might remain.

The second, more viable option for conflict management is third party arbitration. A peaceful international involvement – with proper funds and not just the bare minimum – will economically and financially uplift the population, reducing ethnic tensions. For the present situation of the Balkans and Africa economic preferential treatment and unconditional aid under international supervision provide a possible option for reducing a strong instrumental identity. This is particularly relevant to

Africa where power is connected to resource control.

Other options for conflict management are rejected either because they have a negative effect on the population (genocide, forced displacements, hegemonic rule) or because they are not seen as viable techniques (consociational democracy and federalism). At present the majority of African states are loose federal organisations without accommodation of ethnic diversity and without peace and stability, as in Nigeria. Integration or assimilation, on the other hand, implies strong centralisation, as under colonial rule, and therefore loss of freedom.

Thus, the major powers and international organisations need to refocus their interests towards Africa and provide help for purely humanitarian reasons, since humanitarianism is the main idea behind their creation and existence. Moreover, they can afford to be humanitarian, whereas Africa cannot. ■

Daniella Iordanova is an MA (International Relations) student at the University of Pretoria and a research assistant at the Department of Political Sciences. She has a BAdmin Hons degree, and in 1999 won the CF Nieuwoudt and Politika Awards at the University of Pretoria.

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# Taking architecture back to its roots

**Gerald Steyn reconsiders Swahili residential architecture, and provides a critical re-assessment of roots and realities**

Tanzania provides a useful setting for the study of vernacular architecture. By vernacular architecture we mean the process of producing buildings in the traditional manner of a specific region – without professional intervention. Tanzania offers a diversity of building forms unrivalled anywhere else in Africa. The focus of this study is the two distinct types of Swahili houses.

Some authors refer to Afro-Arab architecture, built from about the 1st century until its demise in about the 16th century, as “early” or “old” Swahili. The prevalent house form along the coast of Africa is now simply called “Swahili”, although it has been built by the general population, not only ethnic Swahilis, since the early 20th century and possibly before that. This study, therefore, uses the terms Early Swahili and Contemporary Swahili to indicate that the forms are from different eras but exist in the same cultural and physical landscape.

Houses built by the ruling Omani merchants in the 19th century supplanted the earlier medieval Swahili houses and dominate the historical Stone Town of Zanzibar. Only in a very few cases do these Early Swahili houses still exist, although in an extensively modified form.

In East Africa in general they are now mostly just ruins found at the traditional Swahili settlements, such as Gedi, Kilwa and Songo Mnara. Since the best-preserved – and inhabited – examples seem to be at Lamu in Kenya, they are also called Lamu-type houses. In Zanzibar, the Omani houses exist side-by-

side with another distinctive house form, one largely neglected by researchers – the Contemporary Swahili house. Stone Town and Lamu are both on the World Heritage List.

The main objective of this study is to submit an updated review of the related literature, which was informed by observations from fieldwork.

Why is this project necessary? The origin of the Early Swahili house is unknown. Is it simply an import from the Middle East? If its origin as an import cannot be convincingly explained, the possibility that the type evolved as a regional adaptation should be explored.

The origin of the Contemporary Swahili house is also unknown – it could have been invented, or derived from an earlier version, either indigenous or the Lamu house, or from the British colonial bungalow. It is also noteworthy that nobody (as far as we know) has looked into the historical continuum of Swahili architecture, and that only one person, the historian Abdul Sheriff, has attempted any connection between the two types.

But the real value of the proposed research is not only, or even primarily, historical. The fact is that the Contemporary Swahili house has been the most prevalent housing model along the East African coast for most of the 20th century. How did it become a “model” plan, accepted by entire populations without bureaucratic interference?

If planners knew that, they might know how user requirements are really generated. With that knowledge they would con-

**The prevalent house form along the coast of Africa is now simply called “Swahili”, although it has been built by the general population, not only ethnic Swahilis, since the early 20th century and possibly before that**

ceivably be able to produce better living environments for more people.

The purpose of this report is to attempt to initiate multinational and multidisciplinary interest in a collaborative research effort to review Swahili architecture critically. It is, therefore, concluded with ideas for a possible research plan. Observations and the plan are intentionally open-ended – we invite, and want, future partners to participate in developing a research agenda.

**Background**

The widespread presence of the Contemporary Swahili house quickly becomes clear when approaching the airports of both Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar – one can see the characteristic central-corridor/rear courtyard pattern in the vast majority of the houses under construction or being re-roofed. The Makumbusho Village Museum outside Dar es Salaam is an open-air museum featuring the thirteen main traditional dwelling styles of Tanzania, all authentically constructed and fitted out – including one example of such a Swahili house, albeit without its courtyard.

Professor Abdul Sheriff, a historian at the University of Dar es Salaam, postulates that this Swahili house is derived from the much older courtyard-type Swahili model. Its concept illustrates some typical Arab-Islamic characteristics, such as the indirect entrance to the courtyard, but the consistent and distinctive layers of parallel rooms to the rear are unusual. Remains of the early types are rare – there is not an example at the Makumbusho Village Museum – and the only inhabited examples seem to be in Lamu, Kenya.

Particularly interesting is Sheriff’s hypothesis of how the very widespread Contemporary Swahili house developed: a central corridor was cut through the layers of rooms of the early configuration and the courtyard was moved to the rear, becoming the most private zone.

His theory is probably intended to be figurative rather than literal, but if any relationship could be confirmed it would be an excellent example of how a housing type could be modified or transformed to suit changing conditions.

An alternative hypothesis is equally fascinating. Is the Contemporary Swahili house not simply an interpretation of the colonial bungalow? When did people start building them? The combination of the bungalow configuration with the private courtyard into a standardised paradigm seems worthy of investigation.

It is also significant that this type is used in a scattered configuration in rural and semi-rural conditions, as well as densely packed in suburban situations with formal street grids.

**Coastal East Africa: A historical perspective**

Of the generally available publications, Roland Oliver’s *The African experience* and John Reader’s *Africa: A biography of a continent* are examples of scientifically accountable sources with proper bibliographical references and structured argumentation.<sup>1</sup>

Even a cursory scrutiny of their bibliographies is revealing. For example, both refer to HN Chittick, DW Phillipson, Basil Davidson and Peter Garlake. Only Roland Oliver refers to Abdul

Sheriff, while John Reader refers to Roland Oliver and Colin McEvedy.

Samual Kasule and Jocelyn Murray both authored very attractive and readable books, but their lack of notes and specific references makes acknowledgement and further investigation difficult.<sup>2</sup> Kasule’s “select bibliography” is much more comprehensive than Murray’s “further reading”. Both feature Davidson and Oliver, while Kasule mentions McEvedy.

McEvedy’s *The Penguin atlas of African history* focuses on political history with an impressive collection of informative maps and a brief accompanying text.<sup>3</sup>

This book offers a convenient introduction to, and overview of, African history. Its greatest weakness is again the absence of a bibliography – this lack of substantiation makes any reference to McEvedy problematic. At the same time, it should be emphasised that Colin McEvedy has mastered the art of making the reading of history both accessible and analytical.

These common references seem to indicate a very limited body of original research. There are also a number of unresolved issues. For example, when did Arabs start trading along the African East coast – around the beginning of the first millennium as stated in *The Periplus*, or by the seventh or eighth centuries

AD, coinciding with Islamic expansion?<sup>4</sup> What about recent claims that Omanis started trading as early as 3 000 years ago?

Reader argues that the East African coast was by “ancient right” under Arab control and “governed by merchants from present-day Yemen”.<sup>5</sup> Most sources suggest that Arab settlement commenced in the seventh century AD, coinciding with the spread of Islam.

By the tenth century AD, slaves, leopard skins, tortoiseshell and ivory were transported by dhow to Arabia and India from settlements ranging from Mogadishu in the north to Kilwa in the

south. Gold from the Limpopo basin was also traded between Kilwa and Sofala – near present-day Beira in Mozambique.

Other Swahili settlements included Lamu, Malindi, Mombasa, and Pemba, Zanzibar and the Mafia Islands, as well as Bagamoyo and Kilwa. The Islam-oriented Swahili culture, which emerged from contact and intermarriage among African, Arab and Persian people along the East African coast, flourished between 1300 and 1500 AD (see figure 1, page 27).

The Swahili culture never fully recovered commercially after the Portuguese domination of East Africa, which started in the early 16th century, and the subsequent Omani colonisation in the late 17th century.

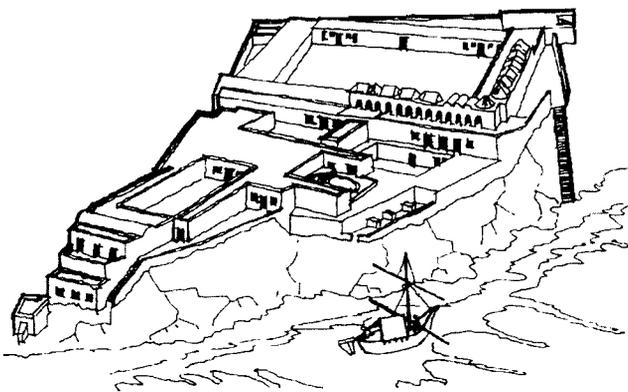
**Swahili architecture – organisation of the review**

Even an authoritative source such as Norbert Schoenauer’s 6 000 years of housing makes no mention of the Swahili culture or even of the historical coastal architecture of East Africa.<sup>6</sup> Paul Oliver’s work, *Dwellings: the house across the world*, contains some interesting old photographs of Contemporary Swahili houses, but they are not substantially referred to in the text.<sup>7</sup>

The problem is that no author, with the possible exception of Sheriff, views the Swahili architectural history as a continuum – most authors focus on the esoteric and exotic early architecture.<sup>8</sup> The Contemporary Swahili house, even though it is the most

The Swahili culture never fully recovered commercially after the Portuguese domination of East Africa, which started in the early 16th century, and the subsequent Omani colonisation in the late 17th century

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**FROM THE RUINS** *Garlake's perspective drawings of Husuni Kubwa (the 13th century palace complex at Songo Mnara) represent one of the few efforts to reconstruct an early Swahili building.*

common form in coastal East Africa, has been totally neglected. We will address the Early and Contemporary residential architecture separately. Our reviews are broadly structured around some key questions:

- What is the state of the related literature and how available is it?
- Why did new forms of houses develop?
- What do the typologies look like?
- Where did the concepts come from?
- Why is there such regional similarity?
- Are the types climatically responsive?
- What caused the demise of the Early Swahili type?
- What is the current state of the research?

### Early Swahili houses

A number of early authors reported on the old ruins, settlements and artefacts of the region. They include Baumann (Mafia, 1896), Buchanan (Pemba, 1932), Burton (Zanzibar, 1872), Dorman (Kilwa, 1938), Kirkman (Gedi, 1954) and others. Many of these reports were published in the journal, *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, and are not readily available.

Susan Denyer's *African traditional architecture* has become a standard reference.<sup>9</sup> Even today it is unlikely that any substantial work in the field will not acknowledge Denyer. Her sources on East Africa include James de Vere Allen, Roland Oliver, Paul Oliver, Basil Davidson, James Kirkman and Peter Garlake. Denyer states that the stone houses produced by the Swahili civilisation have been "fully described by Garlake". In fact, all sources consulted on early Swahili houses refer to Peter Garlake. His *The early Islamic architecture of the East African coast* is thus arguably the most referred-to and authoritative study to this day – a definitive survey – and all other subsequent work refers to him, without contributing anything significantly new to the topic.<sup>10</sup>

Another source, which appears in most studies, is Ronald Lewcock's *Zanj, the East African coast* (1971).<sup>11</sup> Reports like *Lamu: a study in conservation*, are extremely valuable, but they are essentially specialist reports and not readily available.<sup>12</sup> Once again, both these authors refer to Garlake, who now seems to be one of the few sources of primary information.

The early Arab traders had apparently initially been seasonal visitors only, and had probably lived in the traditional thatched mud huts found at the trading posts. In time, however, a very distinctive courtyard house-type of stone construction developed.<sup>13</sup> The development of these stone houses is associated with the evolution of the Swahili culture. And, whereas the majority of local townspeople retained their traditional houses of mud and timber, the Swahili merchants apparently lived in these stone houses.<sup>14</sup>

Ghaidan defines the type as follows: "The Swahili house was designed as an inward looking self-contained complex with a plan organised around a central courtyard".<sup>15</sup> Abdul Sheriff agrees:

The Swahili house was designed as an inward looking self-contained complex organised around an 'intimacy gradient' from the semi-open entrance porch, the characteristic daka, where male members of the household received most of their guests ... through the courtyard, and into the parallel living rooms which become darker and more intimate the farther they are from the courtyard.<sup>16</sup>

Denyer indicates that nearly all the early houses were one-storeyed, and that two storeys only became popular in the 18th century. This statement was probably influenced by Garlake:

Only in two, probably fifteenth-century, buildings behind the Great Mosque at Kilwa have upper storeys been found before the eighteenth century. In both these buildings the upper storeys are late additions to the ground floor. The ground floor plans are typical of the normal single storey house of the coast...<sup>17</sup>

Lewcock, on the other hand, writes that substantial houses in the "larger coastal towns would have been at least double-storeyed, the upper floors with windows and doors overlooking the courtyard..." He suggests that upper levels appeared in the

15th and 16th centuries.<sup>17</sup> This obviously does not correspond with Garlake's deduction. The latter initially assumed an extremely cynical position:

The standing architecture however reflects little African influence and its forms are entirely alien to those of the hinterland – its origins were outside East Africa and it is present fully fledged in the earliest known buildings. If anything, only a slow subsequent decline can be traced in both design and technique. Nevertheless, the resulting style is individual to the coast and homogeneous throughout its length.<sup>19</sup>

A decade later he has radically changed his view:

The culture of the coast is expressed most vividly by its architecture: an original creative synthesis of the opportunities of African climate and resources and the heritage of styles and methods developed in the Arabian homelands. The surviving buildings of all the towns show a coherent, evolving unity of style. There is a clear relationship between all the coastal buildings. It is visible not only in the plans but in details of building techniques, mouldings and carvings.<sup>20</sup>

About the origins, he then writes that no comparison had been made between East African coastal architecture and that of

**The standing architecture reflects little African influence and its forms are entirely alien to those of the hinterland ... nevertheless, the resulting style is individual to the coast and homogeneous throughout its length**

south-west Asia, but that many elements occur elsewhere in Arab-Islamic buildings.

He cautiously suggests that, while early Islamic architecture is well described, “the minor provincial architecture of the later mediaeval periods is little documented – and it is precisely from here that the sources of the coastal style must surely be derived”.<sup>21</sup>

Nnamdi Elleh’s *African architecture: evolution and transformation* is an important and fairly recent book, but it lacks scientific depth, which is quite understandable, considering the scope.<sup>22</sup> His triple-heritage theory (traditional, Islamic and colonial influences on African architecture) and the influence of Egypt on sub-Saharan Africa are unconvincingly argued. His bibliography includes most of the usual authors who have contributed to East African history and architecture, such as Garlake, Denyer, Davidson, Allen and Sheriff.

The value of the sections related to our field is regrettably questionable. Some statements even show that Elleh is quite simply uninformed. For example, he reflects that, “The islands of Zanzibar and Pemba have some of the best preserved classic architecture of Swahili middle ages and are distinguished by the art deco that garnishes the walls and notches of the buildings... They are self-contained one and two-storey buildings...”.<sup>23</sup> In fact, there is no preserved “classic architecture of Swahili middle ages” in either Zanzibar or Pemba, but Elleh proceeds to describe just such an Early Swahili house!<sup>24</sup>

Garlake notes that, “one of the most interesting features of the town buildings is the communal approach to, and cooperation in, planning. All adjoining houses share a single common party wall... Moreover, in almost every case, where houses adjoin, the plans interlock rather than simply abut one another, making for compactness and economy of building.”

Garlake states that such a degree of co-operation is alien to both Western and African societies. He suggests that in East Africa it could be due to either strong centralised authority or a very strong communal interest.<sup>25</sup> Neither of these causes really explains the unity of plan form across the region. This is especially puzzling since these coastal towns competed for trade and were generally politically independent.

The Early Swahili houses were introverted with no external windows. As Garlake writes, “there is absolutely no cross ventilation”.<sup>26</sup> Surprisingly, though, climatic comfort seems to have been a major concern, with the majority of the courtyards placed on the northern or eastern side in an apparent attempt to catch the prevailing breeze. In other words, the Early Swahili house was totally inappropriate for its hot-humid climatic setting.

The reliability of drawings in the relevant literature is also suspicious. Denyer’s floor plan of a 15th century Swahili house at Songo Mnara is clearly based on Garlake’s House No 16.<sup>27</sup> The copy is, however, substantially different.

From visiting Arab merchants’ seasonal lodging in traditional houses, a new culture and, in time, a truly Swahili and unique courtyard house-type developed, which gradually disappeared in Zanzibar after Omani intervention. How all this happened deserves our attention. But it is clear that the existing literature should be viewed with critical circumspection.

### Contemporary Swahili houses

The respected historian, Abdul Sheriff, writes that the “working class quarter” of Zanzibar is characterised by “wattle and mud huts with pitched roofs and a ground plan that seems to be a modification of the old Swahili houses”:

From the entrance porch, with a raised platform on one side, where minor trading or artisanal work was carried out, a passage led to the open courtyard that had been shifted to the back of the house, where many of the household chores were carried out. The long parallel family rooms were now formally cut by a central corridor.<sup>28</sup>

This is certainly a very elegant hypothesis. Does it have any support? As far as could be established, others have not explored it. A map of 1846 shows the areas occupied by stone houses and mud houses respectively. But illustrations from that era show Omani houses rather than the Lamu-type of house.<sup>29</sup> Were the mud houses referred to traditional single-room “huts”, or rather precursors of the Contemporary Swahili house – the most common housing type along the East African coast?

Of real significance is Siravo’s remark that “although these simple earthen structures were once the most numerous in the Stone Town, they were gradually replaced by permanent stone buildings during the course of the town’s development”. He adds that, although these mud houses have “virtually disappeared in the Stone Town”, they remain the “most common building type” in the surrounding areas.<sup>30</sup> This clearly indicates that he associates the early thatched wattle and daub houses with the contemporary version. It is notable that four of Sheriff’s publications are referred to, but Siravo chose not to comment on his Swahili house transformation hypothesis.

To date, Leslie has done the most comprehensive survey of the Contemporary Swahili house and the way it is used in Dar es Salaam.<sup>31</sup> He

describes how an Arab sultan of Zanzibar founded Dar es Salaam in 1865. The town had initially been settled with slaves, soldiers and workers from the East Yemen. The Germans took over in the late 19th century and the British after World War I. They took over the plan for an “African town” for demobilised Askaris and laid out what is now Kariakoo, a neighborhood in Dar es Salaam.<sup>32</sup> Hodd also refers to Kariakoo, which he describes as follows:

... Kariakoo, laid out in a grid pattern and predominantly an African area. It became known as Kariakoo during the latter part of WW1 when African porters (the carrier corps, from which the current name is derived) were billeted there after the British took over the city in 1916. The houses are in the Swahili style.<sup>33</sup>

Today, the Kariakoo area of Dar es Salaam is a huge, bustling neighbourhood laid out in a grid pattern, densely packed with Swahili-style courtyard houses, of which most seem to feature some kind of business in front with residential spaces behind. The Malindi, Vikokotoni and Kisiwadui areas outside Stone Town, Zanzibar feature the same type of houses, also often used for business, but laid out to lower densities in a very informal and irregular way.

One of the most interesting features is the communal approach to planning. All adjoining houses share a single common party wall ... where houses adjoin, the plans interlock rather than simply abut one another



GERALD STERN

The most succinct description of the Swahili house is arguably by Leslie:

The Swahili type of house which shelters nearly three-quarters of the African population of Dar es Salaam is built very much to a single design. There is the main house itself, divided by a central corridor off which are three rooms each side. There is thus a single front door, opened and shut first and last thing by the landlord (if he lives in the house) or by his agent. Once inside one looks straight through to the courtyard, half as big as the house, where all the laundering, dishwashing and general chores go on. At the back of the courtyard are usually three rooms, which are latrine, kitchen and store...<sup>34</sup>

In front of the house is a baraza, which is a veranda, often with a built-in bench. Leslie writes that rural homesteads contain the huts of persons of the same family and form a close social entity. In total contrast, the tenants who might occupy a Swahili house (one room per household) are usually from a number of Bantu tribes and from different nationalities, such as Arab and Indian.<sup>35</sup>

One could have argued that the courtyard addresses an Islamic requirement for privacy, but these layouts also accommodate non-Muslim tenants. While the overwhelming majority of people in Zanzibar are Muslim, the proportion of Muslims in Dar es Salaam is only about 43%.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the requirement for privacy, especially for women, is greatly reduced.

But we have here the same regional phenomenon – houses in continuous use for apparently a century over a wide geographic region by people from widely disparate ethnic and cultural dispensations show no perceptible quest for individual identity (see photographs above).

Considering the plan form and the close proximity to the neighbours in urban situations, cross ventilation could be a severe problem, especially considering the hot humid climate.

But Leslie writes: "The rooms in the main house are large and airy, not from open windows, as almost all have shutters (which are kept closed except when it is day and there is somebody in the room), but from access to the airspace under the roof, since the ceiling does not often cut the room off from above".<sup>37</sup>

Houses in continuous use for apparently a century over a wide geographic region by people from widely disparate ethnic and cultural dispensations show no perceptible quest for individual identity

**LIVING HISTORY** These photographs of Contemporary Swahili houses, taken in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, show many of the common characteristics.

Rooms generally measure about 4 x 4 metres, and the ceiling is often about 3 metres high.

We suspect that Sheriff's hypothesis is too simplistic. What, then, are the alternatives? The Swahili house is, after all, quintessentially a bungalow. But the bungalow-type only reached Africa towards the end of the 19th century. Even by 1910 the bungalow was still an official residence in the "East African Protectorate", as it was known, and at that stage the type had apparently not yet spread to the local population.<sup>38</sup>

King writes that the bungalow has not been widely accepted in Tanzania, since "...they cannot easily be separated into rooms and rented off".<sup>39</sup> But that is exactly how the Swahili house is being used.<sup>40</sup> The origin of the Contemporary Swahili house, therefore, is also unknown.

We essentially have three alternatives to explore – it could have been invented, or derived from a number of precedents:

- An earlier indigenous version – Siravo;
- The Lamu house – Sheriff's transformation hypothesis;
- The British colonial bungalow – King.

#### Towards a Research Plan

This envisaged study is about the two types of Swahili houses of the East African Coast. There are two critical questions:

- How did the two distinct types – Early and Contemporary – develop and what is the relationship between them? The types must obviously be researched within the settlement context. This knowledge is important to complement the history of vernacular African architecture.
- Why was the Early Swahili house the standard for the upper classes in earlier times, and why has the Contemporary Swahili house remained the main vernacular model of the East African coast for the ordinary folk since its "introduction"? Both types are obviously climatically ineffective and the Contemporary type wastes a lot of land. An understand-

## SWAHILI ARCHITECTURE

**UNIFORMITY** *A comparison of some East African plan forms: traditional, Zanzibar-Omani, Early Swahili and Contemporary Swahili houses. This comparison shows that a courtyard or a kind of outdoor living space is an inherent feature of these houses.*

ing of how typology actually works at user level would greatly enhance our ability to interpret user requirements.

Prior to the 1960s there had been little interest in vernacular architecture. Work by Rudofsky and Rapoport brought about awareness, which has grown ever since. But the focus seems to be on the more exotic architecture of West Africa, for example, the medieval cities of Kano, Timbuktu and Jenne, and the mud castles of the Mousgoum.

Much closer to home, the Contemporary Swahili house could have been "invented" or it could have developed from the ancient Afro-Arab type, or from an indigenous tradition, or even from the British colonial bungalow, into the most prevalent and enduring type of the East African Coast.

The significance of this study is not only the house type *per se* (why does it remain the standard type?), but also the fact that this type could be an example of how a building type could be modified or even transformed to adapt to new conditions. Future research should also explore issues such as whether the forms and types being studied have been invented, adapted or imported. This could initiate a discourse on the adaptive or invasive nature of technologies.

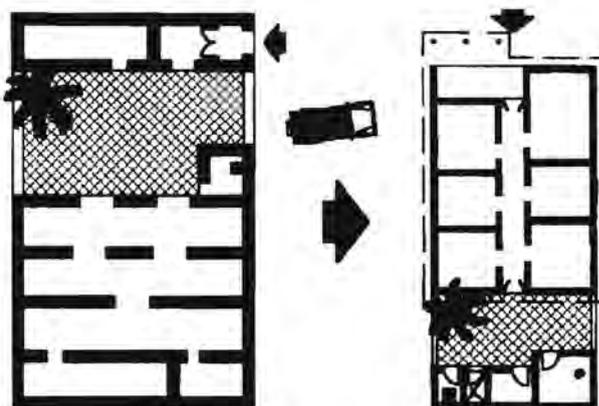
Few researchers would still suggest that climate is a main determinant of form. Rapoport and others have questioned those early assumptions and suggested that culture was the main determinant of form and that technology and climate were modifying factors only.

The Swahili house gives us an opportunity to test this position, since neither the original Early version, nor the Contemporary type, is particularly suited to the hot humid tropical climate! However, both types accommodate the Islamic requirement of privacy for the women of the house – certainly a major cultural consideration initially, but to what extent is it still relevant?

Finally, whereas the technology of the Early Afro-Arab Swahili house required specialised artisans (for example, for the plasterwork), the wattle and daub contemporary version is truly vernacular and could be built without any special skills. The masonry and metal roof version requires craftsmen with elementary training only.

Sheriff suggests that the Contemporary Swahili house evolved from the ancient Afro-Arab type. One can easily be seduced by the elegance of this hypothesis. But how did the original configuration really develop? We accept that research into ancient history rarely produces neat, well-defined answers – in the last decade, archaeology and anthropology have both demonstrated how advanced technologies could make previously accepted conclusions obsolete. The truth is probably much more complex than Sheriff suggests.

To trace the development of settlements and building types back in time and space requires an investigative and analytical



approach. Much of the data in the literature are either unreliable or unconvincing, or not truly suited to architectural interpretation.

The related literature should, therefore, be audited and specific field surveys identified. Such surveys should constitute recording settlements and buildings as well as interviewing owners and occupants. And what would the criteria for a comparative analysis be?

Garlake uses Vitruvian values to appraise Songo Mnara, but do protocols such as those formulated by Clark and Pause not offer more objective parameters?<sup>41</sup> How should qualitative issues be analysed? These are procedures that need to be clarified in follow-up enquiries.

The most significant potential outcomes are the following:

- The description of the type, its settlement context and its historical development – not properly covered in literature.
- An analysis of the process of typological evolution – a rare opportunity to study this phenomenon and develop improved mechanisms for interpreting user needs.

**Research on more than a thousand years of Swahili architectural tradition – part of it still functioning, all of it unique – is incomplete, outdated, and full of contradictions and even inaccuracies**

### Conclusions and Recommendations

It seems reasonable to assume tentatively that the concept of the Early Swahili house originated in the Middle East. But, to our knowledge, the concept has not been implemented anywhere else in such a homogeneous and consistent way over such a geographically dispersed area.

The way this standard plan developed and remained relevant for nearly a millennium – in spite of doubtful climatic performance – is an amazing phenomenon, and even a tentative explanation

would contribute towards the theory of residential design, apart from the pure historical value.

Most traditional African homesteads in Eastern and Southern Africa consist of one-room huts clustered around a lapa-type outdoor living space. Many authors even suggest that the division of the African hut into two or more rooms is rare.

In Tanzania such single-room huts are, amongst others, associated with the Wangoni, who apparently left South Africa in 1824 and settled in southern Tanzania in 1835, probably as a result of the turmoil in Southern Africa at that time.

But there are also some other cone-on-cylinder and rectangular types with multiple spaces, including different rooms and even mezzanine floors.

As a matter of fact, the Wagogo houses are well documented in literature, and are built as L-shaped forms, but also to enclose a cattle kraal on all four sides. Moreover, the Wahehe house is a form of impluvium-type courtyard house, which is also found in West Africa (Ashanti, Igbo and Yoruba).

The people of East Africa, therefore, have apparently had previous exposure to structures that combine rooms under a single roof, and it is not inconceivable that the Contemporary Swahili house could have developed from an ancient traditional type of house. If this "home-grown" theory could be substantiated, the single-room myth would have to be reconsidered.

Architects tend to interpret user needs according to their own value systems. An understanding of how the two types of Swahili houses emerged, and became the norm for so many people for such a long time, would not only allow a much less simplistic evaluation of user needs, but would also contribute significantly to the theory of typological transformation in architecture.

It is inconceivable how research on more than a thousand years' architectural history – characterised by two unique types of houses – could be restricted to a handful of authors and publications. Even the most recent surveys of historical sites, such as Takwa, Kilwa and Songo Mnara, are about a quarter of a century old. It is significant that Garlake's perspective drawings of Husuni Kubwa (the 13th century palace complex at Songo Mnara) represent one of the few efforts to reconstruct an early Swahili building.

There is undoubtedly a need to reconstruct more of the significant settlements and buildings in this manner. With new imaging and computer-modelling techniques, researchers now have tools Garlake never had.

Finally, while statements regarding the origin and subsequent development of the Swahili architectural examples are often presented with seeming authority, even a preliminary and superficial investigation reveals glaring errors.

Tanzania and Kenya are visitor-friendly and most of the historical sites are accessible. If data and surveys are so limited and inferences so weak under such comfortable conditions, one cannot help questioning the value of some of the work on the architecture of remote and hostile areas!

Swahili houses constitute a significant portion of the African architectural heritage. It seems, however, that research on more than a thousand years of Swahili architectural tradition – part of it still functioning, all of it unique – is incomplete, outdated, and full of contradictions and even inaccuracies.

An international and multidisciplinary research project is required to review and update our knowledge of Swahili architecture. It is hoped that this study will persuade other educational institutions and research agencies to participate. ■

Gerald Steyn is the head of postgraduate studies and Professor for Research and Development at the Department of Architecture of the Technikon Pretoria. He holds a PhD degree from the University of Pretoria.

This report emanates from a field trip to Zanzibar in 2000 and one to Lamu in 2001, both financed by the National Research Foundation (NRF). The theme is related to two NRF-funded projects. The first investigates the vernacular courtyard houses of Africa, and the other, African settlement patterns.

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# Management after Magic

**A discussion and comparison between the leadership styles of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki**  
By Cornelia Stols

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more with the day-to-day issues within the country? In answering each of these questions the personality of the leader must be considered because it provides the lens through which the leader perceives his/her environment as well as his/her leadership role within that environment.

Only after clues are gathered while answering Lewis's questions can one attempt to categorise a leadership style. The three categories of leadership styles identified by Heywood are laissez-faire leadership, which refers to a "hands off" approach; transactional leadership which in contrast involves a "hands on" approach and finally, transformational leaders who are often perceived as visionaries and inspirers.<sup>3</sup>

**The person(alitie)s who lead**

The political environment in which leaders grew up, as well as their past experiences, play an enormous role in shaping their personalities and in turn their leadership style. Hermann emphasises this by stating that leaders are both "products of their environment and their times".<sup>4</sup>

Nelson Mandela, the first president of a democratic South Africa, was one of the principal figures in the liberation struggle and spent 27 years in jail after being found guilty of high treason in the Rivonia trial. When Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964 he uttered the famous *cri de coeur* from the dock, which confirms that he aims to devote his life to "the ideal of a democratic and free society in which persons live together in harmony and with equal rights".<sup>5</sup>

Besides defining his principal goal in life and shaping his personality, Mandela's liberation struggle background as well as the time he spent in jail made an enormous contribution to the way in which this leader is perceived. Wilhelm argues that Mandela's "imprisonment of 27 years made him both a stranger and an icon".<sup>6</sup> The perceptions that exist about Mandela did not always come about as a natural result of his role. Winnie Madikizela Mandela, for instance, recalls "a deliberate decision was taken by the ANC to use him as a symbol of resistance".<sup>7</sup>

Mandela's devotion to the liberation struggle and the perceptions that exist about him point one in the direction of classifying his leadership style as charismatic in nature. The charismatic-revolutionary type of leadership is described by Geldenhuys as one of three salient types of leadership identified according to Kissinger's leadership typology.<sup>8</sup> Kissinger used "leaders of the new nations" as an example of this leadership type and highlights that their personal experiences in the struggle for independence have provided the impetus for these leaders.

In Mandela's case it has been his personal experience in the liberation struggle that has provided this moving force. Thabo Mbeki, on the other hand, lacks a "heroic bibliography": "His relative youth and modest family background are factors that could inhibit the development of charismatic leadership attributes".<sup>9</sup>

Apart from his background and what he believes to be his calling, Mandela also qualifies as a charismatic leader when measured against Max Weber's understanding of the term 'charisma', which emphasises the contribution that perceptions make to leadership style. Weber states that "the term 'charisma' can be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue

**MANDELA AND MBEKI** "Mandela has been the distant CEO who has kept a watchful eye over government, while Mbeki has been the more hands-on MD"

of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman and at least as having specifically exceptional powers and qualities".<sup>10</sup>

Mandela undoubtedly possesses some exceptional personal characteristics, which have filtered through in his leadership style. One of these characteristics is his ability to "reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable". Mandela is the "turner of the other cheek" and the man who demanded that at the core of the transition was the need to "forgive and reconcile". This conviction guided his focus within the domestic environment.

Nelson Mandela has been described as a "Mother Theresa-figure" and he is the embodiment of reconciliation and peace for many South Africans. Moreover, Mandela's charismatic personality has not only cast its net over South Africa but extends into the international arena. As Sitas points out, "For the world community, Nelson Mandela is synonymous with South Africa's democratic transition".<sup>11</sup>

Although Mandela is perceived by so many as a symbol, icon or even a saint, this image seems to disquiet him. His diffident reaction to former British Labour MP, Brian Walden's description of him as "incompetent, amateurish and feckless" substantiates this argument. Mandela responded by saying that such remarks "helped to dispel the idea that he was superhuman".<sup>12</sup> This is, however, one of the few instances when Mandela was criticised. This tendency might be linked to Mandela's charisma and the subsequent reluctance to criticise someone who has in many circles acquired superhuman status.

In contrast, it has become almost fashionable to criticise Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's successor. Nieuwoudt notes this tendency and refers to it as "Mbeki-bashing".<sup>13</sup> She did this in particular in reaction to Lester Venter's severe criticism in his book *In the shadow of the rainbow* of Mbeki's handling of the HIV/AIDS crisis, the Zimbabwean issue as well as his reluctance to meet with the Dalai Lama.

But does the fact that Mbeki has been the target of more criticism than Mandela mean that he has made more mistakes? This is not necessarily the case and the reason for the criticism might lie in the difficulties involved in following an icon and the fact that "Mbeki is a mere mortal man".<sup>14</sup>

As with Mandela, Mbeki's personality and approach to leadership has been shaped by aspects pertaining to both environment and time. Born the son of African National Congress and South African Communist Party stalwart Govan Mbeki, Thabo Mbeki joined the ANC at the age of 14.<sup>15</sup> He is an economist who learned his diplomatic skills while under the wing of former ANC president Oliver Tambo. Mbeki's background has equipped him with the necessary tools to be an excellent negotiator – which is validated by the key role he played in 1996 during the promotion of a peace initiative between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party.<sup>16</sup>

It was also Mbeki's negotiating and diplomatic skills that enabled the ANC to lure General Constand Viljoen, Freedom Front Leader, "away from the dangerous rightwing to the coun-

It has become almost fashionable to criticise Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's successor. The reason might lie in the difficulties involved in following after an icon and the fact that Mbeki is a mere mortal man



selected Mbeki because he viewed Mbeki's complementary leadership style as being advantageous to the presidency.

Malala discusses the attempts that have been made to change Mbeki's image from a branded "doer", out of touch with the ordinary people, lacking charisma and aloof, to a leader who is a mixture of the people's touch embodied by Nelson Mandela and the intellectual, youthful and optimistic outlook embodied by the UK's Tony Blair.<sup>20</sup> When shifting the attention to the "complementary" nature of Mandela and Mbeki's leadership

styles the big difference seems to lie in management and magic.

try's historic all-inclusive elections of April 1994 and, eventually, to parliament".<sup>17</sup>  
In addition to the experience that Mbeki acquired before 1994, especially in exile, his experience gained as part of government has also become a determining factor in his leadership style. Two of the questions that Hermann poses in her discussion of background factors and their influence on leadership styles are: "What kind of experience has the political leader had in the position he now holds?" and "How similar is the present position to others he has held?"<sup>18</sup>

She goes further by stating that the answers to these questions will provide the analyst with some idea about the "repertoire of behaviours the leader will have" as well as "how much the leader will have to learn on the job". In this regard it is important to mention that Mandela was in a sense thrown into the deep end when it came to governing a country since he had no past experience within government, whereas Mbeki enjoyed the advantage of being Mandela's "understudy" during his term in office.

It is often argued that leaders have been known to select advisors and staff with whom they feel comfortable and compatible.<sup>19</sup> It can therefore be hypothesised that Mandela and Mbeki have similar leadership styles and Mandela was apt to select Mbeki to be his deputy president as a virtue of these similarities. One could even go further and explore the ways in which Mbeki's leadership style has been influenced by Mandela's style of leadership.

There is, however, evidence that some of the similarities that do exist between Mandela and Mbeki can be attributed to deliberate efforts to incorporate some "Madiba Magic" into Mbeki's leadership style.

Despite the mutual aspects within their leadership styles, Mandela and Mbeki's leadership styles are rather more complementary or "compatible" than similar. Mandela might even have

One of the character traits that is prominent in Mbeki and lacking in Mandela pertains to the management or "Tony Blair" component of Mbeki's leadership approach.

Nyatumba explains the relationship between Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki during Mandela's term in office as "somewhat similar to that between a chief executive and a managing director in the private sector: Mandela has been the distant CEO who has kept a watchful eye over government, while Mbeki has been the more hands-on MD".<sup>21</sup> The hands-off approach of Mandela is characteristic of a laissez-faire leadership style whereas the hands-on approach of Mbeki is reminiscent of a transactional style of leadership.

Hermann also highlights the role that beliefs play in moulding a politician's leadership style.<sup>22</sup> These beliefs are often the foundation of the goal towards which the leader is aiming his/her strategies and behavioural patterns. It also influences all of the leader's perceptions, including those regarding leadership.

Thus, as strongly as Mandela believes in freedom and equality for all, Mbeki believes in the African ideal. Mbeki's African ideal crystallises in his vision of an African Renaissance. Traces of this ideal were already evident in Mbeki's speech to parliament with the adoption of the South African Constitution in 1996.

In this context, Esterhuysen describes Mbeki as an Africanist of the late 20th century – someone who stands on the verge of the century with a dream for his own country and for Africa.<sup>23</sup> Mbeki has a passion for and is committed to the development of the potential of the people of Africa.

**Mandela has made reconciliation his crusade; Mbeki, while not denying the need for South Africans to come together, talks more about transformation**

#### **Focused on the end goal**

When analysing the focus of leaders, their primary goal is a logical point of departure. We have touched on these goals in the course of the discussion of Mandela and Mbeki's personalities:

“Mandela has made reconciliation his crusade; Mbeki, while not denying the need for South Africans to come together, talks more about ‘transformation’”.<sup>24</sup>

While president, and even afterwards, Nelson Mandela focused his attention within the domestic environment on the ideals of non-racialism and national reconciliation.<sup>25</sup> This policy and operational focus has been “the theme of his administration and the basis of the esteem in which he is widely held”.

He has acted as a facilitator and peacemaker, for instance by intervening successfully to retain the Springbok emblem on the national rugby team’s jerseys and working towards obtaining peace in Kwa-Zulu Natal through his attempts to co-operate with the Zulu king and the amakhosi.<sup>26</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was aimed at settling the ghosts of the past, is described by Sitas as “one of the most significant pieces of nation-building ever imagined”.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, Mandela’s involvement in the Masakhane project, a project directed towards building a united “rainbow nation”, is yet another example of the way in which his domestic focus correlated with his ambition of bringing about a “democratic and free society in which persons live together in harmony and with equal rights”.<sup>28</sup>

Mandela’s preoccupation with the rainbow nation ideal was also reflected in the appointments he made. Before the start of the Mbeki presidency, Nyatumba predicted that since Mbeki is more of a technocrat, he would base his choice of appointees on the candidate’s ability to do the job and consequently “rainbowism” would lose significance as a criterion.<sup>29</sup> The appointments that have been made during Mbeki’s term in office have proven Nyatumba wrong, with the scenario unfolding more as Schrire predicted.<sup>30</sup>

The cabinet was chosen on the basis of loyalty, instead of either competency or “rainbowism”. This has not only been true as far as cabinet appointments like the appointment of Gill Marcus, an experienced and respected ANC leader, as Deputy Finance Minister are concerned.<sup>31</sup> It also served as a criterion during the appointment of other government officials such as the National Director of Public Prosecution, Bulelani Ngcuka, and the Reserve Bank President Tito Mboweni.

Mandela’s focus was also generally a lot more people-oriented than Mbeki’s and to an extent this can be attributed to his background as well as personality and the role that these elements played in shaping his leadership style. Mandela can be seen as someone who was drawn into politics by a sense of obligation towards the people.

According to Hermann, leaders motivated by a sense of obligation tend to become involved with moral and ethical issues.<sup>32</sup> This was indeed the case with Mandela. There has been “a tone of strict, old-fashioned disapproval” whenever he comments on “the national lack of moral fibre”. He has even referred to a “filthy nation” when momentarily caught off guard while speaking on television.<sup>33</sup>

Mandela’s “big idea” is encapsulated in his personal vision of democracy, equality, unity and non-racialism and is the underlying force in all of his domestic endeavours. Mbeki’s “big idea” is intertwined with his African identity and is gradually emerging via “his efforts to give the country’s domestic politics a more overtly African complexion”.<sup>34</sup>

Mbeki’s domestic policy focus also has to be viewed within the political context of the time: “Mbeki himself says the five years of the Mandela administration were about putting into place new governmental and social structures to move the country out of apartheid and into a better era for all its people. Now it is up to him to make the structures work and the improvements happen.”<sup>35</sup>

Mandela’s leadership produced an environment of “relative social stability and political peace” balanced “precariously on rising expectations”.<sup>36</sup> Mandela’s ability to manage black expectations rested largely on the economy. There was a direct correlation between whether he was able to deliver and the way blacks perceived his contributions to peace, jobs and welfare.<sup>37</sup> Mandela’s term in office is now something of the past but these expectations remain a reality that Mbeki has to focus his domestic policy on.

Mbeki is an economist, and it is only natural to assume that he will use economic routes to direct domestic policy towards promoting his African ideals as well as addressing the needs and expectations of people in the country.

Policies implemented under Mbeki’s leadership support the notion that “political stability and the building of a non-racial South Africa are inextricably tied to a transformation in the material circumstances of the black majority”.<sup>38</sup>

Already in November 1994, Mbeki conveyed the conviction in a Strategy and Tactics Document that was later adopted as ANC policy that “reconciliation would have to be counter-balanced with delivery to the black – but particularly African – majority”.<sup>39</sup>

Mbeki is also the principal architect of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution macro-economic strategy (GEAR), which was unveiled in June 1996. In 1998, Mbeki put forward the Employment Equity Bill, which seeks to deliver black empowerment. This Bill aims to do so by creating workplaces which more accurately reflect the racial composition of South Africa.

The ANC under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki is also debating the merits of a basic income grant for the desperately poor, and affirmative action and “Africanisation” have become realities under Mbeki. During his term in office, then, government policies have become part of a deliberate effort towards seeking accelerated delivery to the black masses and to advance them economically.<sup>40</sup>

These policies, however, touch on the raw nerves of the racial question in South Africa as “competition for scarce resources such as top positions in the private sector heats up”.<sup>41</sup> In this context it could be argued that there is a contradiction in focus between Mandela and Mbeki.

To an extent Mbeki has burnt some of the bridges that Mandela built in an attempt to overcome the racial divides that are so deeply entrenched in South African society. Mbeki’s aim with his economic policies is undoubtedly not giving rise to a “racial Armageddon” because “he understands too well that it will not be in the country’s interest for such a conflict to take place”.

Mbeki’s primary concern, rather, remains the economic upliftment of the African majority who still largely represent a marginalised group at the bottom of the economic ladder.<sup>42</sup>

**Mbeki’s primary concern remains the economic upliftment of the African majority who still largely represent a marginalised group at the bottom of the economic ladder**

## Managing a vision

From the beginning of his rule, Mandela was relatively unengaged and started to distance himself from the daily political brawl; shifting his focus to the fulfillment of the ceremonial aspects of his duties.<sup>43</sup> Schrire remarked that Mandela became satisfied with “leading from behind” and over time came to rarely chair even Cabinet meetings.<sup>44</sup> In so doing, he enabled Mbeki to adopt the role of de facto Prime Minister.<sup>45</sup>

The rationale behind this move was twofold: it created a controlled environment in which Mbeki could learn the ropes of the presidency and it served to counteract some fears surrounding a post-Mandela era. Mbeki’s election as ANC president at the organisation’s 50th national conference in December 1997 in reality marked the beginning of the post-Mandela era and reassured the people by guaranteeing some form of continuity.

It is worth emphasising that despite the laissez-faire leadership style that Mandela adopted he did not become an “insubstantial figurehead” as a result of this leadership style. He remained politically astute in areas such as choice of key personnel and policies of reconciliation. At the same time it is a reality that Nelson Mandela was ignorant of many details of policy and had an apparent shortcoming in managing many aspects of government. His exceptional gift for influencing and convincing people, however, overshadowed this shortcoming and Mbeki aided where Mandela fell short.<sup>46</sup>

After 1999, Mbeki continued to display the characteristics of a transactional leader by organising his staff in such a way that he can “oversee policy and direct the implementation of initiatives in economics, security and foreign affairs”.<sup>47</sup> He became known for adopting the roles of both manager and leader. This is a vague political philosophy, borrowed from Tony Blair, through which governing a country is seen as a business.<sup>48</sup> Besides extending his role Mbeki adopted policies that include scaling down the government, an increasing focus on the free-market principle, as well as moving the focus away from local government such as the municipalities and towards the metropolitan areas that are in line with these business principles.<sup>49</sup>

The fact that Mbeki seems to have adopted both these roles raises the question of whether these two roles are mutually exclusive or not. Cook explains leadership as being about “giving direction and energy” whereas management is about “being efficient and going through the steps of getting there”.<sup>50</sup> If the definitions are used as a foundation one could argue that these two roles could in fact complement each other but may be mutually exclusive in some cases as well. It should be noted that personality, leadership style, human capabilities and time impose limitations on the simultaneous fulfilment of both these roles by any one person.

A president can, however, provide leadership by giving direction through the formulation of a vision and by motivating and convincing the constituency of the value of striving towards that goal. At the same time the president can also be of assistance along the road heading towards the goal, and in doing so, the president may then take on a role of a manager.

There is a goal in Mbeki’s ideal future, which is encapsulated in the African Renaissance and by providing the direction towards this goal he is becoming both South Africa’s and Africa’s

leader. Due to his commitment towards the achievement of this goal he is intensely involved in building a path towards his goal. With every step of the path that is completed, he is managing South Africa. The path starts in South Africa’s domestic political arena, it winds from the Cape to Cairo, and will eventually link Africa to the world.

It started with Mbeki’s famous “I am an African” speech, grew with his efforts to give the country’s domestic policy a more overtly African complexion, and is extended by policies such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development.<sup>51</sup>

The roles of leader and manager were, however, mutually exclusive in Mandela’s case. At the core of Mandela’s ideal transition was the need to forgive and reconcile. He was the “animator of the ideas of nation-building, of the new South Africa and of the Rainbow nation”. He argued that justice had to be measured in terms of socio-economic equality as well as by emancipation from poverty. These goals were very honourable as animating visions and left creative popular respondents ‘speechless’, but Mandela failed to achieve all three during his term in office.<sup>52</sup> He provided the direction and energy but was not there to guide the process every step of the way.

## Taking a step back

The direct impact that the leadership of Mandela and Mbeki has had on South Africa is most noticeable, but taking a step back to view the broader influence of their leadership adds a whole new dimension to the analysis. The era of “Madiba Magic” represents the reconciliation of racial antagonisms, healing of deep wounds and the securing of a brighter future.<sup>53</sup>

This, however, merely represented the first few steps of a long walk towards a more democratic, equal and fair South Africa. It also has to be borne in mind that at this stage it is easier to take steps backwards, and that the real challenge lies in keeping the process on track. Mandela indeed left Mbeki with a valuable legacy – political peace – but this legacy is just as vulnerable as it is valuable and in that sense “we stand or fall with the Mbeki presidency”.<sup>54</sup>

Fears have already been expressed that Mbeki will “run the South African government in a manner that resembles that of other African leaders”.<sup>55</sup> Warning signs have been sighted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London and played up by opposition parties. These include Mbeki’s “ruthless streak” (i.e. the belief that he has sidelined or forced people like Cyril Ramaphosa and Tokyo Sexwale out of government) and his subsequent “maneuvering” of his most trusted Congress loyalists into key government positions.

The biggest fear, however, is that “Mbeki will start off a democrat and finish an autocrat”. The ANC’s campaign for a two-thirds majority in the 1999 elections fuelled this fear. Increased power does not however represent the real threat; rather the threat lies in the irresponsible handling and use of that power. Given the problems facing Mbeki and rising expectations of changing the “two-nation” rich white/poor black character of South Africa, it can be argued that “a little autocracy can go a long way” in managing the post-“Madiba Magic” era.<sup>56</sup> Esterhuysen underlines this by highlighting the need for a transformational leader who can govern

Given the problems facing Mbeki and rising expectations of changing the character of the country, it can be argued that “a little autocracy can go a long way” in managing the post-“Madiba Magic” era

the country in a strategic manner.<sup>57</sup> This type of leadership style necessitates involvement in almost everything precisely because strategic policy formulation is linked to almost every aspect of the environment. In some circles there is, however, not a deep understanding of this.

If we now take a step back and distance ourselves from the domestic criticism that accompanied the post-Apartheid era it becomes evident that the positive spin-offs of Mandela and Mbeki's leadership have extended far beyond South Africa's borders. Mandela and Mbeki together brought South Africa through a time that could have been horrifyingly different.

During those dangerous years of transition, there could have been civil unrest followed by racial wars – in addition to social and economic collapse. Instead, with the help of all races, they managed to preserve South Africa's stability and potential wealth and create new institutions.<sup>58</sup>

The mostly peaceful strides that the integration of South African society has made since 1990, sets a powerful precedent for other countries grappling with the complexities of social integration and democratic transition, especially other African countries.

Mandela has been and still remains one of the most visible personalities in contemporary politics.<sup>59</sup> He enjoys a certain leeway with his moral high ground and respect in a wide range of

circles. He is a politician whose name is world famous and due to his reputation as a peacemaker without equal he has been asked to mediate in countless conflicts both during and after his term in office.

Through his role as mediator, Mandela has also planted some of his seeds of peace on the African continent, notably through his contribution to the peace-building process in Burundi. Through his personal gifts he was also capable of making his country more prominent than its economy or geographic position would seem to warrant.<sup>60</sup>

Mbeki, in turn, has built on the foundation that Mandela laid, as well as South Africa's prominence that resulted from it. He has used South Africa's position as well as his own international influence to advance the plight of Africa within the global arena. His intense commitment was already evident in 1996 when he promised, "Africa will prosper!"<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, his efforts have already borne fruit in the realisation within institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund that they, aided by South Africa's emerging leadership role on the continent, can make a difference in a continent that some have already written off.<sup>62</sup> ■

Cornelia Stols is a student in Political Science at the University of Pretoria.

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# Planning Local Economic Development

Policy Challenges from the South African Experience  
By Christian M Rogerson

In the context of globalisation, the planning of so-called Local Economic Development (LED) represents one of the most popular policy buzzwords. Over the past decade, it has been argued that, "local economic development activities have assumed the importance once attached to regional policy"<sup>1</sup>. The increasing expansion of LED activities reflects a combination of factors, including significant structural adjustment problems in local economies, efforts to improve local competitiveness in the face of new forms of competition and production organisation, as well as the need for local actors and institutions to be active in the policy process.

The definition of the term LED is contested, however, and little agreement exists as to its meaning. For organisations such as the World Bank, the core objectives for LED are enhancing competitiveness and sustainable economic growth.<sup>2</sup> But for other analysts, the essential focus is on challenging the Washington Consensus and instead addressing challenges of unemployment, poverty alleviation and the imperatives for evolving pro-poor LED interventions.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, it must be conceded that LED is essentially an 'umbrella' term that encompasses a variety of organised responses that localities undertake as national economies are re-regulated in the context of globalisation.<sup>4</sup> LED offers opportunities for local government, the private sector, the not-for-profit sector and local communities to work together to improve the local economy and potentially also to address problems of poverty.<sup>5</sup>

Although the context for LED policy in the South is viewed as different from that prevailing in the developed North, recent international research concerning LED planning points to a "considerable convergence of policy prescriptions among the developed nations and, increasingly, among developing nations as well".<sup>6</sup>

Essentially, the directions of LED planning convergence are towards the pervasive adoption of so-called 'neoliberal' economic development prescriptions that involve place marketing for the attraction of inward investment; business retention strategies, support for new small enterprise development, enhancing local investment climates, cluster development and infrastructural improvement.

An alternative is a more bottom-up or market-critical approach of community development. The objectives in this path include achieving local self-reliance, empowerment, participation, local co-operation, redefining work, and sustainability.<sup>7</sup>

As a result of its current high policy profile, the activity and planning of LED generates a large volume of often contradictory writings and statements in South Africa. This article analyses contemporary directions and challenges that face the development planning of localities in South Africa as a potential developing world 'model'.

The paper seeks to identify some of the important blockages to locality economic development in modern South Africa. Within the developing world, South Africa is recognised as a leader in the planning of locality economic development.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, as compared to other countries in Southern Africa, LED planning and practice in South Africa is far advanced.<sup>9</sup>

## LED Planning in South Africa

### National Frameworks

Historically, in policy terms South African approaches towards thinking about and planning for LED have been strongly influenced by the experiences of Britain and the USA, where a substantial body of literature on the subject exists, and by Australia, where the response to declining small towns has close parallels in South Africa.<sup>10</sup>

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**RAISING HOPES** *A cornerstone of LED in South Africa is poverty alleviation and job creation.*

In Western Europe and North America the axis of LED is defined by Blakely as “essentially a process by which local government and/or community-based groups manage their existing resources and enter into new partnership arrangements with the private sector, or with each other, to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in a well-defined economic zone”.<sup>11</sup> Recently, the focus has shifted away from North America and Western Europe to the construction of increasingly indigenous South African debates around LED.

Since 1995 the lead actor and institution in developing a national framework for LED has been the Department of Provincial and Local Government (formerly the Department of Constitutional Development) which has produced a series of policy statements.<sup>12</sup> The involvement of this department culminated through October 2000-August 2001 in the workshopping of a draft national discussion document on LED. In addition, a number of other national government departments undertake important programmes which impact upon the planning of LED.

For example, the activities undertaken by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in terms of providing a framework for tourism-led LED initiatives cannot be overlooked.

Nevertheless, alongside the DPLG, the most important department influencing LED is Trade and Industry. For several years, the DTI has been expanding its implicit role for influencing LED in South Africa, through its responsibilities for Spatial Development Initiatives, tax holidays, cluster initiatives, small business development and so on.<sup>13</sup> The importance of the LED operations within DTI was acknowledged in early 2001 with the formalisation of an explicit LED unit which was granted responsibility for co-ordinating DTI’s activities and interfacing with the operations of DPLG.

The current South African understanding of “what is LED” is linked to the overarching concept of developmental local government and of the national government’s interpretation of LED as an outcome based on local initiative and driven by local stakeholders “to stimulate economic growth and development”.<sup>14</sup>

The process whereby local initiative combines skills, resources and ideas aims “to create employment opportunities for local residents, alleviate poverty, and redistribute resources and opportunities to the benefit of all local residents”.

In the draft LED policy paper a series of interlocking challenges that confront localities are defined as constituting the base for LED:

- to balance local economic strategies so they achieve both increased competitiveness – sometimes through economic transformation – and poverty alleviation and job creation;
- to address enormous pent-up demand for service delivery, particularly where services have not reached vulnerable members of society, as well as severe affordability constraints;
- to engage in more open, transparent and mutually respectful state-society relations;
- to forge new and reformed inter-governmental relationships.<sup>15</sup>

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Overall, the official South African conception of LED accommodates elements of what in the international literature are referred to as market-led and market-critical approaches towards LED.

### LED Planning Directions

The policy landscape of LED in South Africa has been shaped and re-shaped by a wide range of institutions and actors. As Bloch argues: “At regional and local levels, more people than ever before in public, private and community sectors are now engaged in crafting policy guidelines, designing practical activities and starting to implement them”.<sup>16</sup> Currently a range of local government led, private sector driven, CBO and NGO initiatives function to promote economic and social upliftment.

For some observers, the notion of LED as applied in South Africa is too broad-ranging in the scope of its activities such that the concept is slippery and seemingly lacks precise definition. The wide cast of actors involved in LED has aimed broadly at attempting to boost the employment, investment, economic growth performance and prospects for localities.

In some cases the goal of poverty alleviation is also highlighted. What this has meant is that the participants in LED across South Africa often find it difficult to distinguish clearly between the means that are being used to further the dictates of policy. In addition, there is much confusion over the responsibilities of different levels of government in South Africa in supporting the activity of LED. Indeed, a wide spectrum of different LED initiatives and practices operates in South Africa and encompasses both market-led and market-critical approaches.

The mainstream of LED activities is comprised of market-led approaches. The enactment of this approach of business development has been manifest through various kinds of LED activities undertaken across South Africa.<sup>17</sup>

Four essential strategies of “place entrepreneurialism” are identified. These relate respectively to promoting the roles of cities or towns as (1) centres of production, (2) centres of consumption, (3) centres for information-processing and corporate

decision-making, and (4) centres for the reception of central government funds. Each of these four basic entrepreneurial strategies is based on a different premise of the direction in which cities or towns would evolve and necessitates a set of different planning actions designed to match its particular strategic objectives. Planning interventions across South African areas parallel the international record with most urban centres initiating LED activities in support of building local competitiveness, many launching city improvement programmes and the majority seeking to support existing SMME development as well as to galvanise new entrepreneurship.

Although measures to incorporate poverty alleviation are a minor element in the record of LED planning in Western Europe, the enormous legacy of apartheid inequality has resulted in a strong and distinctive poverty focus for LED planning in South Africa's cities.<sup>18</sup> This strong poverty focus is not surprising in view of the enormous challenges of unemployment and poverty that confront most South African local governments. In terms of the mandate of developmental local government the establishment of pro-poor local development strategies is therefore central for sustainable urban development as a whole, particularly in dealing with this apartheid legacy of widespread poverty.

### Planning Challenges for LED in South Africa

In terms of the development of LED in South Africa, a number of important gaps have been discerned. At least four major sets of gaps or planning challenges may be discussed in relation to LED:

- leveraging private sector investment;
- regulations governing the activities of local government;
- institutional issues, including financing of LED;
- institutional coordination.

### Improve Leveraging Private Sector Investment

A critical theme for enhanced LED in South Africa is that of catalysing local growth through higher levels of private sector investment. The major blockages to private sector investment must be understood as occurring both at national level and at the locality-specific level. At the national level, important factors that would affect levels of private sector investment would include, for example, interest rates, trade policy or labour legislation.<sup>19</sup> By contrast, at the locality level, local growth will be affected for example, by a range of additional factors, most notably the unique set of place-based resources and infrastructure in any locality.

To illustrate the blockages on LED, attention will be given to leveraging private sector investment flows in Johannesburg, South Africa's leading urban centre. A major World Bank-led investigation has been undertaken of the factors influencing the investment behaviour of a sample of 325 large (50 or more employees) manufacturing enterprises situated in the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Area.<sup>20</sup>

Interviews were undertaken with the major decision-makers or chief executive officers of these enterprises. The study is set against the background that whilst global capital markets have judged the post-1994 macro-economic policy as fairly reasonable and the investment climate as positive, nonetheless a surge in pri-

vate investment accompanied by accelerated economic growth and job creation has not so far taken place.

The findings of the World Bank investigation are part of a wider study to understand the muted response from the private sector to the signals transmitted through national government's macro-economic policies. Moreover, the data aims to furnish the base of a local economic information system for the Greater Johannesburg area.

The major results of the World Bank LED investigation suggest important planning challenges for LED in South Africa. Overall, the CEOs of large manufacturing firms identified the following factors in descending order as the leading constraints on business growth: (1) crime and violence, (2) labour regulations, interest rates and exchange rates (all three ranked equally), (3) corruption in government, and (4) skills shortages and tax rates. Other, less significant, constraints include business and trade regulations, infrastructure and environmental factors.

A key theme and argument of the World Bank study is that in leveraging private sector investment for local economic growth a piecemeal approach to resolving any one constraint may not elicit the desired investment response.<sup>21</sup> Rather, it is argued that since an investor's appraisal of the economic environment is based on the sum of all key constraints as opposed to any individual constraint, policies aimed at realigning the fundamental macro-economic prices, interest and exchange rates are necessary but not sufficient to compensate for hard policy decisions associated with crime, labour markets or skills shortages.

Crime and theft were rated as the number one constraint upon business growth in Greater Johannesburg.<sup>22</sup> Although the CEOs interviewed rated Johannesburg's infrastructure highly in terms of international standards, the city was ranked poorly in terms of safety for investors: 83% of firms were victims of crime in 1998, over 60% experienced break-ins and on average firms spent about 1.6% of sales on crime prevention measures. Clearly, the World Bank argues, the level of crime and theft is such that it potentially repels investors from Johannesburg.

The second most important constraint upon investment by the private sector relates to what was described as the "hassle factor" in terms of recent labour regulations. It was argued that by requiring large employers to comply with specific clauses of these regulations associated with hiring and firing decisions, extension of collective bargaining agreements, number of unions that firms must do business with and so forth, the hassle factor is perceived as imposing a high implicit resource cost of doing business with formal employees in the post-1996 era. Moreover, whilst employers did not pinpoint any particular legislation as the problem, they unambiguously noted their negative response to the cumulative impact of the new labour market environment. The other notable structural blockage to investment was the growing difficulty in finding skilled labour across all occupational categories except clerical workers and labourers.

In terms of desired policy interventions the CEOs of private sector enterprises offered different policy agendas and interventions for national as opposed to local levels of government. For local government in Johannesburg the top five ranked factors were safety and security on the streets, maintenance of high eth-

**The enormous legacy of apartheid inequality has resulted in a strong and distinctive poverty focus for LED planning ... this is not surprising in view of the enormous challenges of unemployment and poverty**

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ical and moral standards among local government officials, infrastructure in terms of telecommunications, targeted financial incentives, and the provision of investment support and facilitation centres.

For national government, the core issues were ranked as the promotion of an efficient and flexible wage policy, maintaining policy stability, and promoting an efficient interest rate policy. The Greater Johannesburg study suggests the important conclusion that “the most crucial policy interventions required to spur growth in South Africa’s metropolitan centres of growth still lie at the door of national government”.

In addition, it is argued that the major structural constraints to growth are “intricately interlinked and require a comprehensive policy commitment to break the prevailing low investment-low job creation impasse and enable firms to move onto a path of sustained growth and job creation”. Overall, the findings from this important World Bank investigation point to the specific locality-level blockages that need to be addressed across South Africa in terms of leveraging private sector investment for LED.

### Clear Regulatory or Legal Constraints

The question of regulatory or legal constraints on the activities of local government is in a fluid situation with the recent introduction by the DPLG of the Municipal Systems Bill. The legal situation regarding LED is complex, as until recently there was no particular legislation in South Africa that dealt with and empowered local government to undertake activities related to LED.<sup>23</sup> Since the publication in 1998 of the White Paper on Local Government, a considerable improvement has been effected in the regulatory environment pertaining to LED.<sup>24</sup> In a recently completed review by the Economic and Social Directorate, Cape Metropolitan Council, several important general constraints were identified for municipalities seeking to promote or conduct various forms of LED.<sup>25</sup>

Of many legal constraints, four key regulatory issues must be highlighted:

- First, in terms of the powers of local government, there is a lack of clarity. Although Section 152 (1)(c) of the 1996 Constitution provides that one of the objectives of local government is to “promote social and economic development”, the objects and development duties of municipalities in terms of the Constitution are distinct from the powers and functions of municipalities as set out in Sections 156 and 229 of the Constitution. Accordingly, it is argued that “the exact role of local government with regard to economic development therefore remains somewhat unclear”.<sup>26</sup>

The Development Bank of Southern Africa argues that this lack of clarity is reflected in the notion of ‘co-operative governance’.<sup>27</sup> On the one hand, national government seeks to promote the relative autonomy of municipalities and provide them with sufficient flexibility to manage their own affairs. On the other hand, it needs to be able to exercise some control over the operation of all councils to ensure that they are operating in the best interests of the country as a whole. The DBSA observes that there is a danger in that the existing regulatory framework risks undermining developmental local government because the absence of clear policy guidance and

strong national leadership could leave municipalities unclear of their roles and responsibilities.

- Second, unlike the activities of certain local governments in Western Europe and North America, restrictions exist in terms of investments that may be made by South African local governments. Under Section 10 G (9) (a) of the Local Government Transition Act, municipalities are restricted in terms of “high risk investments or investments into new businesses”. What this means is that municipalities may only invest their funds in a list of permitted investments (such as bank deposits or government securities) and thus cannot provide credit to existing or emerging businesses.
- Third, whilst municipalities can sell their assets, such as public land, they may only do so at the defined market value. Most importantly, South African “municipalities cannot sell land below market value as a tool to stimulate investment”.<sup>28</sup>
- Fourth, no private investor may make a designated donation to a specific department or project that is operated by a municipality. Rather, all contributions must go into the Consolidated Revenue Fund and once in general coffers “be spent as designated by the approved budget”. This situation makes it difficult for municipalities to create linkages between their services and permission to develop and a specific contribution to an under-served area by a developer. This important question has been interpreted differently in various parts of the country and applied selectively within each of South Africa’s nine provinces.

Overall, the regulatory environment remains one of the key planning challenges relating to LED in South Africa. Despite certain improvements, it must be concluded that there are exist a number of important regulatory blockages that need to be addressed in terms of supporting the planning of LED.

### Address Institutional Issues

In terms of institutional issues surrounding LED planning in South Africa there are four important matters that must be acknowledged. First, there is the issue of institutional capacity for undertaking LED activities. It is well-known that there is unevenness in terms of capacity to undertake LED across the country with the greatest potential existing in well-resourced and in general the largest municipalities. Capacity is often weakest in more poorly resourced and small town and rural localities.

The emphasis that is given to ensuring that each municipality has an Integrated Development Plan is commendable but needs to be set against the fact that the IDP is a highly sophisticated planning tool that seeks to integrate and co-ordinate the activities within the municipality’s area of jurisdiction. In a recent review, the DBSA argues that the experience of attempting to implement IDPs reveals that in order to comply with legislative requirements, the IDP rapidly becomes too complex for the public and the majority of council officers to interpret and understand.<sup>29</sup> There is a danger therefore that the IDP may become self-defeating and degenerate into an expensive exercise for the benefit of private consulting firms and exert minimal impact upon the co-ordination of municipal activities.

Secondly, the institutional issues of funding for LED are commonly raised as a blockage upon successful LED in South

**There is unevenness in terms of capacity to undertake LED across the country with the greatest potential in well-resourced, larger municipalities. Capacity is often weakest in small towns and rural areas**

Africa with the oft-voiced complaint that LED is an 'unfunded mandate' for local government. It is apparent that there is a range of existing funding programmes to support LED that may be accessed across various government departments, including Agriculture, Housing, Labour, Public Works, DTI and DPLG. The national LED discussion document provides details of these funding programmes.

The DPLG discussion document identifies the need for certain institutional changes and argues that "there is significant room for improvement".<sup>30</sup> The key issues identified for improvement relate to (1) fine-tuning of programmes in order to assist municipalities; (2) better co-ordinating and integration of programmes to ensure that they reach their target groups; (3) improving co-ordination between DTI and DPLG in order to develop a more focused approach for assisting localities, (4) assistance to municipalities for facilitating greater access to programmes, (5) reducing the administrative burden on municipalities in accessing programmes and improving the knowledge of municipal officials of available funding programmes, and (6) most importantly ensuring an improved capacity to better co-ordinate the national government programmes which affect municipalities.

Third, there is a need for greater clarity on the effectiveness of the different programmes which impact upon LED. For example, DTI has a range of different interventions concerning the support of small enterprise development and competitiveness. It is important that the effectiveness of these different institutional programmes be evaluated and/or better understood in terms of consolidating or refining them as effective tools for LED programming assistance.

Finally, there is an important requirement that a framework be established for constructing a gendered agenda for LED in South Africa. In the draft discussion document on Local Economic Development the impacts of LED upon women are raised at various points. From an international perspective, this acknowledgment of gender in South African LED policy analysis is both innovative and welcome. Nevertheless, further progress is needed to advance the gendering of local economic policies. During the first decade of LED planning in post-apartheid South Africa, most LED practice has become dis-gendered to a major extent.

#### Define Institutional Responsibilities and (Lack of) Co-ordination

The activity of LED was established as an essential responsibility for national, provincial and local levels of government in terms of South Africa's 1996 Constitution.<sup>31</sup> In line with the principle of co-operative governance, provincial and local tiers of government were granted responsibilities albeit only restricted powers with regard to economic development.<sup>32</sup> It is suggested that the framers of the 1996 Constitution circumscribed these place-based responsibilities in terms of the national interest, fearing in particular the consequences of destructive competition between different localities for inward investment. Bloch suggests that other factors behind these circumscribed powers included the limited administrative capacities of many localities, their lack of experience in economic development planning and fiscal constraints.<sup>33</sup>

In light of this situation, precisely what provincial and local governments in South Africa, in partnership with the private sector, NGOs or communities, were supposed to do to "further their somewhat broad and undefined economic development responsibilities" remained somewhat unclear.<sup>34</sup> Over the last five years, a number of government White Papers and discussion documents sought to clarify this matter, the most recent being the 2000 draft discussion paper on LED.

The essential message in this draft LED policy document is that national government should support local government to achieve its central constitutional mandate of "promoting the social and economic development of the community". Several major strategies are spelled out, including promoting good governance; ensuring sensible forms of redistribution, achieving complementary linkages between large and small projects; establishing linkages to government's macro-economic and broader development strategies; and establishing a lead sector in local development.<sup>35</sup>

It is evident that the national tier of government bears the major responsibility for providing an adequate framework for supporting and reinforcing national LED priorities at local level. The capacity of national government must be such that its proper role is that to encourage diversity and innovation in LED practices at local level whilst operating an overarching strategic framework that is targeted to ensure that at local level national objectives and priorities are taken into consideration.

It is clear that a special responsibility exists for the assistance by national government of the economically most depressed or marginal spaces. These are the areas least likely to have the capacity to undertake LED activities and planning towards the construction of competitive economies.

In this regard it is an important responsibility of national government that it effectively researches and develops a definition of economically distressed areas or marginal spaces that require special targeted assistance for economic development. Overall, national government must assume the lead role for developing a remedial economic development approach that deals with the outputs of national level spatial inequalities.

In essence such an approach must combine business climate upgrading, with appropriate business attraction and support measures that have been effective in remaking the economies of distressed regions or marginal spaces.

#### Meeting LED Planning Challenges

In addressing the planning challenges that face contemporary local economic development in South Africa, a good starting point is to further clarify the different practices of LED. Unpacking the South African practice of LED planning, Bloch makes a useful distinction between the execution of policy into three different areas of practice.<sup>36</sup>

These are firstly attempts to improve the business climate of any place as a foundation for any economic development efforts. In addition to this, the practices of business attraction and business support follow.

All these three areas of LED planning practice are viewed as important for galvanising new job growth, industrial competitiveness, and improved living standards. Indeed, it is argued that

**The establishment of an appropriate business climate is the basic starting point for LED in terms of making any area an attractive place to transact business, or to lay the foundations for supporting job creation and enterprise**

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“they should form conscious part of the strategies now being devised by South African (policy) actors at different territorial scales”.

At the local and provincial level of government in South Africa, the three core economic development service functions relate to business climate, business attraction and business retention. With respect to business climate, it is argued that this “should be thought of as the foundation that any place furnishes for the conducting of the activities of economic production”.<sup>37</sup> The activities of business attraction focusing on external promotion and those of business support upon internal enterprise support can reinforce one another in a virtuous cycle for LED.

In turn these should contribute further to improving business climates as regards making localities both better places for existing business and more attractive locales for new business. With the foundations for growth set in place, localities should simultaneously develop and implement a suite of specific and active poverty alleviation measures for which several of the support programmes of DPLG are targeted to assist.

### Business Climate

For local and provincial governments, supported by information and finances from national government, the establishment of an appropriate business climate is a core responsibility.

Several factors which impact upon the liveability of places and their attractiveness as business locales include the provision of public goods (schools, higher education), physical infrastructure and services (transport, telecommunications) and services (electricity, water); the command and control of a regulatory system (business licensing, land use controls); the levying and collection of local rates and taxes; and police protection.

The establishment of an appropriate business climate is therefore the basic starting point for LED in terms of making any area an attractive place to transact business, or to lay the foundations for supporting job creation and enterprise competitiveness. Bloch observes that “the creation of a good business climate is a necessary floor” for the activity of LED.<sup>38</sup>

It is evident that in South Africa the need to build and maintain positive business climates is well-known and accepted by key LED actors at provincial and local levels.

Notwithstanding revenue and capacity constraints within certain smaller and less well-resourced municipalities, “there is experience in financing and delivering the municipal, human and social services upon which a good business climate must be based”.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, a start has been made in many areas in terms of confronting and overcoming some of the core blockages as regards local regulatory regimes and business regulatory structures.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, there are clear capacity variations between provinces, and between metropolitan authorities and lower levels of local government that will require monitoring and support initiatives from national government.

Undoubtedly, the worst difficulties are experienced once again in those marginal spaces or economically distressed parts of South Africa burdened with a situation of cumulative disadvantage for economic development.

### Business Attraction

The activity of business attraction is the element of LED practice which has the longest history in South Africa. Place marketing geared to the recruitment of new industrial investors was operated by municipalities in the Witwatersrand, Port Elizabeth and East London as far back as the 1920s.<sup>41</sup>

The prime focus of business attraction undoubtedly has been centred upon manufacturing activities. In the last two decades, however, the tools of business attraction have widened to include service activities, most importantly in terms of attracting company headquarter offices or business conference activities for tourism purposes.

As a result of its widespread occurrence and of its relatively long history of usage, the activity of business attraction in South Africa has confronted an array of criticisms concerning the destructiveness of ‘place wars’, ‘locational tournaments’ and the like, and of the ways in which enterprises can play off particular provincial or local government in their search for the best packages for attracting their investment. These criticisms notwithstanding, without undertaking the activity of business attraction there is the danger that many (smaller) places may fall off the investment map.

Despite its critics, there are strong political imperatives for the continuing activity of business attraction by provincial and local levels of government. Successful industrial recruitment can bring benefits in terms of not only new investment but also the introduction of new business or industrial practices and new product and process technologies that may be adopted and/or diffused into existing local enterprises. The overall consequence of successful business recruitment can therefore be enhanced competitiveness of particular localities.

Many local and provincial authorities have accumulated experience and capabilities concerning the activity of business attraction. In fact, business attraction is perhaps the most capacitated element of LED practice in South Africa. Overall, the national schemes and initiatives already function as a kind of investment promotion floor, which is then augmented by regional level participation, provincial initiatives and activities at the level of cities and towns.<sup>42</sup>

### Business Support

It is increasingly accepted internationally and also in South Africa that the

activities of business attraction by provincial and local LED actors should be supplementary to that package of tools and programmes which comprises business support. Essentially, business attraction is the external promotion of a locality to outside enterprises whereas business support is focused on internal enterprise development and competitiveness. Business support incorporates a suite of activities that involve business retention and expansion of a locality’s indigenous enterprises as well as the catalysis of new business start-ups.

The tools for business support are many and varied and encompass the application and tapping of national programmes to address local market failures and are often pursued in combination with the private sector and sometimes with NGOs or community organisations.

Among the array of business support mechanisms used internationally as well as in South Africa the following may be

**At the local and provincial level of government in South Africa, the three core economic development service functions relate to business climate, business attraction and business retention**

noted: programmes to modernise small and medium-sized manufacturers in terms of delivering problem-solving technical assistance; provision of management and marketing information to established and new entrepreneurs; export assistance measures; facilitation of access to finance by SMMEs; furnishing market information regarding tender preferences; skills upgrading for both managers and employees; venture capital assistance to address 'capital gaps' in local and regional financing; and a range of measures to encourage and nurture new business start-ups, including business incubators or programmes to assist in technological diffusion to new entrepreneurs. Enterprise support should be wide and inclusive of all enterprises in a locality, both large established enterprises and the SMME economy.

In terms of business support, the major area of controversy relates not to their application per se but as to the best means for their effective implementation.

As Bloch argues: "Business support measures should, by their nature, be discrete solutions to particular problems, designed and implemented pragmatically and incrementally as close to firms, workers and entrepreneurs as possible. Given their variety, these kinds of initiatives are well-suited to being piloted and assessed before being replicated."<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, business support measures should be seen as experiments in regional and local level competitiveness enhancement, which will be conducted with national support.

## Conclusion

The South African LED planning experience offers potential lessons to many other countries in the South, and especially for planning in other parts of Africa. A number of lessons emerge from the first years of LED planning in South Africa which may be relevant to the planning of LED in other parts of Africa.

Three sets of issues may be noted as of particular significance. First, the importance must be acknowledged of national government taking the lead in defining the parameters and framework for local economic development. Moreover, the important roles of national government in furnishing support programmes to encourage innovations at local scale should also be recognised. Second, the three economic development service functions relating to business climate, business attraction and business retention represent anchors for any local economic development programming, including even for the alleviation of poverty. Finally, the critical challenges of unblocking and leveraging private sector investment, clearing away regulatory blockages, setting in place appropriate institutional frameworks and co-ordinating the roles of different levels of government are generic matters that will surface in many countries' LED planning programmes. ■

Christian M Rogerson is a professor in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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# Micro lending at the crossroads

**Johan Hough profiles the training and skills development needs  
of the micro lending industry in South Africa**

**T**he micro lending industry has been identified as one of the growth areas in the financial services industry in South Africa, because of political pressure, increased demand from micro borrowers and the formal banking sector's lack of support for lenders and borrowers.

However, the micro lending industry in South Africa is now at a crossroads. Various strategic issues such as the availability of funds to lenders, risk and outstanding debt considerations, increased government intervention, high-level legal action, the formation of the Micro Finance Regulatory Council (MFRC), possible maximum prescribed interest rates, technological requirements, and changing client preferences, demand that micro lenders reposition themselves to adapt to these changes and to become more competitive and relevant in the 21st century.

The economic landscape of South Africa is not the same as it was five or ten years ago, nor is the pace of economic change expected to slacken in the next five or ten years. Rather, change is likely to accelerate.

Therefore, micro entrepreneurs and business managers must understand the impact of different economic systems, the role of the financial sector in these economic systems, which trends will influence these systems, what drives them, and, ultimately, how to develop a mind-set to 'manage' these changes.

## **Micro Lenders in South Africa**

It is important to clear up any uncertainties that may arise with regard to who is included in the term "micro lenders". The criterion generally applied to distinguish between formal and informal financial intermediaries is whether an intermediary is regulated by government or not. In terms of this generally accepted yardstick, there is no question that micro lenders used to form part of the informal or non-regulated financial sector. However, the distinction is made between "formal" (visible) and "informal" (unidentifiable) micro lenders in South Africa. Any references to micro lenders here will imply "formal" or MFRC registered micro lenders, though it should not be forgotten that they also formed part of the non-regulated financial sector until September 1999.

The services micro lenders provide are in reaction to the failure of formal financial intermediaries to serve a specific section of their potential market. This is the lower income section, mainly salaried black people, who chiefly borrow for paying accounts already in arrears. The market failure is due to the information asymmetries that exist between intermediaries and borrowers, the high operating costs of small loan accounts and the high transaction costs for borrowers to gain access to formal lenders. Micro lenders, nevertheless, solve these problems

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**TAKING THEIR CUT** *With an estimated 50-60% of the South African population still unbanked, the informal sector has nowhere else to turn but to the informal financial sector - or micro lenders - for funding.*



## MICRO LENDING

and they consequently succeed in meeting the demand of this segment of the market with regard to amount and term of the loan at a mutually acceptable rate of interest.

The failure of the formal financial sector to serve a certain segment of the potential market has resulted in the emergence of informal financial intermediaries. It is caused by a combination of high risk, high cost and low returns associated with such business. Furthermore, it is estimated that 50-60% of the South African population is still unbanked and with the lack of formal credit, the informal sector has nowhere else to turn but to the informal financial sector or micro lending sector for funding.

However, this is busy changing as bigger financial institutions are busy entering the market from 2000 and have transformed the market into a more professional and multi-product industry. A major factor in this transformation has been the entry into the micro lending market of major financial institutions and corporations.

Gabriel Davel, CEO of the Micro Finance Regulatory Council, says that major banks, financial institutions and corporations now regard micro lending as part of their core business. They include industry leaders such as FirstRand, Standard Bank, African Bank and Unibank, among others, as well as retail groups such as Joshua Doore and Ellerines.

There are 10 247 micro lenders registered with the council, with a total of 50 793 branches. Lenders span the entire spectrum of financial intermediaries, from small to very large companies. They currently include ten banks, six public corporations, almost 20 private companies and a number of close corporations.<sup>1</sup>

### The Justification for Informal Financial Services<sup>2</sup>

A market failure – in this instance the failure of the formal financial sector to serve a certain segment of its potential market – has resulted in the emergence of informal financial intermediaries. This failure of the formal sector banks is caused by a combination of the high risk, high cost and low returns associated with such business.

Banks are normally very careful in granting credit. The reason is that the delay involved in discharging the debt obligation exposes the credit transaction to considerable risk. To offset this risk, banks perform three tasks:

- They screen potential borrowers to establish the risk of default;
- They create incentives for borrowers to fulfil their promises;
- They develop various enforcement actions to make sure that those who are able to repay will do so.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Size of the micro lending industry in South Africa**

	Type and number of offices						Turnover (R billion)			
	Group		Single		Total		95	97	2002*	
	95	97	95	97	95	97	2002*	95	97	2002*
Formal	750	1 500	450	2 000	1 200	3 500		2.5	7.0	
Semi-formal				2 000		2 000			1.6	
Informal			4 000	25 000	4 000	25 000		1.2	1.5	
Total	750	1 500	4 450	29 000	5 200	30 500	51 000	3.7	10.1	15.0

\* estimate

However, these actions are often very difficult and costly to undertake in the case of the informal sector. The scarcity of data results in important information asymmetries between informal sector borrowers and formal sector lenders. To circumvent these asymmetries banks normally attach collateral requirements to loans. Unfortunately, these generally cannot be applied to the informal sector because they seldom have sufficient forms of conventional title.

Yet, even with the promise of higher rates, banks are still generally reluctant to provide credit to the informal sector.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, Stiglitz and Weiss argue that the interest rate assumes a dual function, i.e. it represents both the price of money and regulates the risk composition of loan portfolios.<sup>5</sup>

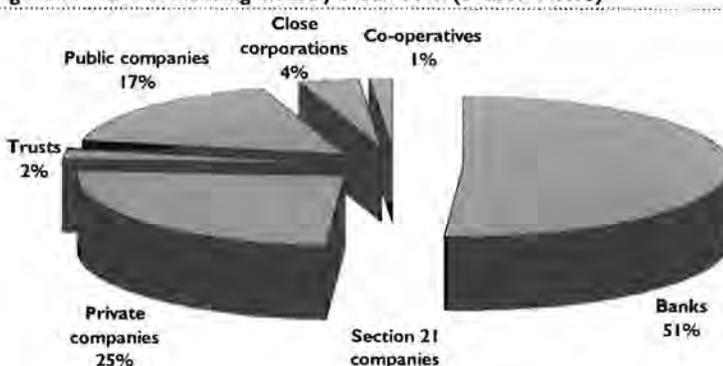
As the interest rate increases, borrowers with riskier projects will apply for funds. These borrowers are less concerned about high interest rates because they realise there is a greater likelihood that their projects will fail. In the event of this happening they will not have to repay their loans. In contrast, borrowers with lower risk projects are more likely to repay and will be the first to be discouraged by high interest rates.

The failure of formal sector banks to serve the informal sector has, however, not left the latter totally in the lurch. Their demand for financial services has led to the widespread emergence of informal financial intermediaries. These intermediaries have succeeded in overcoming formal credit market failure by utilising innovative techniques to minimise information and transaction costs.

Informal lenders have developed innovative forms of collateral, e.g. the requirement that clients must hand over their bank cards and secret PIN numbers to the micro lenders in South Africa, which in principle ensures that lenders have access to their borrowers' salary for repayment purposes.

Under the new regulation in terms of Government Notice 713 of 1999 of the Usury Act, however, these practices have been outlawed.<sup>6</sup> There is clearly a huge need for credit among South Africans who have either limited or no access to conventional banking services. Bad debt and profit warnings from players like Saambou may influence the credibility of this market.<sup>7</sup> But financial intermediaries exist because they succeed in meeting the demand for financial services that is not fulfilled by the formal financial sector.

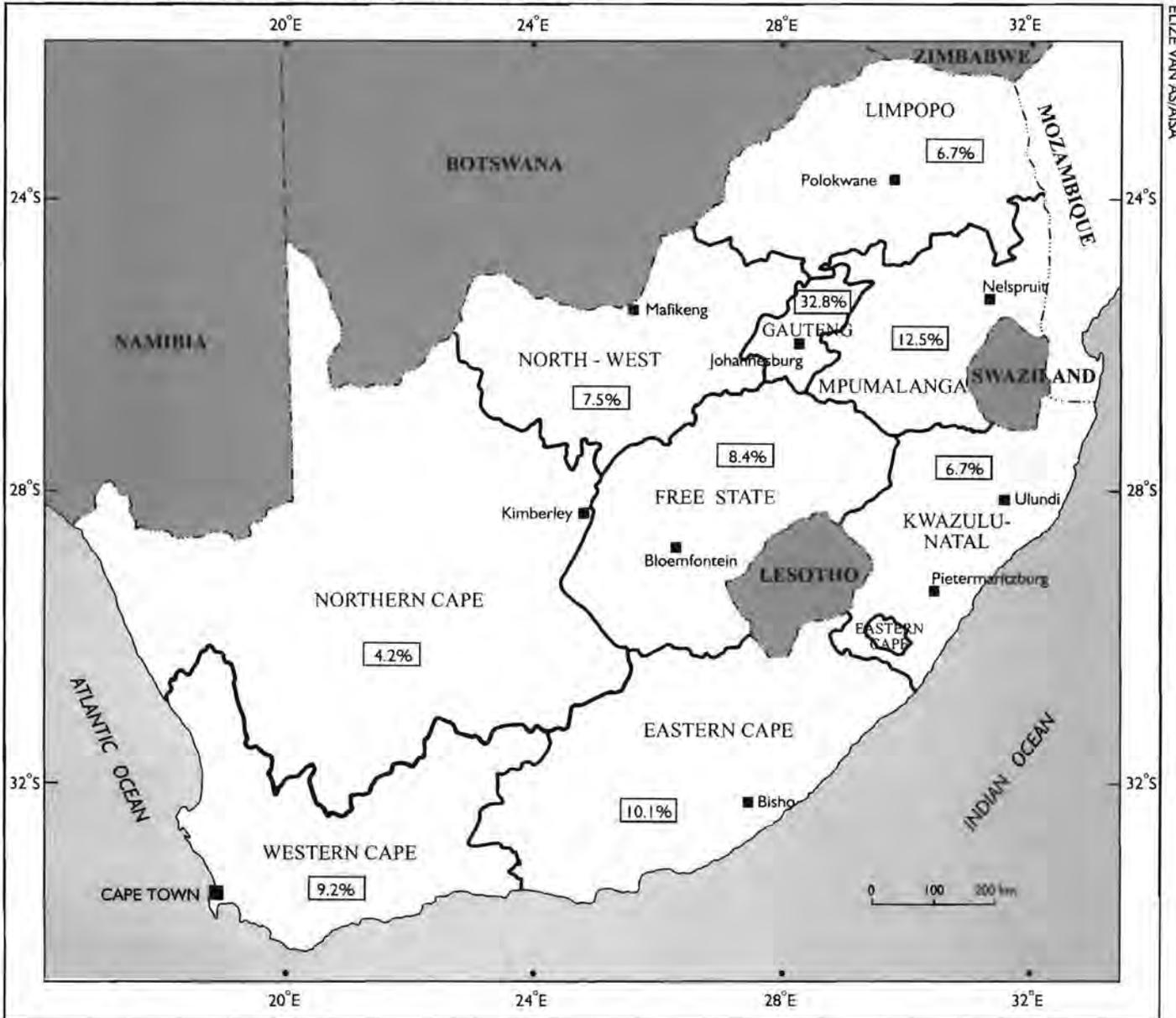
**Figure 1: The micro lending industry's loan book (Source: MFRC)**



### The Size and Structure of the Micro Lending Industry in South Africa

To conduct research into the informal financial sector, the mailing lists of the two biggest associations in the micro lending industry, the Micro Lending Association (MLA) and the Association of Micro Lenders and Associated Consumers (AMLAC), were used to send questionnaires to 1 892 registered members. Of these, 18% or 342 micro lenders responded.

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS



ELIZE VAN ASIAJA

No distinction was made between members of the MLA and AMLAC.

The main objective of this research was to determine the current training needs and skills requirements of the micro lending industry in South Africa, but in addition certain background information regarding the size and structure of the micro lending industry was obtained as part of the empirical results.

There is a wide variety of individual micro lenders, big companies, groupings and franchises active in the micro lending industry, with differences in lending policies, interest rates, values, geographical distribution, biographical particulars, and services and products. They use different legal entities such as sole proprietorships, close corporations, companies, business trusts and partnerships to serve the public and it is therefore virtually impossible to describe the industry in terms of a general grouping or representation or distribution. However, the MLA commissioned a survey in 1997 of their members and useful findings regarding the role and structure of the industry were published in a 1998 research report.

### Size of the micro lending industry

The micro lending industry is geographically distributed throughout South Africa. Micro lenders are located in some of the best, most up-market, First World areas of the main centres.

They function next to, or in close proximity to, most of the largest formal banks in the country. They are also found in just about every industrial and business area in every town and city in South Africa.

It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of participants and the total value of turnover of the micro lending industry in South Africa. The information in Table 1 stems from the data gleaned by means of the empirical survey and from discussions with the major role players in the industry.<sup>8</sup> A turnover for 2002 is also estimated.

The micro lending industry's loan book (Figure 1) indicates that commercial banks have the biggest share of the market, namely 50%, followed by private companies with 25% and public companies with 17%.

### Life cycle of the micro lending industry in South Africa

The life cycle of a product or industry describes the state and level of its development over time. Most products and industries have a life span of a certain number of years, after which, for many possible reasons, the industry might disappear, be changed dramatically because of new technology or may even get a new lease on life, depending on innovation and changes in market preference. The length of this cycle can range from months to decades.

## MICRO LENDING

The life cycle is normally divided into five distinct stages:

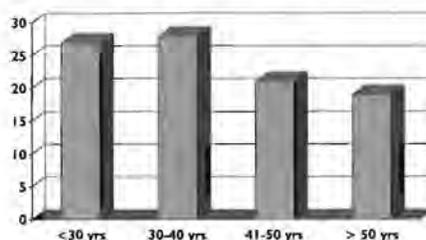
- The entrepreneurial or development stage, during which new initiatives and innovations give rise to the birth of a new industry.
- The introduction stage, when a product or service is launched in the market. The length of this period varies according to technological complexity and intensity of demand.
- The primary growth stage is determined by the extent to which a new product or service is accepted. If there are no structural barriers to new entry, the profit potential usually plays a significant role as regards the intensity of new entry and growth.
- The maturity stage sees growth in the industry begin to level off. The length of this period depends on the nature of demand and whether new technology or innovation can inject new dynamism, which may see a new growth period following the maturity stage.
- The declining or stagnation stage sets in if there is no new innovation or technology, and leads to the product or service declining until it disappears completely or is replaced by a new product or service.

According to these stages, the entrepreneurial period or development of the micro lending industry in its current format started taking shape during the years 1988 to 1992 in the Northern Province. Hendrik Smit and Louis Buys are commonly recognised as being the founders of the modern franchising concept of the micro lending industry.<sup>9</sup> This concept came into fruition with the exemption of loans smaller than R6 000 from the Usury Act in 1992. When the concept was introduced into the market, it took only one year to spread across the whole country.

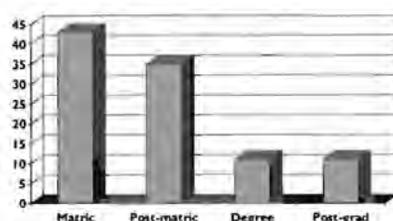
The primary growth stage was entered during 1993 and has increased almost exponentially in size until the end of 1999. The end of the primary growth stage can be placed during the early 2000s. The common characteristics of a life cycle at the end of the primary growth stage include the following:

- Increasing competition through new entrants as the profit potential becomes apparent;
- Many unscrupulous new entrants with a short time horizon enter the industry;
- Product innovation and new technology is introduced;
- Mergers and takeovers occur;
- Larger firms and corporations start positioning themselves for possible involvement in the industry;

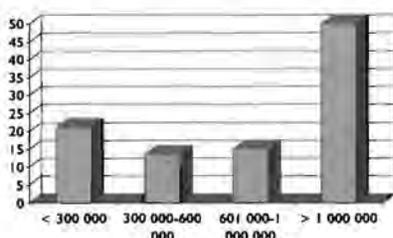
**Figure 2: Age distribution in the micro lending industry, 1999**



**Figure 3: Educational qualifications of micro lenders**



**Figure 4: Turnover per annum in the micro lending industry, 1999**



- Towards the end, less efficient operators dwindle and are eliminated;
- The quality of service of the survivors increases, as better service becomes more important.

The introduction of corporate governance principles in the micro lending industry might also be an indicator of maturity.<sup>10</sup>

The above symptoms are all already visible in the industry. Most of the formal groups are putting out feelers to the formal financial sector in an effort to establish some form of working arrangement, especially as regards access to new capital. As this restructuring continues to develop, the cycle should move into the maturity stage, which could last until around 2005. During this period, the position of government should become clear and the future of the industry should be either established or terminated, at least in a legal sense. Should the former evolve, as is expected, the large formal financial institutions will certainly exercise their options and take up significant stakes in the micro lending industry.

This might lead to a position where the industry does not enter into the decline stage, but rather starts a new life cycle, albeit in a different format. Should government decide on terminating the industry, or to impose control of such a nature that survival becomes difficult, the industry might decline, but will certainly not disappear. The informal sector will then again flourish. And many of the currently transparent micro lenders will go underground.

### Profile of the micro lender in South Africa

#### Geographical distribution and location

The distribution of micro lender respondents reflects their high concentration in the Gauteng area. As for the remainder of South Africa, the distribution is fairly even. Location is one of the strong selling points of the industry, in that they are close to their clients, usually within walking distance of the major employers, making it very easy to access their services. In the industrial areas, many have representatives on foot who solicit business and assist clients and potential clients in the working and procedures of the service.

Locations vary from the neighbourhoods of the corporate headquarters of the formal banking sector in Johannesburg, to the downtown business districts, industrial areas and close to points of concentrated commuter traffic and residential areas of clients. One of the outstanding features of the industry is that the facilities and services are brought to the clients, saving them the inconvenience of travelling long distances, which takes time and money.

### Biographical particulars

Age, gender, educational qualifications, and number of years involved in the micro lending industry were researched. The age distribution (see figure 2) among micro lenders showed a large concentration of respondents in the younger age groups, with 55% of all respondents being younger than 40.

From figure 3, we can see that more than 40% of the respondents have at least a matriculation (school-leaving) qualification, and over 30% have some form of tertiary education, in the form of a Technikon diploma or post-matric certificate.

A significant percentage also have a degree or post-graduate qualification. This reveals that micro lenders in South Africa are well-educated, especially when compared with the general population, and that educational programmes focusing on the needs of the micro-lending industry might be well received by them.

Moreover, in 1999, the majority (64%) of "formal" micro lenders were registered as close corporations, while only a small percentage of private and public companies were directly involved. This situation has since changed dramatically, as banks, private and public companies entered the industry, becoming major role players.

The turnover per annum of the respondents is shown in Figure 4. Only 20% of respondents indicated that their annual turnover is less than R300 000, while 50% have turnovers of more than R1 million a year.

### Assessment of the training needs in the micro lending industry

This assessment is based on 342 questionnaires received from micro lenders in South Africa. As figure 5 shows, the legal environment and especially detailed information about the Usury Act is of vital importance to the micro lender. The interest generated by a recent court case of the MLA against the Department of Trade and Industry confirms the importance of legal issues for the industry.

There is also a pressing need for more information about the industry itself. Interviews with micro lenders highlight the need for structured and factual feedback on issues like the following:

- Role and structure of the micro-lending industry;
- Profile of the clients of the micro lending industry in South Africa;
- Impact of the market environment on the micro lending industry;
- Analysis of the legal environment and the Usury Act which regulates the industry;
- Driving forces of long-term growth in the industry;
- Basics of entrepreneurship.

The importance of communication skills and especially more understanding of multi-cultural communication was also expressed during the interviews.

In addition, there is a need for a basic understanding and analysis of financial statements, fair lending practices, financial planning, the time value of money, capital budgeting techniques and effective cash management, as shown in figure 6.

Effective cash management and financial planning are perceived as the two most vital areas, although almost 60% of the respondents also noted that budgeting skills are very important to stay in the micro lending business.

Interviews with micro lenders also reveal the following financial training needs: the basics of management accounts, how to approach a bank manager, and determining the value of a micro lending office or branch.

Figure 5: Scanning of the South African business and micro lending environment

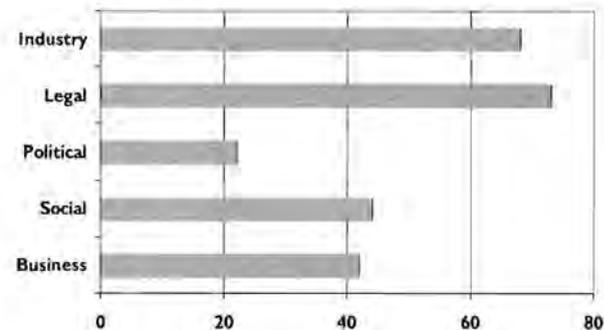
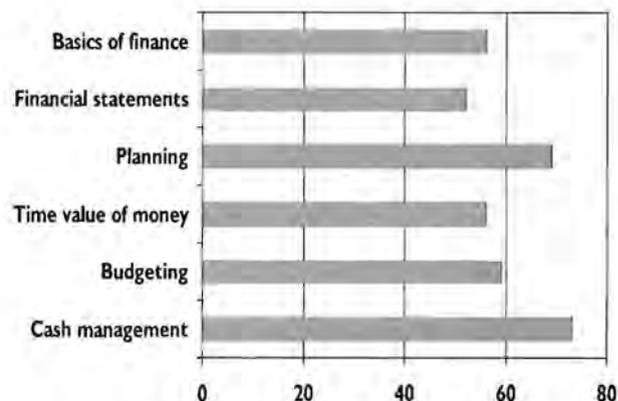


Figure 6: Perceptions on the need for financial management expertise



The importance of the market positioning of micro lenders is critical. Research demonstrates that the marketing of new products is of great importance for micro lenders, and that training programmes to address this need will add value to the industry. Information and case studies about the marketing environment in South Africa, marketing information regarding the micro lending industry, the positioning of markets in the industry, and market measurement and forecasting are of immediate interest to role players in this industry.

Another area of some importance was the management of labour relations and conflict, with 35% of respondents indicating that managing conflict and adhering to the Labour Relations Act are very important issues for the industry. Issues such as negotiations with trade unions, collective bargaining and the history of labour relations are seen as being of lesser importance. However, these issues will become more important as the industry grows and larger financial institutions enter the micro lending market.

In summary, figure 7 displays the perceptions of the respondents regarding the priority of the 44 training aspects discussed in the questionnaire. From a practical point of view, only the top 15 elements are focused on. More than 85% of the respondents indicated that these 15 training aspects are very important, and even vital, for the micro lending industry.

As expected, cash management is the number one priority in the micro lending industry, and although longer term loans are gaining momentum, cash loans will dominate the industry for the next few years. The emphasis on financial planning for the micro lending office is welcomed, and it is expected that new innovative computer-based programmes will build additional capacity for the micro lending industry.

## MICRO LENDING

Marketing skills to advertise and sell micro lending products is vital for the industry, and programmes to address this need will also add value to the business acumen of micro lenders in South Africa.

More than 90% of the respondents also indicated that basic financial skills and a basic knowledge of the legal environment are very important for the industry. Training programmes to teach and inform managers and owners of micro lending offices must be practical and industry-oriented, with the focus on basic skills like budgeting, cash flows, account management and the implications of the new Usury Act.

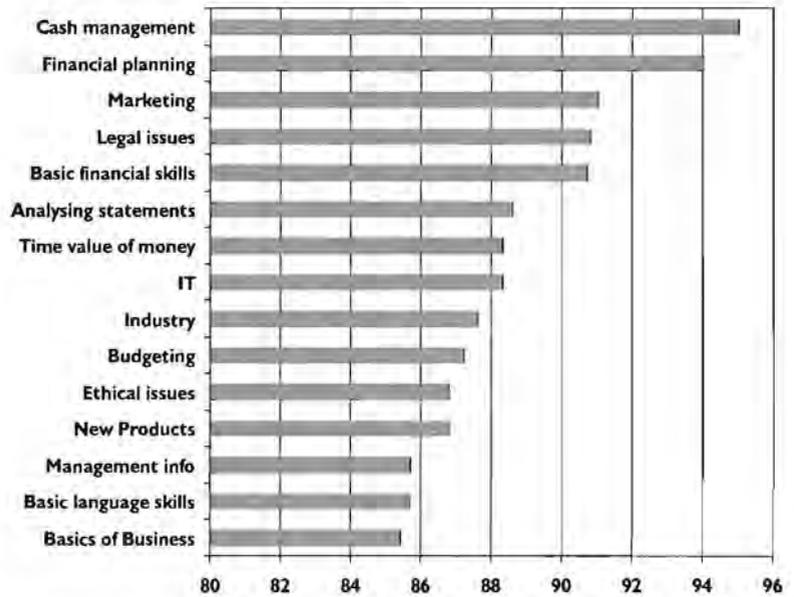
### Conclusion

Micro lending has become a far bigger business than a few loan sharks dealing with the poorest of the poor and ripping them off. It is now worth something like R15 billion nationally, and around R1.125 billion is being repaid each month. It affects employers whose workers take out small loans, people who are unable to get credit from their banks, and a large group of wage earners who perennially need to relieve short-term debts.

The majority of the "formal" lenders in the micro lending industry were registered as close corporations in 1999. However, the number of private and public companies has grown, and they are now the biggest role players in the industry. Their numbers will only increase as the industry develops along the normal life cycle.

It has also become clear that the training and skills development needs of micro lenders are not restricted to financial and legal issues, but include vital elements such as marketing, technology, new product development and ethical issues. It has been established that the ten most important training needs are cash and debtors management, financial planning, marketing of new products, legal issues, basic financial skills, analysing of financial statements, time value of money, information technology,

Figure 7: Priority analysis of most vital training needs in the micro lending industry



detailed information about the micro lending industry, and budgeting for the micro lending office.

These training needs will have to be addressed as a matter of urgency to establish the micro lending industry's importance in the financial services sector, to adjust to the new legal environment, to add value to their own pool of expertise and to ensure sustained growth and profitability in an increasingly competitive environment. ■

Johan Hough is a professor in the Department of Business Management, University of Stellenbosch.

The support of the Institute of Micro Financiers in funding this research, and of the Micro Lending Association (MLA) and the Association of Micro Lenders and Associated Consumers (AMLAC) in sending out questionnaires to their members is hereby acknowledged.

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# Emerging farmers: reaping what you sow

**A Business Management Profile of Emerging Farmers in the QwaQwa Area: A Geographical Survey**

**By JHD Claassen, G du T de Villiers and MF Viljoen**

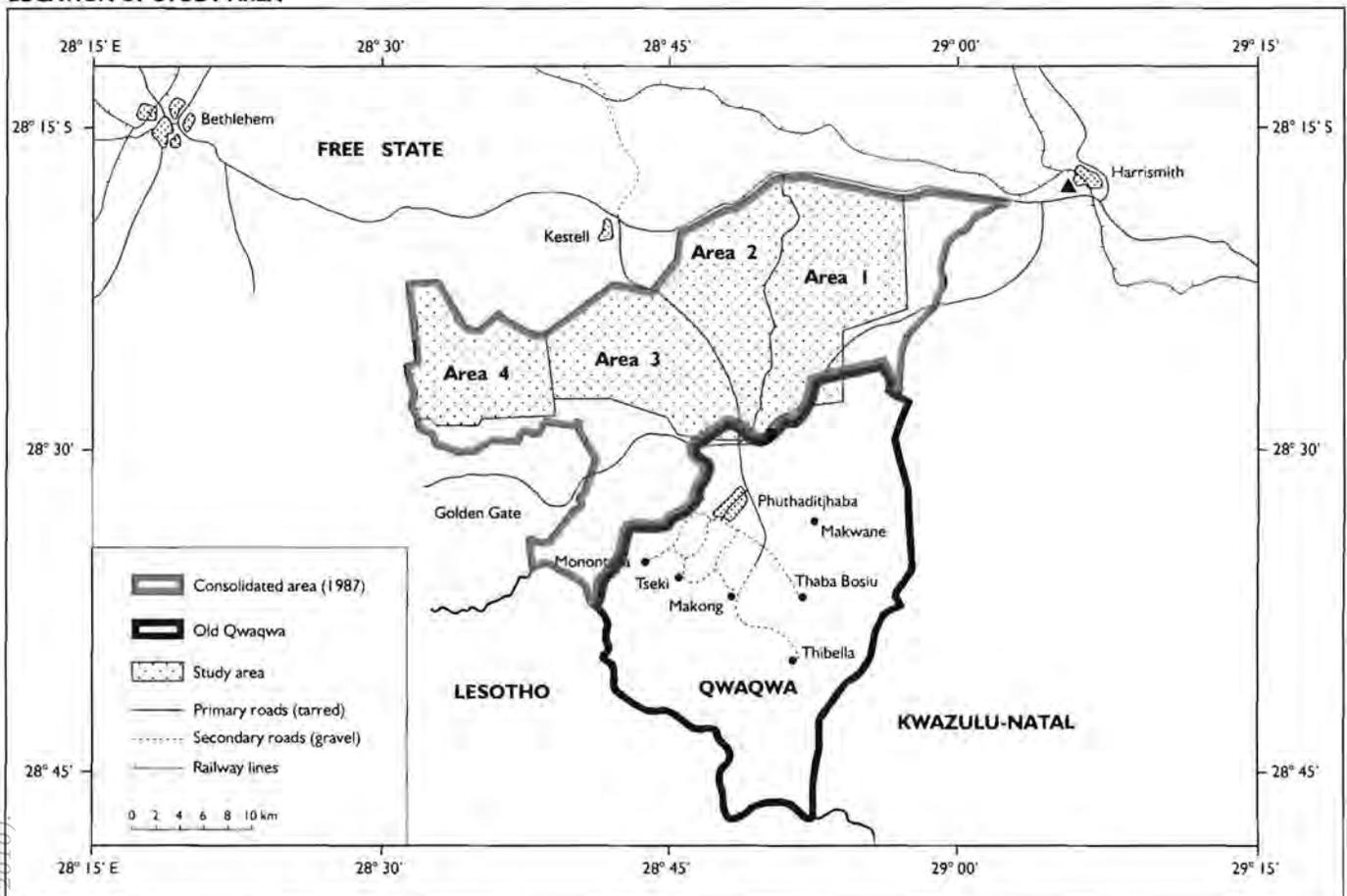
In 1987, 50 000 hectares of commercial farmland were added to QwaQwa, a former homeland located in the north-eastern corner of the Free State Province. The purpose of this project was to establish black commercial farmers on the acquired land. Agriqwa, a government-owned corporation, acted as development agent and was given the task of establishing the new farmers. Since the inception of the programme in 1987, a total of 114 farmers practising mixed farming have been settled on farms averaging 400 hectares. In 1992, Agriqwa was renamed Agri-Eco.

After the general elections of 1994 and the election of a new government, policies regarding agriculture changed drastically. In the Free State, the provincial Department of Agriculture shifted its focus to small-scale vegetable farmers, community vegetable gardens and the establishment of small and micro-businesses.<sup>1</sup> The Department of Agriculture in the Free State made it clear that resources for training and development would largely

be channelled to small-scale and subsistence farmers and that the needs of commercial farmers would have to be addressed by the private sector. The outcome of this was the termination of state subsidies to all commercial farmers and in the case of QwaQwa the restructuring and downsizing of Agri-Eco.<sup>2</sup> The premise was that emerging commercial farmers in QwaQwa should become financially independent and that they should compete in a free market environment. The process left a void in the availability of technical and other support systems for the emerging commercial farmer. The implication of this decision was far-reaching to all QwaQwa farmers, and for the following reasons:

- The decision spelt the termination of in-service training.
- With the downscaling of Agri-Eco, all support services came to an end. Support services included assistance in the form of equipment during ploughing, planting and harvesting, free technical advice by Agri-Eco extension officers and interest free production loans.

## LOCATION OF STUDY AREA



- The tighter budget also resulted in the closing down of Agri-Eco retail depots and retail markets for agricultural produce.
- Black commercial farmers are now dealing directly with traditionally white agricultural co-ops for the acquisition of production loans, for the purchasing of agricultural commodities and for technical assistance. This change in policy led to serious managerial problems for black commercial farmers. During the apartheid years black farmers were not allowed to purchase land in white farming areas and in the homelands black farmers were mostly involved in subsistence farming. In this way black farmers were never exposed to the open market system.

#### Development objective

Agriqwa, the project developer, formulated the development objective as a strategy aimed at the creation of a diversity of commercial agricultural opportunities that will enable entrepreneurs to become self-reliant within market-determined norms.<sup>3</sup> The policy document further states that it is the objective of the QwaQwa government to establish self-reliant full-time emerging farmers in the QwaQwa region and that market forces will guide production, marketing and other management decisions. Land, infrastructure and support services were provided to empower farmers to take up the commercial agricultural opportunities created by the project. Over the short-term, farmers were given the opportunity to lease the land, but with the long-term objective of farmers taking title deed to the land.

Since 1994, fundamental changes with regard to agricultural policy have taken effect. The new vision gives support to the emergence of a more diverse structure of production with a large increase in the numbers of successful smallholding farming enterprises.<sup>4</sup> In achieving this, the national government committed itself to the establishment of an environment where opportunities are created for resource-poor farmers alongside a thriving commercial farming sector.

The policy document further states that most black farmers, whether small-scale or not, have limited access to land and capital and have received inadequate research and extension support. To redress the inequities created by past apartheid policies and to achieve the government's objective of black empowerment, the policy addresses the problems faced by black farmers in general and resource-poor farmers in particular. To achieve this, the policy aims to ensure that black farmers have access to productive resources and various support services needed for success. The Department of Agriculture also emphasises the importance of self-reliance and economic independence. Government makes it clear that the direct subsidisation of the costs of farm inputs and farm loans are not part of government policy.

This clearly indicates the national government's commitment to provide assistance to farmers who have been denied access to resources by the past apartheid policies. Financial viability and economic independence remain important priorities that should not be distorted by support measures.

The termination of development assistance by the Free State provincial government to black commercial farmers in the QwaQwa region forced emerging farmers into a highly competi-

tive and unfamiliar commercial environment with detrimental financial consequences for most of them. Past apartheid policies, which denied black farmers access to production resources, led to serious disadvantages with regard to financial and administrative-managerial skills. The aim of this study is to identify managerial problems pertaining to financial and administrative matters and to formulate a workable development strategy that will ensure a viable and sustainable farming community for the area.

Data has been collected by interviews with individual farmers as well as important individuals in the field of agriculture. This has been supplemented with research on the literature involved. For administrative purposes Agri-Eco divided the settlement area into four separate blocks.

Although official maps were available, it proved impossible to draw a random sample from each block or area. The reason is that communication structures are non-existent and appointments nearly impossible. To overcome the problem it was decided to interview any 20 farmers per block, with a maximum of 60 farmers or 52.6% of the total number of farmers.

## Financial and administrative management

### Administrative management

Personal interviews with individual farmers indicate particular shortcomings with regard to administrative matters. Table 1 shows that 27% of the farmers in the research area have experienced problems relating to farm management, financial planning and personnel management, while 17% have experienced administrative problems. With regard to farm management, problems relating to planning occur regularly. Farmers in this category admitted that their programmes on short-term planning operate only on a day-to-day basis and are inadequate.

Table 2 illustrates farming divisions that require special attention. Inadequate financial resources seem to be a serious problem among 58% of the emerging farmers in the research area. Personal interviews with farmers also revealed that financial problems are the result of inadequate managerial skills in a wide range of farming divisions.

The high percentage (46%) of farmers who find it difficult to acquire production loans supports this finding and is a source of concern. Crop farming was identified as the second largest problem next to financial requirements. The following aspects are related to crop farming and were listed as the most important stumbling blocks:

**Table 1: Management problems experienced by emerging farmers in QwaQwa**

Problem	Frequency	%
Administrative	10	17
Managerial level	16	27
No problem	34	56

**Table 2: Farming divisions requiring special assistance**

Division	Frequency	%
Requires no assistance	4	7
Financial section (1)	35	58
Livestock (2)	3	5
Crop farming (3)	16	27
General farm management (4)	2	3

Note: 1. Production loans (for crops and livestock)

2. A shortage of grazing

3. A need for training in crop cultivation

4. Training in general farm management and planning, administration and personnel management.

**Table 3: Reasons for refusing/granting production loans to emerging farmers in QwaQwa**

Reasons for the refusal of loans	Frequency	%	Cumulative Percentage
Inadequate collateral security	8	13	13
Poor financial record	18	30	43
Black farmer	2	3	46
<b>Loans granted (reasons)</b>			
Good financial record	18	30	76
Never applied for loan	14	24	100

**Table 4: Most pressing problems experienced by emerging farmers in the area**

Problem	Frequency	%
Provision of drinking water	8	13
Lack of business capital	35	59
Managerial problems	5	8
Personnel problems	10	17
Shortage of grazing	2	3

- Obsolete and unreliable farm equipment;
- High maintenance costs;
- High production costs (diesoline, seeds, fertilisers and pesticides);
- Inadequate knowledge of cultivation methods;
- Inadequate knowledge of the servicing and maintenance of farm machinery.

A critical analysis of the factors above clearly illustrates the dominant role of financial aspects. Maintenance, replacement costs and production costs are important expenditure items. The identification of crop farming as a problem area and the fact that 52% of the farmers are of the opinion that they should be assisted financially requires further attention.

### Financial management

Effective and available financial services are important prerequisites for the development of agriculture. Sufficient and suitable financial services for medium and small scale emerging farmers are, however, not readily available. As a result these farmers depend largely on personal savings, as well as friends and family for the acquisition of loans. According to the national Department of Agriculture, this method of financing is inadequate and unreliable, offers no financial security and does not comply with the requirements for

medium and long-term financial loans.<sup>5</sup> The Land Bank is also aware of the particular problems experienced by resource-poor farmers in the acquisition of production loans and is investigating the development of a specific product range to meet the requirements of resource-poor farmers.<sup>6</sup>

With regard to the study area, Table 3 shows that financial assistance was refused to 43% of the emerging farmers on the basis of inadequate collateral security as well as poor financial records.

During private discussions farmers indicated that the restructuring of Agri-Eco and the termination of production loans to emerging farmers caught most farmers off guard and left them with no source for financial assistance.

These farmers also indicated that the conditions for obtaining loans from the co-ops are much tougher than those laid down by the defunct Agriqwa.

The high percentage (59%) of farmers experiencing a lack of business capital correlates with the findings of Table 2 and Table 3. Emerging farmers in the study area indicated that a shortage of production capital inevitably resulted in the downsizing of input costs. This in turn led to lower yields and a downward production

## EMERGING FARMERS

spiral with detrimental financial implications.

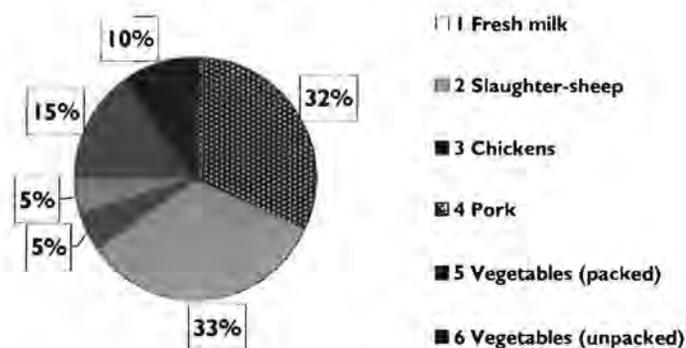
Table 5 clearly identifies a need for financial assistance (52%) and for training and extension services (45%) among emerging farmers. This finding supports the findings in Tables 2, 3 and 4. The general feeling among respondents is that emerging farmers in the area should receive a one-off, non-refundable financial package that will enable them to overcome the financial demands of a new enterprise.

Farmers with a heavy financial burden should receive a similar package to pay off their debts. Farmers also expressed their eagerness to have the crop loan system of the previous Agriqwa reinstated. The fact that 46% (Table 3) of the farmers find it difficult to acquire production loans through the agricultural co-ops seems to be the most important reason.

Table 5 also illustrates that 45% of the farmers in the study area are eager to undergo training in farm management and financial and administrative management. This group of farmers underlined the importance of ongoing agricultural extension services and the reinstatement of the training and extension service previously offered by the dismantled Agriqwa.

Nell also reports on the insufficient extension service among sheep farmers in QwaQwa.<sup>7</sup> He recommends the re-establishment of an effective extension service as well as continuous training courses to update extension officers with the latest technology in agriculture.

**Figure 1: Most popular value-adding activities in operation on farms in the study area**



**Note:**

Fresh milk is directly sold to QwaQwa residents. Residents provide their own containers.

Direct marketing. No packaging.

Live slaughter-sheep animals are sold. A small percentage of animals are slaughtered, pre-packed and sold. Minimum processing and packaging.

As with slaughtered-sheep, chickens are sold alive to QwaQwa residents. No processing and packaging.

Pigs are sold alive to QwaQwa residents. No processing and packaging.

Vegetables. Mostly cabbage and pumpkins. No processing and unpacked.

Vegetables. Mostly sugar beans and potatoes that are sorted, packed and marketed in QwaQwa. Minimum processing and packaging.

**Table 5: Agricultural assistance required by emerging farmers in QwaQwa**

Type of assistance required	Frequency	%
Training and extension services	27	45
Financial assistance	31	52
Stock farms/grazing	5	8
Unsure	1	2

**Table 6: General perceptions of value-adding activities**

Perception	Frequency	%
No response	4	7
No knowledge/experience	3	5
Very time consuming	13	22
Unprofitable	2	3
Profitable	34	57
Unsteady market (demand)	8	13

### Value-adding activities

The research project clearly identified value-adding activities as an important and viable source of income to emerging farmers. Nieuwenhuizen points out that the replacement of the previous one-channel marketing system with a free multi-channel system placed the South African farmer in a new environment with regard to marketing and profit adding to farm produce.<sup>8</sup> The cost sensitivity of the South African consumer and the introduction of new techniques for the profitable processing and packaging of farm produce on a small scale, contribute to the increasing popularity of value-adding activities.

Value-adding activities present the farmer with the following advantages:

- The addition of monetary value to produce through processing and packaging. It also offers the farmer the opportunity to make better use of infrastructure and labour.<sup>9</sup>
- Value-adding inhibits produce decay and also increases the marketing period of farm produce.
- Value-adding provides the farmer with a wider marketing choice and offers better profit margins to the farmer.<sup>10</sup>

The summary below gives an indication of the extent of value-adding activities on farms in the study area:

- Farmers involved in value-adding activities: 53%
- Farmers not interested: 43%
  - Farmers interested, but not involved: 4%

The high percentage of farmers involved in value-adding activities underlines the importance of this facet. Table 6 reflects a few perceptions among emerging farmers about value-adding activities.

The high percentage (57%) of farmers who regard value-adding activities as particularly profitable, correlates well with the percentage of farmers engaged in value-adding activities (53%). According to these farmers it provides handy cash and also fits in well with existing farming activities. Labour and infrastructure are optimally utilised and farmers receive better prices for their produce by cutting out the middle-man.

It was also concluded from interviews that a number of farmers tried value-adding activities, but gave up for a number of reasons. Almost 22% of the farmers viewed it as too time-consuming. Farmers in this category are of the opinion that the extra time, labour, supervision and administration required for value-adding activities are not worth the effort. It seems as if this perception can be connected to inadequate management and should therefore be corrected with the introduction of courses in farm management. Only 3% view value-adding activities as non-profitable, while 13% are of the opinion that the informal market is far too unsteady and that they do not have the experience



and time for the direct marketing of their farm produce. Figure 1 portrays the most popular value-adding activities in operation in the study area and the percentage of farmers involved in each. Fresh milk (32%), slaughter-sheep (33%) and both categories of vegetables (25%) seem to be the most popular trading products.

### Marketing

Traditional marketing boards and methods of marketing have changed considerably in agriculture over the past few years. The deregulation of the agricultural sector not only effected important structural changes, but also resulted in drastic changes to existing marketing channels and the creation of new price and marketing structures. Over the past years import controls and the subsidisation of agricultural produce have largely fallen away. The fact that farmers are no longer tied to traditional control boards and one channel marketing not only granted farmers more manoeuvrability in the market place and options for increasing profits, but also increased the risk of possible losses.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that 82% of the farmers in the study area are satisfied with existing marketing channels indicates that farmers give preference to a structure that makes provision for traditional marketing as well as individual bargaining. The deregulation of traditional marketing channels offer farmers the opportunity to get involved in direct marketing and to earn extra profit on produce. Norman supports the deregulation of the market place and is of the opinion that deregulation creates more opportunities for the development of the market place by private business.<sup>12</sup> The current practice between farmers and private companies to enter into contracts for the production of wheat and maize, illustrates the deregulation of marketing practices and the latest tendency with regard to the production and marketing of agricultural produce.

### Conclusion

With regard to administrative management, problems relating to record keeping seem to be the most important. Farmers with administrative problems indicated their willingness to undergo training courses in administrative management. Those with

## EMERGING FARMERS

problems on a managerial level are eager to do courses in financial planning, as well as in farm and personnel management.

The need for immediate financial assistance by 52% of the farmers underlines the weak financial position of a large proportion of the emerging farmers in the area. According to Mather and other international economists, large-scale financial assistance often does not produce the required financial restitution.<sup>13</sup>

In some cases subsidisation and financial assistance results in the distortion of market mechanisms and ineffective decision-making.

The optimal use of labour, infrastructure and farm by-products represents the strongest arguments in favour of value-adding. Insufficient knowledge in the field of marketing and product processing as well as inadequate infrastructure seem to be important stumbling blocks.

The deregulation of traditional marketing channels reflects some important changes that have taken place in agriculture over the past few years. A vast majority – 82% – of the farmers in the study area are in favour of the new marketing structures with their emphasis on private and individual bargaining.

Moreover, Table 5 reflects the need for training and agricultural extension among 45% of the farmers in the study area. This group of farmers proposed the reintroduction of the dismantled extension service. Nell also refers to the need for extension services among emerging farmers in the QwaQwa area.<sup>14</sup> The national Department of Agriculture regards agricultural extension as an important provider of agricultural information to emerging farmers.<sup>15</sup>

### Recommendations and future strategies

The withdrawal of support services to emerging farmers in QwaQwa amounts to a disregard of the government policy document concerning the establishment of a competitive and efficient agricultural sector.<sup>16</sup> The importance of Agri-Eco as a governmental agency for the sustainable development of agriculture among emerging farmers in the area is clearly illustrated by the study. For this reason the revitalisation of Agri-Eco is of the utmost importance. The implementation and facilitation of development proposals and strategies should therefore be channelled through a reactivated Agri-Eco.

Moreover, inadequate financial management and poor business practices seem to be at the core of the poor financial position in which many emerging farmers find themselves. In view of the limited success of large-scale financial aid programmes, the restructuring of accumulated debts and the introduction of training courses in financial and business management is recommended.<sup>17</sup> The reactivation of the defunct extension service and the re-

employment of extension officers as facilitators and presenters of such courses should be investigated.

It is further recommended that the advantages of cost effective and sustainable farming practices be conveyed to emerging farmers in the area. In order to achieve this, training courses should be implemented to assist farmers with a gradual switch over from monoculture to a sustainable form of mixed farming.

The popularity of value-adding activities underlines the necessity of making this division more accessible to newcomers. The overarching goal should be the establishment of a steady and reliable source of income. In order to promote and maintain the advantages of value-adding activities the following developmental proposals are recommended:

- The introduction or facilitation of training courses in the processing of farm produce.
- Interaction with training institutions like the Agricultural Research Centre for the presentation of courses in product processing.
- The provision of a fresh produce market in Phuthaditjhaba for the direct marketing of agricultural produce. A fresh produce market with proper facilities will not only promote agricultural development in the area, but will also solve problems related to the marketing of produce. Agri-Eco and the local municipality should take the initiative in the provision of such a facility.

The research project also clearly illustrates the reintroduction of a proper agricultural extension service. The following initiatives, formulated and subscribed by the Department of Agriculture, are recommended:

- The retraining of selected extension officers to address the distinctive needs of emerging farmers.
- The improvement of interaction between research institutions and extension services with a view to enhance the supportive role between the two institutions.
- Improved interaction among emerging farmers, extension officers and suppliers of production inputs to establish a workable and cost effective partnership among them.<sup>18</sup> ■

Dr Hennie Claassen is a senior lecturer in Human Geography at the University of the North, Qwaqwa Campus; Prof G du T de Villiers is head of the Department of Geography, University of the Free State; and Prof MF Viljoen is in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of the Free State.

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# Henry Kissinger's War Crimes in Africa

The consequences of Nixon/Ford policy in the region

By Abayomi Azikiwe

A recent attempt to question Henry Kissinger in a court of law in the United Kingdom flowed from alleged war crimes committed by the former National Security Adviser and later Secretary of State who served under the Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford administrations during 1969-1977. The crimes that were cited by the plaintiff stemmed from policy decisions made by the Nixon and Ford administrations that adversely affected the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Although this motion was unsuccessful, Peter Tatchell, the plaintiff, in a letter to the *Guardian* newspaper, said that, "I lost my bid to have the former US secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, prosecuted on charges of war crimes in Indochina, but there is good reason to hope that a future, better prepared attempt might succeed".<sup>1</sup> Tatchell points out that Kissinger, as the National Security Advisor to President Nixon from 1969-1973, and during Nixon's second administration and Gerald Ford's presidency, where he served as US Secretary of State from 1973-1977, personally directed military actions that would knowingly result in the deaths of innocent civilians. During this period, Kissinger was the principal architect of US military policy in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Tatchell writes that, "According to the US Senate subcommittee on refugees, from March 1969 to March 1972, in excess of three million civilians were killed, wounded or made homeless". Also during this period, the USA launched approximately 4.5 million tonnes of high explosives on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, which was 200%

more than all of the bombs used during the entire period of World War II.

"What the US did in Indochina involved the mass killing of civilians and the premeditated, wholesale destruction of the environment using chemical defoliants such as Agent Orange," Tatchell notes. These mass killings were carried out in part utilising the B-52 bomber that flew flights so high that the planes could not be seen from the ground, which gave no warning to civilians that their villages and towns were under attack. These planes were highly inaccurate in their targeting of supposed military bases of the national liberation forces fighting the US occupation in the region. Nonetheless, between March 1969 and May 1970, there were 3 630 American bombing raids over the nation of Cambodia.

Such actions, when undertaken by a government, were declared war crimes under the 1957 Geneva Conventions Act.

These facts relating to Kissinger's role in war crimes in Indochina are taken from a book by author Christopher Hitchens entitled *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*.<sup>2</sup> Hitchens's findings, that were utilised by Tatchell in his legal challenge to Kissinger, indicate that "During the first 30 months of the Nixon-Kissinger administration, the US counter-insurgency 'Phoenix Program' was responsible for the murder or abduction of 35 708 Vietnamese civilians". In addition, American bombing missions in the region are estimated to have killed 350 000 non-combatants in Laos and approximately 600 000 in Cambodia. Other crimes during the US war in Indochina involved the

systematic use of chemical agents aimed at destroying the people's will to resist the military occupation. Tatchell adds that, "Kissinger's role in formulating and implementing US war policy coincided with the systematic use of chemical defoliants and pesticides, including Agent Orange". He continues, pointing out that "these caused birth defects and rendered significant areas of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia too toxic for people to live in or farm – creating an environmental disaster that will continue to affect many generations to come".

There are of course other crimes that Kissinger must be questioned about, including US involvement in the 1973 coup against Chilean president Salvador Allende, which resulted in the assassination of the head of state of this South American nation and the subsequent massacre and imprisonment of thousands of citizens of that country.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, there is the Indonesian invasion and seizure of East Timor, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. This intervention was given the green light by the Ford administration in 1975, at which time Kissinger was Secretary of State. East Timor, a former Portuguese colony in the Indonesian archipelago, had its independence delayed by more than a quarter of a century because of the actions taken by the US and its ally, the government of Indonesia, in this region.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, what should not be forgotten is the direct role of Henry Kissinger during the Nixon and Ford administrations in the suppression and subversion of the national liberation struggles in Africa. The crimes committed in this region have had an equal, if not greater, impact on the continued underdevelopment and instability in existence on the African continent than what has transpired in other geo-political areas.

Kissinger has argued in his defence that, "No one can say that [I] served in an administration that did not make mistakes. The decisions made in high office are usually 51-49 decisions, so it is quite possible that mistakes were made. The issue is whether 30 years after the event courts are the appropriate means by which this determination is made."<sup>5</sup> Yet if the courts are not the best place to address such issues, then what is the most appropriate forum? This question and others must be grappled with in a bid to seek solutions to the contemporary challenges facing these geo-political regions.

**The US Role in the Portuguese-African Wars During the Nixon/Kissinger Years**

When Nixon first came to power in early 1969, Kissinger in his capacity as National Security Adviser to the new administration, immediately commissioned a study of current attempts at national liberation in Africa. The National Security Council Interdepartmental Group for Africa, in which Kissinger served as Secretary, issued a secret report on 10 April 1969 in which the contours of US policy towards Africa would be guided over the next five years.

This secret report was named National Security Study Memorandum, No. 39 and it was designed to rationalise an escalation of support for Portuguese colonial rule in Africa as well as to fortify the political and economic positions of the white settler-colonial regimes then operating in

Rhodesia, South-West Africa and South Africa.<sup>6</sup> While the USA was carrying out a war against the national liberation struggles in Indochina, a similar war was being waged by nationalist forces in the Portuguese colonial territories on the African continent, which would make the two nations natural allies. In addition, Portugal was also a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) which was established with American dominance after the conclusion of World War II and at the beginning of the so-called Cold War.

This report, which was circulated by Kissinger to the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence (CIA), incorrectly concluded in terms of the national liberation movements on the continent that "the blacks cannot gain political rights through violence. Constructive change can come only by acquiescence of the whites." As a result of this line of thinking, the NSSM memorandum came up with five potential policy options for the US government to follow in regard to its policy in southern Africa and other contested regions. According to a summary of the report by Mohamad El-Khawass and Barry Cohen, the options can be summed up as follows:

- To improve US standing in black Africa and internationally on the racial issue;
- To minimise the likelihood of escalation of violence in the area and the risk of US involvement;
- To minimise the opportunities for the USSR and communist China to exploit the racial issue in the region for propaganda or advantage and to gain political influence with black governments and liberation movements;
- To encourage moderation of the rigid racial and colonial policies of the white regimes;
- To protect economic, scientific and strategic interests and opportunities in the region, including the orderly marketing of South Africa's gold production.<sup>7</sup>

These options, drafted in 1969 and implemented thereafter, give no consideration to the national liberation movements representing the will of the African peoples in their struggle for self-determination and independence. Such a set of policy options led to the escalation of financial and military support to the Portuguese colonial regime by the United States and NATO. The policy implications contained in NSSM 39 emanated from the so-called "Nixon Doctrine" which sought to reinforce a western anti-communist alliance with each respective ally sharing responsibility within its sphere of influence.

Such an approach to the existence of colonialism during the late 1960s was clearly designed to perpetuate the continuance of imperialism in Africa. Such a policy was welcome news to the then Prime Minister of Portugal, Marcello Caetano, who recognised the Nixon call for the assumption of regional control by various colonial and imperialist nations as a means to secure firm NATO support for the war in his so-called "overseas territories". In 1970, Caetano stated that, "The West is a bloc, but this solidarity cannot be limited to a few matters located on the territory of Europe... At all times and everywhere in the

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world its values or vital interests are threatened, we have the duty of defending them.”<sup>8</sup>

In line with this Nixon/Kissinger foreign policy orientation, the use of the Azores island base for US military activity became a focal point of discussion and co-operation between the USA and Portugal. In March 1971, Caetano seemed to be saying that US use of the Azores base would not continue without the drafting of a formal agreement. If this could not be done, the Portuguese leader proposed that the base could only be used as an outpost for exclusive NATO operations. However, by December 1971 an agreement had been reached which proved to be a lucrative deal for the Portuguese government.

According to John Marcum, the US government, in exchange for the use of the Azores base, authorised the Export-Import Bank to grant loans to Portugal for the amount of \$436 million, a sum of money that was 400% greater than the total funds loaned to Portugal between the years of 1946 through 1971.<sup>9</sup> Such an influx of capital into Portugal enabled the colonial state to prolong the war in Africa through the purchase of sophisticated NATO weaponry, which was largely used against civilian populations in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola.

Nonetheless, the guerrilla movements in the Portuguese colonies continued to escalate their struggle during the course of the Nixon/Kissinger administration, which proved disastrous for the policy initiatives put forward in NSSM 39. By 1974, a total of 7 674 Portuguese soldiers had been killed in action in Africa. The expense associated with the war was costing the Portuguese government over 50% of its annual budget, in a country which was considered the poorest in Europe. The total estimated cost for the colonial war against the forces of national liberation in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola is \$5 billion.<sup>10</sup> Accurate figures for the casualties on the African side during the Portuguese colonial war are not readily available but it is generally considered that they run into the tens of thousands – with the bombing of civilian areas in all three contested colonies involving NATO ordinances that destroyed towns and villages. Any assessment of the war must also take into account the massive dislocation of civilian population groups who fled as refugees from the bombings by Portugal and their Rhodesian and (apartheid) South African allies. These refugees settled in neighbouring countries such as Zambia, Tanzania and Guinea-Conakry.

Consequently, the immediate impact of the strategic vision emanating from NSSM 39 was an intensification and broadening of the colonial wars in Africa as represented by the massive casualties endured by the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. A racist belief that Africans could not successfully wage a revolutionary war against European colonialists on the continent led to the genocidal policy of the Portuguese regime under Caetano. However, the immense costs in both financial and human resources led to the 25 April 1974 military coup in Portugal which effectively ended the war against the liberation movements in Africa. Dissident military officers cited the hopeless efforts by Portugal to defeat the African liberation movements as the main incentive for their seizing power. Despite these setbacks for the US government, the

administration continued to pursue a failed foreign policy towards the African continent.

### Kissinger Engineers a Civil War in Angola

In the main theatres of the guerrilla war in the former Portuguese colonies the liberation movements had struggled for over a decade for a unified front against the imperialist states. These objectives were largely achieved in the colonies of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Mozambique. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) was headed by Amílcar Cabral, an agricultural engineer who made tremendous contributions to the theoretical basis for an armed revolutionary phase for the liberation movements on the continent. In Mozambique, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) became the undisputed leader in the national movement in this southern African nation. Samora Machel eventually took control of FRELIMO after the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane, who had been educated in the United States.

Meanwhile, in Angola, the US and its allies, including Portugal, attempted to create two alternatives to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). Holden Roberto, who headed the Front for the National Liberation of Angola (FNLA) had close ties with the west through its bases in Zaire (now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo). The Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) was based in Angola and even collaborated with the colonialists during the concluding years of the war. Jonas Savimbi, the UNITA leader who was finally killed in 2002, became the darling of the United States government and the apartheid regime in South Africa.

US governmental support for Holden Roberto extends back to at least 1961, according to declassified State Department documents from the Kennedy administration.<sup>11</sup> With regard to UNITA, a series of letters between Jonas Savimbi and the Portuguese military leadership dating as far back as 1972 were revealed in *Afrique-Asie* in 1974.<sup>12</sup> In one of these letters, to General Luz Cunha of Portugal in 1972, Savimbi states that:

We are no longer interested in the OAU (Organisation of African Unity), nor in Zambia, and even less in alliances with the MPLA. If these aspects of UNITA's policies are not yet sufficiently clear for the authorities in Angola and Portugal, it is still an irrefutable fact: we have actively participated in the weakening of the MPLA in regions of the east. ... We use our arms so that one day we will force the MPLA to abandon the east.

Savimbi then lays out a series of proposals which he thinks will bring peace to the eastern region of Angola. His first recommendation was to bring about the “weakening of MPLA forces within Angola to lead to their liquidation. This task can be accomplished by the combined efforts of the military forces (of Portugal) and the forces of UNITA”. He also suggests “the liquidation of MPLA camps in the border areas of Zambia”. He says that “this can be more easily accomplished by UNITA because we have no political status which would lead to censure by an international organization. Our plans are beyond the preliminary stage”.

The UNITA leader finally suggests that an effort take place to “discredit the MPLA”. He continues by saying that, “in this regard, we are also aiming at the OAU, at least as concerns liberation movements. Once the MPLA is weakened or liquidated in the east, great horizons are open to us”.

Obviously this letter implies a strategic alliance between Savimbi, the ostensible “liberation movement” leader, and the Portuguese colonial authorities designed to isolate and liquidate the MPLA, which had been considered a threat by the western nations, including the United States, as far back as the early 1960s. Consequently, after the overthrow of Caetano in April 1974, the Nixon-Kissinger administration was keen to prevent the consolidation of power by the MPLA inside Angola. This desire to prevent the MPLA from coming to power in Angola in 1975 eventually led to the commencement of the civil war in that country which has continued for all but a few years since independence. In 1975, the US government suffered a humiliating defeat in Indochina with the consolidation of power by the national liberation movements and the communist parties of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. With the independence of Guinea-Bissau in 1974 and Mozambique in June 1975, the existence of FNLA and UNITA in Angola provided an opportunity for the US to destabilise the Angolan revolution and consequently stifle the total liberation of southern Africa.

What served as a public relations disaster for the Nixon-Kissinger administration was the exposure of its open alliance with the apartheid regime in South Africa and South-West Africa (now Namibia) in their efforts to prevent the consolidation of power by the MPLA in Angola. Although links between the South African intelligence services, known as the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), and the American Central Intelligence Agency extend as far back as at least the late 1960s, this relationship had been kept from public view, clouded by the diplomatic position that the US supported the concept of majority rule. However, despite this diplomatic posture, the machinations of the State Department, National Security Council and Central Intelligence Agency were designed to frustrate and subvert the activities of the independence movements.<sup>13</sup>

Peter Kornbluh of the National Security Archive’s Cuba Documentation Project, says that recent historical studies provide further proof of US collaboration with the racist apartheid regime in South Africa to prevent an independence movement from coming to power in Angola and subsequently engineering a civil war which had grave implications for the social and political stability of the country and the entire region of southern Africa.<sup>14</sup> Kornbluh, based on the release of the documents published by Gleijeses, claims that

Castro decided to send troops to Angola on November 4, 1975, in response to the South African invasion of that country, rather than vice versa as the Ford administration persistently claimed... The United States knew about South Africa’s covert invasion plans, and collaborated militarily with its troops, contrary to what Secretary of State Henry Kissinger testified before Congress and wrote in his memoirs... Cuba

made the decision to send troops without informing the Soviet Union and deployed them, contrary to what was widely alleged, without any Soviet assistance for the first two months.<sup>15</sup>

According to the minutes of a National Security Council meeting held on 27 June 1975, where Secretary of State Kissinger, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff David Jones, and Director of Central Intelligence William Colby discussed the developing situation in Angola on the eve of the country’s independence, apparent plans were made to ship arms to UNITA for an offensive to prevent the MPLA from taking control of the country.<sup>16</sup>

President Ford was reported to have asked during the meeting: “Is there a specific proposal from the group on grants in the arms area? I don’t want to make a decision now, but I didn’t see any proposals in the briefing papers.” Kissinger responds by saying: “the Forty Committee has met twice to discuss the situation. The first meeting involved only money, but the second included some arms package. I recommend a working group make a more systematic study of this option and return to you.” The next section of this document is redacted (blackened and labelled “Top Secret/Sensitive”). Ford opines that “once the Popular Movement (MPLA) takes over you can write it off”.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, the major foreign policy initiative was to prevent the legitimate liberation movement organisation from taking power – even at the cost of bringing about a bloody civil war. US assistance to the anti-independence forces of UNITA, FNLA and the South African Defence Force (SADF) not only involved the shipment of arms but also saw the direct intervention of CIA personnel and mercenaries from the United States and other western nations. With the intervention of tens of thousands of Cuban troops in Angola in 1975-1976 to support MPLA leader Agostino Neto after the direct intervention of the SADF and the escalation of American arms shipments to the FNLA and UNITA, as well as the SADF, the CIA-backed forces in the country suffered stinging defeats in the war against the MPLA. By April 1976, the MPLA had consolidated power in key areas throughout the country including the rich oil fields.

However, without the intervention of the United States administration of Ford and Kissinger, the country may have been able to resolve its internal contradictions without such a protracted and deadly conflict, which did not end as expected in 1976. The US Congress passed legislation during 1976 which halted overt assistance to the anti-MPLA forces in Angola.

The continued covert financing of UNITA during the early years of the Reagan administration until 1986, when open funding and support resumed, led to the deaths of over one million Angolans and the destruction of its national development programme for a period of over two and a half decades. Seen in this light, Reagan’s policy of constructive engagement with the apartheid regime of the 1980s was merely an extension of the policy orientation that was articulated by Kissinger in the NSSM 39 Memorandum of 1969.

### **Kissinger's Role in Delaying the Independence of Zimbabwe**

In Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe), a protracted guerrilla struggle intensified in the aftermath of the collapse of an attempted détente between the national liberation movements and the European settler-regime in 1975. Plans were made by the leadership of the Zimbabwe African National Union and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union to fight a war aimed at total national liberation. This took place in the aftermath of the consolidation of power by the MPLA regime in Angola, which resulted from the resounding military and diplomatic defeats of the Ford/Kissinger administration in Washington and the Vorster regime in Pretoria. More significantly from a military standpoint, the recently independent nation of Mozambique agreed to open up two provinces for the use of ZANU and ZAPU in their war against the Ian Smith regime.<sup>18</sup>

Despite its policy failures and subsequent military defeats in Indochina and Angola, Kissinger embarked upon a new African initiative to prevent the military collapse of the settler-colonial regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia. As far back as the early 1970s, Kissinger had advocated a relaxation of economic sanctions against Rhodesia in line with the policy orientation of NSSM 39. In 1971, the Nixon administration endorsed the Byrd amendment which was designed to lift the ban on the importation of Rhodesian chrome. There was also a tremendous tourist trade to Rhodesia by white Americans during this period which generated \$16 million annually in much needed foreign exchange for the settler-state.<sup>19</sup>

The Nixon administration's encouragement of tourism, as well as the avoidance of key elements of the United Nations sanctions passed against Rhodesia, provided a substantial degree of material and political support to the Smith regime. After the resignation of Nixon in July 1974, the Ford administration, where Kissinger remained as Secretary of State, paid lip service to the repeal of the Byrd amendment but no action was ever taken on the matter. Therefore, when Kissinger announced that he would set out on a diplomatic mission to Africa in April 1976, with a special emphasis on seeking a political solution to the Zimbabwean question, there was much scepticism on the continent as to his actual intentions. Several governments underwent intense debate over whether the head of state should have met with the American Secretary of State during his visit. This cool response to Kissinger was clearly related to the US role in Angola and the blatant defiance of the wishes of the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations in regard to their recognition of the MPLA government during the period that the American government was actively co-ordinating military efforts to overthrow the government of Agostino Neto.<sup>20</sup>

In a State Department confidential "Action Memorandum" to Henry Kissinger dated 1 April 1976, and entitled "Rhodesia: A Proposed Course of Action", William Schaufele Jr says that "any moves we make with respect to Rhodesia must be in concert with an over-all Southern African strategy which will consider our relationships with the Soviet Union, Cuba, our European allies, black African countries, China and South Africa". From

this statement it appears that the traditional Cold War imperatives were still guiding American involvement in the region. The effort to protect US interests and to prevent the influence of the socialist countries was thus the motivating force behind the direction of foreign policy in the region.<sup>21</sup>

Later in the memorandum, Schaufele says, "however, in terms of immediacy, we should focus on Rhodesia – on what we can do in the near future to pre-empt the Soviets and Cubans, improve our position in Africa, and possibly help avert widespread, intensified conflict in Rhodesia itself". He continues by declaring that "the Soviet/Cuban intervention in Angola has drastically affected the determinants of our policies toward Rhodesia. Our essentially passive stance no longer is the most appropriate approach. Preclusion of further expansion of Soviet/Cuban presence and influence in Southern Africa will require us to become more directly involved there than we might prefer."<sup>22</sup>

During Kissinger's trip to Africa in April 1976, he met with several of the key players in the region including South African Prime Minister John Vorster, Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith, Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere and Botswana President Seretse Khama. His tone was geared towards remaking the image of the United States in Africa after the collapse of the American foreign policy framework in the Portuguese colonies, and specifically Angola. In a speech delivered by Kissinger on 27 April 1976 in Lusaka, he claimed that "the United States is wholly committed to help bring about a rapid, just and African solution to the issue of Rhodesia".<sup>23</sup>

Yet this trip did nothing to stop the aggressive military campaign against the peoples of Rhodesia and of the region. This ruthless policy was best illustrated in September 1976, when the Rhodesian Air Force bombed a Zimbabwean refugee camp in Mozambique at Nyadzonja. Claiming that this camp was a guerrilla training base, the overwhelming consensus by the United Nations as well as the Mozambican government was that it was indeed a camp for refugees who had fled the war in Rhodesia. During this attack, over 1 000 Zimbabweans were killed and later buried in mass graves. Most of the casualties were young children and women who were engaged in medical, agricultural and educational projects at the camp.<sup>24</sup>

American and Rhodesian intelligence agencies had long collaborated and exchanged information in regard to their mutual interests aimed at preventing communist influence in the region and prolonging white minority rule. These links were revealed during the negotiation process with Smith during the second State Department trip to Africa, when Kissinger sold the white settler leader a plan for the ostensible resolution of the Rhodesian question.<sup>25</sup> With the close links between the American Central Intelligence Agency and the Central Intelligence Organisation of Rhodesia, it is not beyond reason to conclude that the Americans may very well have had access to Rhodesian plans to bomb the Nyadzonja camp in Mozambique. At any rate, their refusal to apply economic and political pressure to the Rhodesian regime tacitly encouraged Smith to pursue an aggressive military policy

against the front-line African states, particularly Mozambique during 1975-1976.

Several weeks later, Kissinger returned to Africa to advance a more comprehensive plan for the transition to "majority rule" in Zimbabwe. The plan, which was forced on Ian Smith during a meeting with Kissinger, merely provided a means for the settlers to delay the handing over of power to the African majority in Zimbabwe. Real internationally supervised elections did not occur until early 1980 after the negotiation of a settlement between the liberation movement leaders and the British at the Lancaster House talks of late 1979. Kissinger left office with Gerald Ford in January 1977, after Ford was defeated by Jimmy Carter in elections. With the presidency of Jimmy Carter, a new era of American-Rhodesian relations unfolded.<sup>26</sup>

### Kissinger indictment cannot ignore these crimes

Kissinger's role in subverting the national liberation movements in Africa represented the continuation of a long-held US policy of seeing the foreign policy interests of the United States as primarily concerned with preserving and enhancing American economic interests, i.e. through cheap access to strategic raw materials and waterways, and the desire to subvert the influence of socialist countries and left-leaning political parties.

These policies led to the continuation of the Portuguese war against the peoples of Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola. The US government not only supported the Portuguese military effort through increased financial assistance to the state, but it shared and utilised intelligence information with the white-minority settler regimes, which contributed to the drafting of the NSSM 39 policy document which laid the foundations for US relations with Africa during the Nixon-Kissinger years.

The US government's role in fomenting the Angolan civil war after the consolidation of power by the liberation

organisations in Indochina led to the intervention of South Africa, which in turn prompted the intervention of Cuban internationalist forces in support of the MPLA government of Agostino Neto. During the course of the civil war in 1975-1976 and the resumption of the war during the late 1970s, and continuing through the recent cease fire agreement signed in early 2002, it has been estimated that over a million Angolans have died.

The war has created one of the largest concentrations of landmines in the world, resulting in the highest amputee rate of any country. Angola, a mineral-rich country with substantial deposits of oil, diamonds and other strategic minerals and resources, has been stifled in its development efforts because of the many years of direct American interference in its internal affairs, resulting in war and political destabilisation.

In regard to Zimbabwe, the resolution of the land question now awaits action by President Robert Mugabe, who has supported efforts by war veterans to seize by force the land confiscated from the indigenous people during the period of British colonialism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

It is possible that the actions of Mugabe would not have been necessary if the initial plans to subsidise land reform advanced by Kissinger as early as 1976 had been honoured by the United States and Britain.

If Kissinger can be indicted in connection with war crimes he engineered in Indochina, East Timor, Bangladesh and Chile, he most certainly should be held accountable for his role in developing and implementing US foreign policy in Africa during the Nixon and Ford administrations, and for the subsequent impact of these policies on the peoples of Africa. ■

Abayomi Azikiwe is affiliated with the Pan-African News Wire, Wayne State University, USA.

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# Nepad and Africa's future

By Eddy Maloka

The resilience of our continent and its people can no longer be doubted. We have been tested by history; we have survived the most brutal of all forms of crimes against humanity – slavery and colonialism. But the struggle against slavery and colonialism was essentially about the right to self-determination; the right to take charge of the present and our future. Today's struggle is about the right to development; freedom from want, hunger, ignorance and fear. It is to this struggle that I want to dedicate this paper.

In December 2000, the US intelligence community released *Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue about the Future with Nongovernmental Experts*, which made the following forecast on Africa: "The interplay of demographics and disease – as well as poor governance – will be the major determinants of Africa's increasing international marginalisation in 2015".<sup>1</sup>

Of course, scenario planning and futures analysis is subjective as an exercise, but it is also useful as a policy-making tool. The forecast in *Global Trends* can influence how critical players in the world perceive and think of our continent – as a place with no future at all, or a place where everything else is doomed to fail.

The release of *Global Trends* was preceded by the adoption at the United Nations General Assembly of the historic Millennium Declaration which was not only dedicated to the plight of our continent, but also set clear development goals to be achieved by the international community by 2015 on pertinent issues such as the eradication of poverty and the achievement of universal literacy. If the logic in *Global Trends* is to be believed, then Africa can in no way achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

But how can this happen to a continent that has survived the most brutal of all forms of crimes against humanity? The secret to our survival has always been our struggle – the human agency. I want to argue that NEPAD and the African Union have given this struggle a critical edge that even *Global Trends* could not predict.

In marshalling our forces and energies to confront the 21st century, the challenge, arguably, will be in six areas; (a) to develop a vision that captures the kind of future we want for ourselves and our continent; (b) to develop an organisational machinery for the operationalisation of such a vision; (c) to translate that vision into an implementable programme of action; (d) to have a leadership that not only believes in our vision, but that will also be selfless and exemplary; (e) to mobilise all sections of our people for

and behind the vision; and (f) to win allies for our cause in the international community.

In taking our vision to all these dimensions, on the one hand, we will be defining the social forces that can take our continent forward, and, on the other, improving and sharpening our method and tools of our struggle.

Indeed, the African Renaissance has occupied a position continent-wide as the kind of vision that this continent needs to confront the 21st century. The decision by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) at its Summit in Lusaka last year to inaugurate the African Union in South Africa this July, has given our continent a vehicle, an organisation, that can make our vision a reality. NEPAD (the New Partnership for Africa's Development), for its part, is a programme of action for the political, social and economic recovery of our continent.

But NEPAD has been subjected to a wave of criticisms in four areas in particular. Firstly, it is about process: that the development of NEPAD followed a top-down approach, with no consultation nor civil society participation, and that it is addressed to the North instead of its African constituencies.

The second area of critique focuses on conceptual and ideological issues: that NEPAD is a reinforcement of the Post-Washington Consensus and its neo-liberal macro-economic prescriptions; that it is merely a repackaging of the notorious Structural Adjustment stabilisation medication of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank; and it is a conspiracy by African leaders to auction the continent to the highest bidder in the North. Some have even gone to the extent of alleging that the NEPAD document was drafted by the G8 and the IMF or World Bank!

Thirdly, it is argued that NEPAD will not tamper with the substance of Africa's dependency relationship with the North; instead, its implementation will result in the deepening of Africa's position as a periphery and a supplier of cheap labour and raw materials. According to this view, and contrary to what is argued in the NEPAD document, Africa is not marginalised – in fact, goes the argument, the continent is the most integrated region in the global economy in terms of the degree of its vulnerability and dependence on external variables. The problem, therefore, is in the form and substance of its integration into the global economy. Furthermore, continues the critique, NEPAD is predicated on the expectation of resource flows from the North, especially private capital, rather than on the mobilisation of endogenous resources. And what makes us

believe that the North, after so many years of sabotaging whatever progressive development project the continent initiated and pillaging our resources with their transnational corporations, will suddenly change its heart and fall in love with us?

Finally, some critics of NEPAD question why the initiative appears to be running parallel to the OAU mechanism; that it is not part of the OAU and that this poses a threat to Pan-African unity that took over hundred years to build. Some even go to the extent of comparing NEPAD to documents that were developed by the OAU – notably the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 and the Abuja Treaty of 1990 – and argue that the initiative does not reflect the wealth of developmental knowledge and experience that the continent has accumulated over the last 40 years.

In my view, taking issue with NEPAD is as important to this continent as the initiative itself. However, we need to guard against allowing the critique to degenerate into another form of Afro-pessimism.

Arguably, Afro-pessimism can take three forms. The first, and the most common, is associated with the belief that nothing can work in this continent; that ours, as per *The Economist*, is a “Hopeless Continent”. The intellectual source of this form of pessimism is the belief that Africans are inherently inferior, and that the reason for our continent’s underdevelopment should be sought in our ‘static’ and ‘non-dynamic’ culture.

There is another form of Afro-pessimism, however, which is subtle and intellectually more sophisticated. The response by some political scientists to NEPAD was that it will not work because of the nature of the African post-colonial state which has been characterised not only as “collapsed” or “weak” but also as inherently predatory and driven by the “politics of the belly”. Some proponents of this view even attribute the problems of the African post-colonial state to certain African cultural practices.

Finally, there is another form of Afro-pessimism which feeds on a fundamentalist interpretation of the critique of neo-liberalism and the Post-Washington Consensus. For example, Patrick Bond’s reaction to NEPAD was to conclude that “Thabo Mbeki cannot establish a new framework of interaction with the rest of the world, but can instead merely front for a slightly modified residual version of ‘global apartheid’...”.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, a declaration adopted at one of the recent research meetings on NEPAD in Accra, Ghana, suggested that the initiative “will reinforce the hostile external environment and the internal weaknesses that constitute the major obstacle to Africa’s development”.<sup>3</sup>

Why are we so certain and even so fatalistic about what will happen to this continent because of NEPAD?

Let us admit that the struggle against the IMF/ World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes on this continent has produced a post-colonial constituency that over the last 20 years developed its own political and development discourse and identity. More importantly, the experience of 30 years of one-party and other forms of dictatorial rule has resulted in serious mistrust between the people of this continent and their leaders. It is conceivable that many in this continent do not think that there is anything positive that our leaders can do.

There are also significant conceptual differences in how the NEPAD and the African Union (AU) founding documents engage, for example, with the concepts of development and democracy. The AU, as we know, is a product of two processes: the transformation of the OAU into a more effective vehicle for Pan-African unity in the post-Cold War era; and attempts at revisiting the market-integration approach that informed the thinking behind the Abuja Treaty. For this reason, the AU Constitutive Act as a multilateral instrument is not just grounded in Pan-African ideals of the “Founding Fathers” – of solidarity and common historical experience and destiny – its development thinking is also consistent with the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Treaty, in particular, with its implied emphasis on self-reliance, regional integration and popular participation.

Whereas one of the AU’s objectives is to “promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance”, these, however, are not put forward as preconditions for development. For the AU, “the scourge of conflict in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent... [therefore] the need to promote peace, security and stability ... [is] a prerequisite for the implementation of our development and integration agenda”.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the linking in Article 3(g) – cited above – of “good governance” to “democratic principles”, “institutions” and “popular participation”, suggests that the AU document was informed by a more comprehensive notion of good governance.

By contrast, NEPAD is not constrained by the limitations of multilateralism but operates at the supranational level; there is hardly any reference in the document to the nation-state or the OAU’s notorious obsession with “sovereignty” (an obsession that is carried over into the AU but with some qualification). Understandably, NEPAD is not intended to be a mechanism for Pan-African unity and solidarity, but a programme of action (including implementation strategies) for taking Africa out of its developmental impasse.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas the AU makes passing reference to the “global economy” within which “the continent ... [has] to play its rightful role” (Article 3i) and “international partners” with whom Africa must work for “the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent”, NEPAD, for its part, is centred on partnership with the North. According to the document, African leaders must first commit themselves to a set of principles and practices (including macro-economic discipline, good governance, peer review and code of conduct for leaders), and in turn, the North will commit itself to a comprehensive partnership package that includes the transfer of financial resources, access to Northern markets, and the transformation of the international financial institutions. The African membership of this “pact” with the North will not only depend on adherence to the agreed principles and practices, but also includes provisions for sanction.

However, NEPAD, as opposed to the AU, is informed by a different notion of good governance and development. First of all, for NEPAD, “African leaders have learnt from their own experiences that peace, security, democracy,

good governance, human rights and sound economic management are conditions for sustainable development". A few pages down the line, another pre-condition to development that is added is "sub-regional and regional approaches to development". This is in contrast to the AU that not only regards, in the spirit of the Lagos Plan and the Abuja Treaty, regional integration as the cornerstone of Africa's development (not as a precondition), but also subscribes to a school of thought that does not consider good governance and democracy to be preconditions for economic development as is the case with NEPAD. According to this school of thought which dominated development thinking in the 1970s and 1980s, it is economic development that is a necessary condition for sustainable democracy. It was partly for this reason that authoritarian, developmentalist regimes were tolerated and supported. The sequencing of economic development with good governance is a post-Cold War phenomenon linked to attempts by the World Bank to rethink the Structural Adjustment Programmes as they were implemented in the 1980s and subsequent years.

As to the definition of good governance itself, NEPAD subscribes to a minimalist view as opposed to a more comprehensive understanding of this concept. The "political reforms" that are envisaged in the document will focus on: "administrative and civil services; strengthening parliamentary oversight; promoting participatory decision-making; adopting effective measures to combat corruption and embezzlement; and undertaking judiciary reform".

The unfortunate thing about the debate on NEPAD is that most of the time we are not discussing the essence of the initiative but its operationalisation. NEPAD is unprecedented, even in comparison to the Lagos Plan of Action, in that it is a pledge and an undertaking by African leaders to turn the African state into a vehicle for development rather than for accumulation and repression as has hitherto been the case. The operationalisation of this pledge and undertaking is an inclusive and contested process that is open to input and influence.

An example of how civil society can take advantage of this pledge is to establish independent, national structures to monitor and enforce compliance. Civil society in those countries whose leaders still refuse to identify with the NEPAD process, can find in the initiative a Pan-African mechanism for fighting for democracy and the right to development within nation-states.

The second area where the NEPAD initiative is unprecedented is in the extent to which it has compelled the North, including the United Nations and international financial institutions, to pause and reassess their work in Africa. Donor agencies and countries have in many ways taken control of the functions of the state in many African countries; they set the development agenda and finance the

state budget. Since the unveiling of NEPAD, however, all these players have been meeting in private and in public to reassess their work in Africa and align it to the imperatives of NEPAD. For the first time in our post-colonial history, our continent is being consulted about its own needs.

There is also another way that NEPAD can assist those among us who march every year on meetings of the G8, the World Economic Forum and the IMF/World Bank to make the case for the developing countries. For example, the NEPAD document is very explicit on the need to transform international financial institutions, and very implicit in making demands for the reform of the international trade regime.

We cannot choose when to be born but we can try to influence the conditions under which others can be born. NEPAD is the product of a moment we did not choose, and an attempt to improve the conditions under which we can continue to struggle for our right to development.

I believe that some of our leaders on this continent can be trusted: as to our people, they have long proven themselves. Globally, the notion of security has also undergone a substantial change over the last decade, shifting emphasis from the security of states to the security of people, to the extent that today we have a constituency in the international community which considers poverty and underdevelopment as the greatest threats to world security. The struggle for a new global morality – against genocides, war crimes and underdevelopment – is gaining ground and can no longer be ignored.

We have conditions now that did not exist in the 1960s when Kwame Nkrumah hoisted the first independence flag over Ghana; the essence of these conditions is in the experience we have accumulated over the last 40 years. The source of our strength is that we have survived the most brutal of all forms of crimes against humanity.

Our continent may be the most integrated region in the global economy, but we are also very marginalised in geo-strategic terms – we have no arms and wealth that the North has, let alone a voice within the chambers of the United Nations Security Council, in the boardrooms of the WTO or in the international financial institutions and transnational corporations.

NEPAD is not a religious script to be recited, nor a dogma to be memorised; it is a call to action. It is a firm declaration that: "Enough is Enough! Africa must also be counted among the winners!" ■

Eddy Maloka is Executive Director of the Africa Institute of South Africa.

This paper was first presented at a University of Venda Graduation Ceremony, 17 May 2002.

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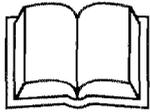
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# Bookshelf



Joseph A Kwarteng (ed), *Extension Education: Reshaping African universities and colleges for the 21st century*, Paris: Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, 2001.

**Reviewed by FOC Nwonwu, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein**

**T**his volume, with twelve contributions, is the proceedings of a workshop on “Bringing African Universities and College more into Agricultural Development”, held in Accra and Cape Coast in Ghana from 4-6 September 2000. The workshop was sponsored by the Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, Sasakawa Africa Association, and the Global 2000 Programme of the Carter Centre. Funding for the workshop was provided by the Nippon Foundation of Japan.

The conventional extension education programme has suffered much criticism on the grounds that it is too theoretical and ineffective and has failed to contribute meaningfully in reshaping the lives of farmers by enhancing their productivity, output and income. The government as the primary provider of funds for this cadre of training decries the insufficiency of trained extension officers and blames it on fund limitations.

The orthodox extension staff face the paradox of being torn between many conflicting worlds in the course of their training and discharge of duties. Their number is limited because government fails to train sufficient staff for lack of funds.

They are ill-trained and ill-equipped for the same reason of a lack of funds. Moreover, researchers alienate extension workers from research planning and execution on the grounds that their knowledge base is very shallow and inadequate to participate and contribute meaningfully to research. Yet, they serve as conduits for disseminating research findings to farmers.

Farmers and rural development agencies, who are the ultimate users of extension agents as conveyors of research results, often consider them to be very technical, too theoretical and therefore irrelevant in solving their practical-oriented problems. Thus, these extension agents become disenfranchised with the government, researchers, farmers, society and the entire system within which they operate.

The primary focus of this volume is on the Sasakawa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE). SAFE is an agricultural curriculum reform initiative launched in 1991 by the SAA in collaboration with the Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development, with funding from Nippon Foundation of Japan. It is intended as a panacea for numerous problems that bedevil the conventional system of extension education and its graduates.

The SAFE programme in Ghana was first started at the University of the Cape Coast, and later introduced in the Kwadaso Agricultural College, Kumasi. The merits of extending the initiative to the agricultural college, which are highlighted in the book, are to bridge the artificial gap between technically qualified and experienced people and academically educated professionals; train diploma-level students to serve as mid-level career extension agents; guarantee the provision of high quality materials on a sustainable basis for the degree programme at UCC; and to use university level staff and other resources for technical and administrative control of products.

The SAFE, through its supervised experimental projects (SEPs), deviates from the over-dependency and theoretical syndrome reminiscent of the conventional extension education system. SAFE pursues a curriculum reform approach, placing much emphasis on experimental learning, and is guided by the “experience is the best teacher” principle. It does this through the inclusion of five to eight-month off-campus farmer-focused, practical and supervised experimental projects.

The SEP innovation enables both lecturers and students to match theory with real-life experiences in the diverse fields of agriculture. With this approach, the extension worker acquires the theoretical knowledge, research skills, extension application, and demonstration techniques necessary for the successful implementation of the skills and technologies developed.

Contributors with diverse skills and experience were unanimous in opining that the SAFE initiative would serve as a vehicle for strengthening the in-country capacity of African universities in mobilising internal and external resources to forge partnerships with

local and international institutions as well as other agencies to train mid-career manpower.

The volume considers the SEP model a formidable tool for linking the three major sub-systems in the agricultural education and extension training system, namely the farmer and agribusiness subsystem, extension and education sub-system, and the research subsystem.

**The conventional extension education programme ... is too theoretical and ineffective and has failed to contribute meaningfully in reshaping the lives of farmers by enhancing their output**

The volume scores highly on its extensive coverage of thematic and topical issues and diversity of the experience and knowledge of contributors. Contributions came from the government, tertiary education administrators and lecturers, politicians, extension workers, farmers, donors, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector.

The workshop delved into the effectiveness and replicability of SAFE in other universities and colleges. It was also a forum to deliberate with stakeholders on the potential of SAFE or similar approaches to reform agricultural education in sub-Saharan Africa and to promote networking between participating agricultural universities.

Networking from the viewpoint of its proponents at the workshop is a viable strategy for effective extension education. This attribute underscores its desirability and indispensability in the SAFE programme. They posit that networking among the participating universities and colleges will help build strong pan-African academic partnerships in developing responsive training programmes for agricultural extension staff.

SAFE is now working with selected African universities and colleges to reform their agricultural education and extension curricula to make them responsive to the needs of agricultural sector clients such as farmers, rural development organisations and agricultural businesses. It is also fostering networking among participating African universities and colleges to build partnerships and initiate institutional reforms.

These efforts are reported to have yielded dividends as colleges in six African countries – Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania – have already adopted the UCC-type SAFE model in designing their training programmes for mid-career agricultural extension staff. The success of the models and initiatives are reflected in many contributions in the volume.

For example, the successful curriculum review exercises carried out at the Bunda College of Agriculture in Malawi are well elaborated in the book. In the light of successes in curriculum reviews in Ghana and Malawi, universities and colleges of agriculture that have not adopted the SAFE model are now challenged to restructure their curricula to adopt the model.

Contributors emphasise the exigency of a multidisciplinary approach to extension education and training. They argue that the complexity of agriculture in both theory and practice underscores this intricate requirement and justifies its relevance in agricultural extension training programmes, especially in Africa.

They further stress that such a multidisciplinary approach should act in tandem with co-operation and partnerships among participating institutions, governments, NGOs, development agencies and the private sector in developing and implementing extension education training programmes.

Among those that echoed this view is the former Vice President of Ghana. In his opening address, he challenged African universities and colleges to offer programmes that prepare graduates to go beyond production agriculture and embrace other off-farm career opportunities like marketing, processing, food distribution systems, and consumer concerns about cost,

quality, and the environmental effects of agricultural systems. Collaboration and partnerships in developing, co-financing and implementing extension training programmes are also advocated in the light that past solo efforts have failed.

The book is unequivocal in prescribing that partnerships forged with the broader education system such as science, economics, sociology, environment, engineering, education, health and business are mutually reinforcing and will better galvanise the multidisciplinary ethos, which the SAFE model seeks to promote.

An attempt is made in the volume to draw parallels between the expected roles of African universities and those played by the land grant colleges in the United States. In line with the land grant college models, one of the authors persuaded African universities to act as agents and engines of economic growth with a mandate to provide education, conduct research, produce new knowledge, and extend the new knowledge to the private sector.

In recognition of the dearth of women extension agents in the existing system and cognisant of their roles in human development, farm operations and household management, the volume also strongly advocates the inclusion of women extension agents in participating countries' education and training programmes.

Among the attractive and enticing dimensions explored in the book are the inclusion of a sample summary of the curriculum for the Post-Diploma BSc Agricultural Extension Programme at the University of Cape Coast; the listing of resources needed in starting the SAFE programme; and a description of the method of financing as well as sources of funding for the programme. Other attractions in the book include a framework for launching and sustaining SAFE-type programmes; and SEP supervision and evaluation forms, which are included to guide institutions aspir-

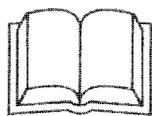
ing to adopt the SAFE-type programme.

One problem I found with the book is the limited participation and technical contributions from people from the six African countries whose agricultural institutions have already adopted the SAFE programme. The workshop was an ideal forum for them to share their respective experiences with participating institutions and the numerous stakeholders in attendance. Their participation was relatively minimal and there is no documented technical contribution in the book to their credit. The expected diversity from their contributions would have added technical strength and quality to the book.

I consider this book a *sine qua non* for educators involved in curriculum development and curriculum reviews not only in agricultural and extension education but also in the broader holistic education system.

It will serve as a useful reference for all universities and colleges that offer degree and diploma programmes in general agriculture and agricultural and extension education in particular. Governments, rural development agencies, NGOs and technical advisers on agriculture and rural development programmes should acquire the book as a tool and guide for effective planning and implementation of agricultural education and extension-related programmes and projects. ■

## A multidisciplinary approach should act in tandem with participating institutions, governments, NGOs, development agencies and the private sector in developing extension education training programmes



Omar Badsha (ed), *Amulets and Dreams: War, Youth and Change in Africa*, Photographs by Guy Tillim and Omar Badsha, Text by Julia Maxted, Pretoria: Unisa Press, South African History Online and the Institute for Security Studies, 2002.

**Reviewed by Abebe Zegeye, Department of Sociology, University of South Africa**

**T**his book should be seen as an attempt to come to grips with a specific issue that is causing concern in Africa: that of child soldiers who are victims of nihilistic war. It is claimed that the impact of globalisation and the tension between continuity and change are particularly acute for children in Africa.

Increasingly, the potency and potential of young people are being exploited to sustain the power of those in authority as well as those seeking to replace them. Thus, young people are unable to realise the promises of the new global economy.

Viewing children and youth as passive and incompetent has rendered them invisible and relegated them to dependent status within the family. Consequently policy has focused on the ways in which the costs of children can be distributed between family and state, with a greater burden being placed on the family, thus increasing its instability. Ironically, the family is the institution that is assumed to provide children with protection and care.

A fresh solution to this problem is needed: one which moves beyond conceptions of children and youth as passive, dependent consumers and sees them instead as contributors and active citizens. The contributions, responsibilities and agency of youth are still largely confined to marginal spaces, whereas they increasingly assume central importance in the African social landscape. Their agency should be recognised.

Viable alternatives should be provided to youth most at risk of being caught up in the militia. One way of doing this is to create meaningful spaces for young people in civil structures and processes. These concerns form the core of this book.

The highly original text in this book analyses the unacceptable involvement of Africa's children in war. The photographs strikingly illustrate African societies in which all aspects of 'normality' in daily life are violated. Together, while exposing the dangers facing these children, the text and photographs appear to ask what will take the place of 'abnormality' in these societies. Besides suggesting the rudiments of a possible solution, they

### **Destinations Unknown: Perspectives on the Brain Drain in Southern Africa**

*Edited by David A McDonald, Queen's University, and Jonathan Crush, Southern African Migration Project*

Based on national surveys undertaken by the Southern African Migration Project with skilled personnel and employers in South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho, as well as information on the skilled South African diaspora, *Destinations Unknown* represents the most comprehensive research on skilled migration ever undertaken in the region.

The book provides invaluable insights into skilled people's perspectives on and experiences with emigration, and challenges many of the popularly held stereotypes about the "brain drain" in the region.

make a powerful and provocative statement on the African condition today.

One of the deepest ironies in the history of Africa is that independence failed its people when they most needed it to succeed. The colonial legacy denied newly independent states the vital components required in post-independence Africa: material resources, democratic institutions, the ability of governments to redistribute wealth, to nurture peace and civil society and to provide proper education.

Shortly after independence, democratic reforms in Africa virtually came to a halt, destroying the visions of many. The changeover was shaped by the regional politics of the continent in relation to the Cold War and the new elites' close relations with either the West or the East.

In many instances, authoritarianism took hold, resulting in monstrous repression, dependency and anarchy. In this situation, ordinary citizens lack freedom and resources as well as access to the information age. Dependency has flourished. In the worst cases there has been a complete breakdown of the social order.

Many governments in Africa appear to be incapable of or unwilling to deliver change or to protect their citizens. Attempts by some to extend political participation to a greater number of people remain fraught with uncertainty. In this scenario, the all-embracing and intrusive state itself appears to be a problem rather than a solution, denying Africans the space to achieve their own solutions to political problems.

Colonial rule created undemocratic institutions and stifled civil society. Education was the preserve of the elite. Access to resources and freedom for the poor remained a dream and war often was seen to have been the only means to force change. During the last half century attempts to reform have failed.

The endemic disorder that has emerged has affected the character of politics in Africa: the nature of what is seen as 'political' has been changed by war and violence. These in turn have resulted in altered political relations in which old alliances or animosities have been demolished.

War and violence appear to have set the stage for the restructuring of African society. The people of Africa have ample reason not to trust the ruling classes and violence has, through undermining the brutal power of the state, changed the balance of power between the state and civil society in Africa.

This has hastened the processes of social and political realignment and of economic reorganisation and has resulted in a release of the potential of civil society to bring about change. Together, these factors have created an unprecedented opportunity for Africans to claim their own social and political space. ■

These research findings come at an important time in the development of new immigration legislation and dialogue in Southern Africa and will hopefully contribute to the policy transformation process as it relates to the movement of skilled people.

The research will be of interest to policymakers, academics, employers and NGOs throughout the region as well as the general reader interested in this critical policy topic.

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Elizabeth le Roux  
Editor, Africa Insight  
Africa Institute of South Africa  
PO Box 630  
Pretoria 0001  
South Africa  
Tel: +27 12 328 6970; Fax: +27 12 323 8153  
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*The Star* (Johannesburg), 10 February 1975.

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