

STUCK AT THE RUNWAY: AFRICA'S DISTRESS CALL

# Africa Insight

GIVING INSIGHT INTO CHANGE IN AFRICA MAY 2000

## Zimbabwe teeters on the precipice

What will Mugabe do next?



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# 40 YEARS OF THE Africa Institute and African Independence

By Elizabeth le Roux and Pieter Esterhuysen, Africa Institute of South Africa

## POPULATION GROWTH

	Number (millions)			Av. Annual Increase (%)		
	1960	2000	2025*	1960-70	1990-00	2020-30*
Africa	280	831	1490	2.5	2.7	2.0
World	3026	6158	8290	2.0	1.5	1.3

\* Projected

Note: Africa accounted for 9.2% of the world's population in 1960 and 13.5% in 2000.

## GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP)

	Total GNP (US\$ million)		GNP p/cap (US\$)	
	1980	1996	1980	1997
Sub-Saharan Africa	242 000	298 000	639	503
Africa	360 000	466 000	770	679
World	-	30 000 000	-	5130

## EXTERNAL DEBT

	Total (US\$ billion)		As % of GNP	
	1980	1996	1980	1997
Sub-Saharan Africa	58	227	34	71
Africa	109	323	..	66

## MAIN TELEPHONE LINES

	Number ('000)		Per 100 Persons	
	1970	1995	1970	1995
Africa	3342	12 600	1	2
World	272 657	689 000	8	13

## ELECTRICITY OUTPUT

	Generating Capacity (MW)		Production (kWh mil)	
	1960	1995	1960	1995
Africa	11 000	96 000	40 000	365 000
World	531 000	3 058 000	2 300 000	13 000 000

**T**HIS YEAR, THE AFRICA Institute of South Africa is celebrating 40 years since its founding in April 1960. Those forty years represent a crucial and eventful phase in the awakening of Africa's diverse peoples.

At the time of the Africa Institute's founding there were only eleven independent countries in Africa, seven of them to the south of the Sahara, including Cameroon that was decolonised in January 1960. In the course of that year the fledgling Institute saw another sixteen African colonies (mainly francophone) achieving their freedom.

In South Africa, 1960 was a momentous year, marked by the Sharpeville massacre and the banning of the liberation movements which had been resisting the country's apartheid policies for many years.

By the end of the 1960s Africa had 42 independent countries. With the exception of South Africa, they were cooperating in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), formed in May 1963. Despite the continent's divisiveness, the OAU succeeded in uniting its member states for the common cause of eradicating

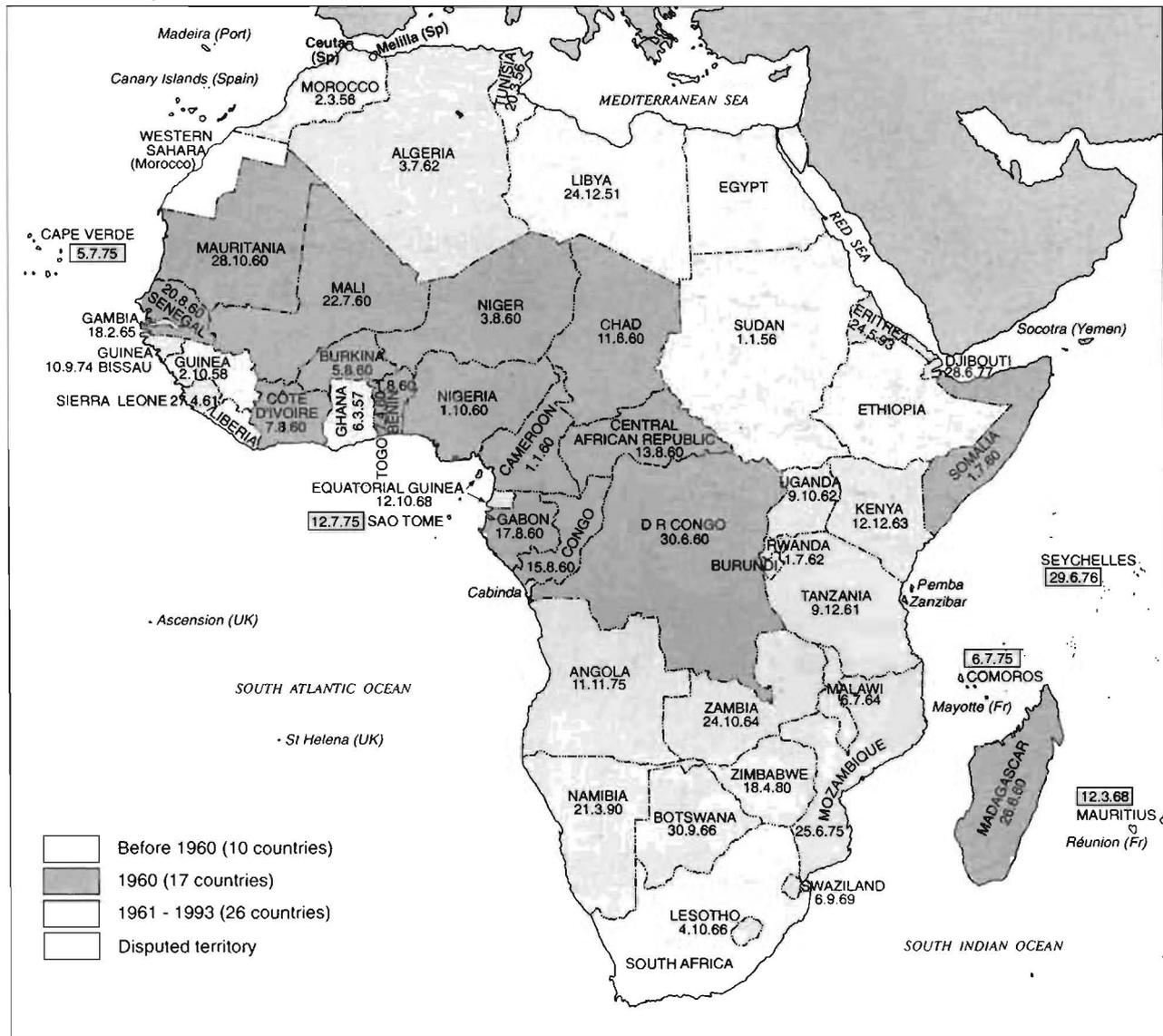
apartheid in South Africa and colonialism wherever it still existed - mainly in Southern Africa.

Meanwhile, the newly independent African countries had begun to replace their fledgling democratic institutions with authoritarian systems, notably military dictatorships and single-party states. In addition, ill-advised government intervention in the African economies and internal conflict, not to mention mismanagement and corruption, undermined economic advancement.

Despite African efforts towards non-alignment in world affairs, dominated by the USA and the USSR and their respective allies, the superpower rivalry extended to Africa where it fuelled militarism and the squandering of resources needed for social and infrastructural services.

General economic decline set in throughout the continent during the 1970s and 1980s. African countries' foreign debt mounted to unsustainable proportions. This was the era of structural adjustment programmes prescribed by foreign donors in an effort to reform the continent's economies, but with mixed results.

Phases of Independence



Map © Africa Institute of South Africa

On the positive side, the 1970s and 1980s saw the formation of regional economic organisations aimed at promoting economic and functional cooperation between neighbouring countries. In Southern Africa the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (now the Southern African Development Community, SADC) came into existence in 1980. Today not a single African country does not belong to some or other regional economic forum, though formidable obstacles continue to impede their proper functioning.

The final wave of independence in Africa started with the Portuguese withdrawal from the continent in the mid-1970s and continued towards the negotiated settlements precipitating the emergence of independent Zimbabwe (1980) and of Namibia (1990). This phase came to an end when, in 1993, Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia as Africa's 53rd independent state.

From 1976 onward South Africa experienced turbulent times and momentous changes, starting with revolt among the country's youth which led to further international isolation of the country and weakening of its economy. By the late 1980s it was dawning on apartheid supporters that the policy was a colossal failure, a realisation that prepared them for the unbanning of the liberation movements and the minority government's eventual handing over of power to a freely elected government.

South Africa's negotiated constitution, its liberation election and its return to the African comity of nations since 1994, gave great impetus to another sea change that had been occurring in the continent as a result of the end of the Cold War and pressures arising from both inside and outside the continent. The change brought the substitution of democratic constitutions and multiparty elections for the formerly prevalent authoritarian systems.

Often called Africa's 'second liberation', the rejection of dictatorship and unaccountable governance undoubtedly reflect progress in Africa's rebirth, though

**LIFE EXPECTANCY**

	1960	1995	1997
Sub-Saharan Africa	40	52	49
World	50	64	67

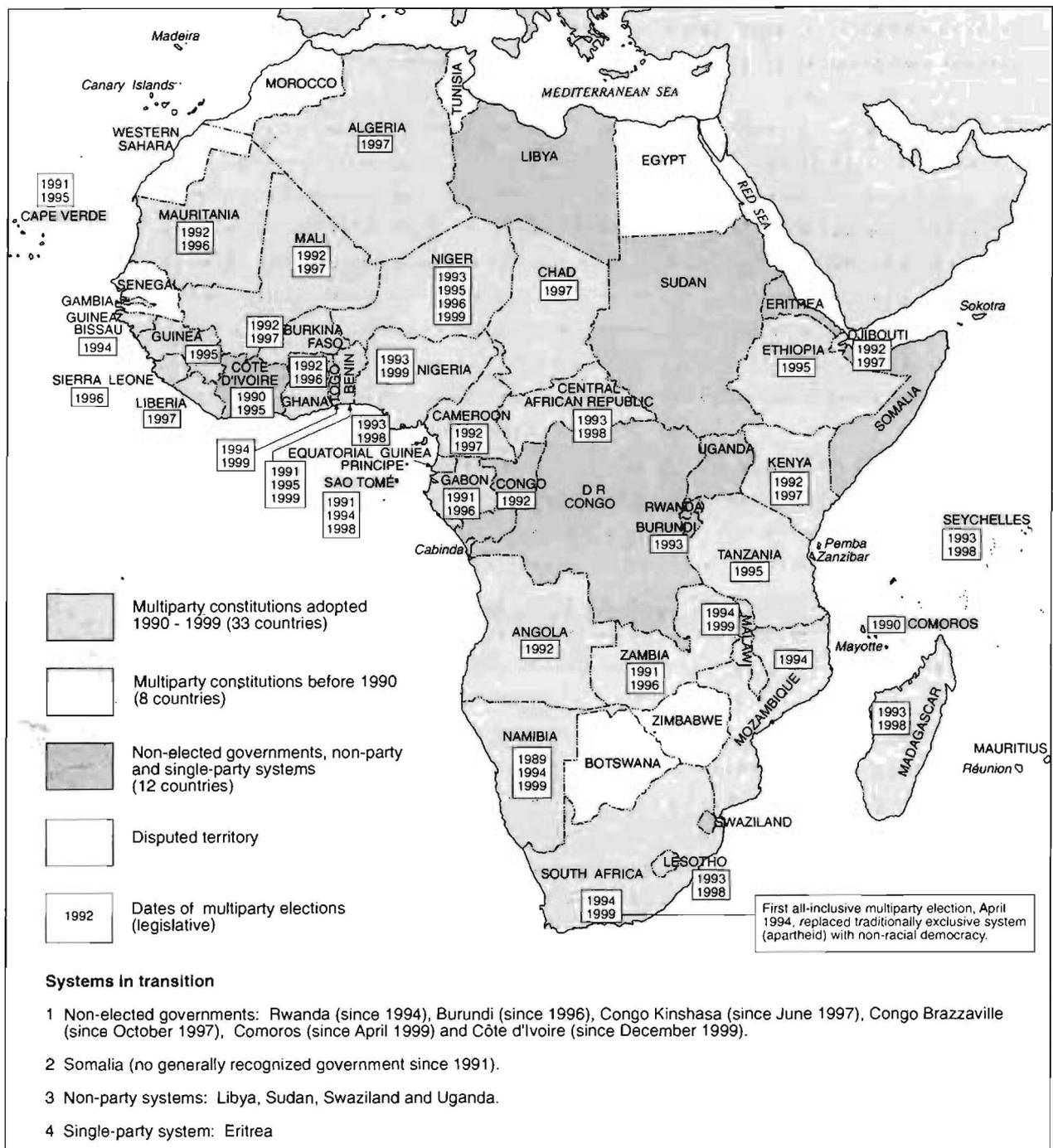
**INFANT MORTALITY (PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS)**

	1970	1997
Sub-Saharan Africa	137	105
World	98	58

**ADULT LITERACY**

	1980 (%)	1996 (%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	40	57
Africa	40	66
World	70	78

Elections in Africa since 1990



Map © Africa Institute of South Africa

the fledgling democracies are still very fragile. Nevertheless, by the advent of the new millennium democratic constitutions had been adopted or restored in at least 41 African countries, with one or more multiparty elections having taken place in all of them.

Democracy is still, then, very much an issue on our continent. Twenty years ago, the editor's comment in Africa Insight centred around the recent elections in Zimbabwe which had brought Robert Mugabe to power. In April 2000, our eyes again turn towards Zimbabwe, and Robert Mugabe, as the country appears to hover between a democratic succession in its

upcoming elections or a return to civil war. Many of the concerns raised in that editorial of 1980 remain relevant today:

- Nationalism, ethnicity and solidarity: "Will (Mugabe) be able to forge Shona and Matabele - and perhaps whites - into one nation?"
- Land reform - or at least expectations thereof: "It is not unrealistic to expect a crisis of rising expectations with regard to more land, greater prosperity and more prestige posts to lead to a confrontation between Mr Mugabe and elements among his supporters."
- Implications for South Africa: "It is in (South Africa's) own interest to have

economically prosperous and stable neighbours. In fact, South Africa can go even further by offering discreet and specific material assistance with the rehabilitation of Zimbabwe. On the basis of equality and mutual commercial benefit South Africa could make a significant contribution to the modernisation of rail, road and telecommunications networks in Zimbabwe."

These issues emerge again as the journal focuses on current events in Zimbabwe, and scenarios for the future of the Southern African region. ☺



# STUCK AT THE RUNWAY: Africa's distress call

**Mathurin Houngnikpo**<sup>1</sup>, who teaches African History and Politics at the Metropolitan State College of Denver, and Global Issues at the University of Denver, argues that Africa's current crises should not only be ascribed to the effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism, but also to a failure of leadership among Africa's elites.

**S**EVERAL DECADES AFTER INDEPENDENCE, MUCH OF AFRICA<sup>2</sup> IS STILL equated with famine, malnutrition, infant mortality, mismanagement, corruption, and civil or tribal wars. All indicators point to the fact the continent is in a desperate plight. Whether one uses per capita income, economic growth or foreign debt statistics,<sup>3</sup> the conclusion is inescapable: Africa is in a chronic crisis. Although a few nations have managed to make modest gains, the overwhelming majority of African countries are plagued with stagnant economies, low per capita income and political instability.

Since decolonisation, a great deal of official and academic literature has tried to tackle Africa's problems, offering remedies that could cure the continent. In their scrutiny of what went wrong, several analysts have correctly condemned European colonisation for its harm to the continent.<sup>4</sup> However, without denying the impact of colonialism on Africa, any serious analysis of the crisis on the continent should go beyond such arguments. While the colonial legacy explains some of Africa's political, economic, and social degradation, post-colonial African leaders, and especially the second wave of politicians, have played a debilitating role in Africa's development.

In the name of the *mission civilisatrice* (civilising mission),<sup>5</sup> supposed to tame the 'savages,' Europeans took over Africa and despoiled the continent of its material and human resources.<sup>6</sup> According to Carter and O'Meara, 'Africa has suffered the rape of its people through the slave trade... and the exploitation of its natural resources.'<sup>7</sup> Having realised the true goal of European presence on their continent, Africans started fighting back. More than a century after they set foot on the continent, Europeans faced a tremendous liberation struggle.

Whether through peaceful negotiation or armed struggle, most African countries were granted their independence in the 1960s.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, African leaders failed to catch the subterfuge. To quench their thirst for independence, they were in reality conceded a hollow victory. European powers designed and handed to African leaders, a 'dependent' independence that would never allow the continent to function on its own. The result is that, four decades later, the continent is still - and risks being forever - at the runway, hoping to receive clearance for take-off, instead of finding its own way of becoming airborne. Although scholars like Christopher Clapham believe that 'the post-colonial era in Africa is now, and only now, coming to an end,'<sup>9</sup> such an assertion seems overly optimistic, given that contemporary African leadership continues to show neither vision nor compass.

This article investigates African political, economic and social crises, from a perspective other than the oft-told tale of colonialism and its consequences as the main cause of African problems. Instead, I treat European colonisation as a given, in an attempt to define the unknown variable of the equation. After an overview of the infamous colonialism, the crux of the continent's misfortune - that is its current leadership - will be evaluated. Through a criti-

cal review of African leadership, the reasons why the continent is still at the runway will become obvious. Finally, I offer a few suggestions to give a new sense of hope to Africans who are genuinely concerned with taking their continent to new heights of economic and political achievements.

### Colonialism and its Legacy

While contacts among nations or continents could, in theory, enhance co-operation and eventually trade, it is hard to credit Europeans' arrival in Africa with such an intention, given the harm European colonialism inflicted upon the continent.<sup>10</sup> Although early explorations seemed to be motivated by genuine curiosity to discover the 'dark' continent, and to spread the Christian gospel, European powers quickly seized the opportunity to use the explorers for their own political and economic ends. Before they realised it, genuine missionaries and impostors were working hand in hand, travelling to the most remote corners of the continent, taking the Bible to the doorsteps of villagers. According to the official line, the 'dark' continent needed light and Europeans took it upon themselves to enlighten it. In the name of 'civilisation,' Europeans managed to explore the continent to the fullest extent.

According to Stewart Easton, the deeper causes of colonial policy may be found in the industrial revolution, strategic motives and national prestige. He saw imperialism only as an urge for expansion and conquest, a 'sickness' from which all 'nations of western civilisation' have suffered.<sup>11</sup> While very little of Africa was known to the outside world at the beginning of the 19th century, hardly anything remained to be explored by 1890. To fully understand the 'need to tame the barbarous tribes,' one has to remember the European view of Africa, and Harry Hamilton Johnston summarises it well:

*The Negro, more than any other human type, has been marked out by his mental and physical characteristics as the servant of other races... in a primitive state [he] is a born slave. He is possessed of great physical strength, docility, cheer-*



Photo © Guy Stubbs

**Given the millions of Africans still affected by dire poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illnesses, and inadequate education, the cry for freedom from want should be louder.**

*fulness of disposition, a short memory for sorrows and cruelties, and an easily aroused gratitude for kindness and just dealing. He does not suffer from homesickness to the over-bearing extent that afflicts other peoples torn from their homes, and, provided he is well-fed, he is easily made happy. Above all, he can toil hard under the hot sun and in the unhealthy climates of the Torrid Zone. He has little or no race-fellowship - that is to say, he has no sympathy for other negroes; he recognizes, follows, and imitates his master independently of any race affinities.<sup>12</sup>*

Johnston's views reflect the prevailing opinion of the era. Europeans believed that they were physically and mentally superior to Africans and as such should conquer them to civilise the continent. Europe was at a stage where industrialisation and imperialism allowed the thought of a 'natural and necessary polarization of the rulers and the ruled, the bearers and the receivers of culture.'<sup>13</sup> While the Caucasoid type was conceived as the ruler and bearer of culture, the Negroid type was the ruled and the receiver. Under those

circumstances, colonisation was not only good but also indispensable, if 'history-less' Africa were to survive.

In contrast to this Eurocentric view, according to which everything of value in Africa originated outside the continent, the reality is that Europeans' contacts made things fall apart<sup>14</sup> instead. The Ghanaian historian Adu Boahen's view is very much in agreement with Chinua Achebe's when he notes, '[b]y its disruption of the existing political organization and its creation of the present independent states, by its generation of the new classes of Africans, by its introduction of a cash-economy and above all by its spread of education and the Western way of life, colonialism has launched Africa on a course of development that is fundamentally different from its earlier patterns.'<sup>15</sup> In the same vein, Anice believes that European penetration into Africa brought 'conquest, exploitation, brutalisation, dehumanisation, westernisation, expropriation, subjugation, dislocation and final integration into the imperial, global, capitalist economy.'<sup>16</sup>

Although colonialism did have some positive impact on Africa (such as modern infrastructures), its negative consequences were so severe that the continent still continues to suffer. But, more than colonialism, neo-colonialism has dealt a harsher

blow to the continent. After several years of resistance and struggle by Africans, Europeans loosened their grip on the continent. However, they were only replaced with two successive categories of leaders.

The first generation of post-independence African leaders was more concerned with self-determination or independence and did not care to analyse the type of freedom they were being given. While they are to be credited with bringing about independence and beginning the process of nation-building, their record would have been better were it not for their naive and misguided policies. As for the second generation, it was definitely preoccupied with self-aggrandizement. Having denounced the fathers of independence for dismal performance, they took over only to eventually destroy the continent. Several years of political and economic decay left the conti-

### African Leaders on Trial

nent with most Africans caught in a net of poverty, ignorance and disease. And the irony is that contemporary leaders are still waiting for rescue by the external forces that placed Africa in such a predicament.

Regardless of how much importance is given by realists to the structure in international politics, the fact of the matter is that the primary actors in that arena, the states, are led by human beings whose actions or decisions shape the system. According to the realist perception of the international system, the unitary state and its leaders are constrained by the structure of the system. This agent-structure dichotomy maintains that the leader has to comply with the competitive nature of international relations.<sup>17</sup> While Aron, Morgenthau and other classical realists tried to understand and explain international structure through the actions and interactions of the states and their leaders, Waltz and other neo-realists believe that the anarchic international system dictates behaviour to actors or agents, from a power perspective.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, whether measured in relative or absolute terms, power seems very elusive in Africa. Through coercion or benevolence, more powerful nations impose their will on African leaders who

Without downplaying the primacy of international system or structure, it is important to observe that leaders' behaviour can make a difference, even if such a behaviour, according to realist assumptions, reflects what the system allows leaders to do. Although the debate on why and how the Cold War started and ended still continues, one cannot ignore that Mikhail Gorbachev's painful decision to do away with the former Soviet Union did play a major role in the thawing of the Cold War. The importance of good leadership in a country's fate has been amply demonstrated by Monte Palmer in his *Human Factor in Political Development*. He credits the effectiveness of any political system to, among other variables, the skills, attitudes, and behaviour of those individuals charged with running the system.<sup>22</sup>

A quick overview of contemporary Africa reveals a whole range of painful problems still lingering for lack of effective leadership. Almost four decades of independence brought more negative than positive returns to the continent, and although it is convenient to blame everything on colonialism, the sad reality is that Africans, especially the second generation of post-independence leaders, are the main root of Africa's malaise.

Operating within a difficult Cold War environment, and with less education, the founding fathers managed, however, to earn freedom for Africa, even if Uhuru<sup>23</sup> failed to deliver on its promises. In contradistinction, the second generation of African politicians chose the path of destruction, using absolute power, not in an attempt to build their nations like their forefathers, but rather to empty the coffers of their countries. Their behaviour and actions simply took the continent to an economic cul-de-sac. After all, Africa is not the only continent that has experienced imperialism and colonialism, even if the one known to the continent has been more severe in terms of its impacts. But given the performance of other former colonies (in Asia for example), the reason for the execrable result of African economies and politics has to lie elsewhere, not just in colonialism and its legacy.

And, as painful as it is to say it, African leadership is the main problem of the continent. Echoing the views of several writers, African and non-African alike, Anice states that 'it is the failure of African rulers, African governments, African governance institutions that account for the emergence of first, political decay, then socio-political instability, followed by

## According to the official line, the 'dark' continent needed light and Europeans took it upon themselves to enlighten it. In the name of 'civilisation,' Europeans managed to explore the continent to the fullest extent.

acquiesce. According to Ikenberry and Kupchan, 'acquiescence is the result of the socialisation of leaders in secondary nations. Elites in secondary states buy into and internalise norms that are articulated by the hegemon and therefore pursue policies consistent with the hegemon's notion of international order.'<sup>19</sup> Owing to coercion and material inducement,<sup>20</sup> mighty nations structure the international system and socialise weaker states to accept their principles and beliefs. Through what Nye describes as 'co-optive power,'<sup>21</sup> some nations simply dictate the rules of the game. But even among those who had to comply, some have handled the constraints better than others, which suggests leadership does matter. In essence, effective individual leadership enhances the chances for emerging nations to circumvent the structural handicaps of the international system.

social fragmentation, and finally political disorders in contemporary Africa.<sup>24</sup> African leaders have frequently behaved as if they were to vindicate those who opposed decolonisation and predicted that Africans would never have the wisdom and moral maturity to be capable of governing themselves in peace and progress. In Anice's words, 'Africa's descent into decay is due to the tragic failure of African leadership in the social, political and economic arenas, the personalization of rulership, the expropriation of societal resources by the kleptocracy of the ruling classes in a patron-clientelist, autocratic, coercive and dangerously intrusive state'.<sup>25</sup>

Contrary to expectations, independence did very little, if anything, to resolve Africa's basic problems. According to the Ghanaian scholar Ayittey, true freedom never came to much of Africa, nor did development.<sup>26</sup> In a similar vein, Claude Ake believes that development has never been on the agenda of African leaders.<sup>27</sup> Axelle Kabou developed the same argument in her book *Et si l'Afrique Refusait le Développement* (What if Africa Said No to Development).<sup>28</sup> Kofi Hadjor has also condemned African leaders: 'with every year that passed, Africa proved less capable of realizing the most elementary aspirations of its people'.<sup>29</sup>

**T**he hope represented by the first generation of post-independence African leaders has been shattered and the image of the continent continues to be battered. To this day, African leaders remain ignorant or, at best, display little knowledge of how international politics work. The evidence is overwhelming that out of necessity or *raison d'état*, powerful states will act according to their national interest regardless of the impact of their action upon other players of the system.<sup>30</sup> African leaders must take heed of that basic premise as they develop their policies.

Whether it is out of naïveté or sheer ignorance, the truth is that most leaders in Africa have betrayed their continent.<sup>31</sup> They have demonstrated clear ingenuity in domestic politics by hanging on to power for several years, at times against the will of their people. They have succeeded in creating strong patron-client relationships, permitting all kinds of political 'gymnastics' for the survival of their regimes. It is, however, difficult to assert that they have ever been concerned with the well-being of their people. Through an unfortunate system of 'privatisation of the public sphere,' they 'own' their respective countries.<sup>32</sup> With no distinction between the public and

the private spheres, mismanagement and embezzlement have been rampant at all levels. Corruption has reached such an alarming level that Olivier de Sardan believes that corruption became 'socially embedded in "logics" of negotiation, gift-giving, solidarity, predatory authority and redistributive accumulation'.<sup>33</sup> In the meantime, many citizens have gone without food, clothing and shelter, demonstrating the myopic policies of current African leaders. However, while their domestic politics skills seem very 'good,' they remain ignorant of the international system, or have only learned how to manipulate outside powers to suit their selfish interests. In this day and age where autarchy is practically impossible, given how interconnected the world has become, grasping the basics of international conduct is the key to a country's good performance on the world scene.

Inasmuch as contemporary African leaders would like to swear by an altruistic international system, the reality is that states act according to their interests as determined by their leaders. It is not

powerful, with might being the real referee. Without a clear understanding of these rules, a weaker country can never win, despite its efforts. By the time a small and weak country is about to score, the more powerful country moves the goal posts. This is a reality African leaders, regardless of their ideological stands - idealist or realist - must grapple with. Unfortunately, they seem to show no dexterity in mastering international politics, and rather, display an astonishing naivete.

At the dawn of a new millennium ushering the fifth decade of Africa's independence, a glance at the continent still reveals, despite a gleam of hope on the horizon, a land of degradation and humiliation. Although the early days of independence were difficult because of the economic and political exploitation the continent was subjected to, and the Herculean task ahead, there was at least a sense of pride. Now, arguably, this sense of pride has vanished, and Africa must account for decades of failure.

While the first decade of liberation - the 1960s - could be considered the starting

### **The truth is that most leaders in Africa have betrayed their continent ... while their domestic political skills seem good, they remain ignorant of the international system, or manipulate outside powers to suit their selfish interests.**

uncommon to see countries or states interact with one another from a purely altruistic or humanitarian ground, but that is the exception, not the rule in international relations. Looking back at the very reasons that forced Europeans to invade, occupy and finally colonise Africa, and given the European resistance to decolonisation, it is still a mystery why African leaders continue to expect their former 'masters' to become altruistic genuine partners in their quest for African development.

Of course, the developed world would not mind an 'upgrading' of the level of development of the developing world, in its own interests: market for export, investment, and repayment of debt, etc. However, any country's development strategy should be first endogenous, primarily based on its leaders' creativity and ingenuity. And therein lies African leaders' deficiency. It is taking them forever to understand how the world system operates. Today's international relations could be likened to a rigged soccer game. The game has rules that are defined by the more

point for analysing the role of African leaders, a critical book by Leonard Barnes in 1969 should have sent out a warning signal. Already, Barnes observed a false euphoria in post-independent Africa. His contention was that the greatest obstacle to the social and economic progress of the continent lay in African leadership. He noted that leaders had exercised poor judgement by avoiding closer associations - political and economic - as the only guarantee to breaking the endless round of poverty.<sup>34</sup> There were also several pessimistic signs which compelled French sociologist René Dumont to write *L'Afrique Noire est Mal Partie* (False Start in Africa) in which he depicts Africa as bound for failure.<sup>35</sup> The kind of independence granted to the continent and the second generation of leaders at the helm of the continent did not augur well for Africa.

The second decade signalled the beginning of a long crisis. The 1970s saw the decline of the initial optimism towards political independence and the concomitant acceptance of the ideology of develop-



Although the initial enthusiasm and euphoria about the transition from authoritarianism or totalitarianism toward multiparty politics have now given way to more nuanced assessments, the hope is that the worst is over, and democracy will allow Africans to finally live their overdue dream of having a decent life.

ment by African populations. At roughly the same time, the hope that modern economic thinking, through development plans funded by former colonial powers, could transform nascent African economies, vanished. The continent was already facing such severe problems that a French political scientist, Gonidec, observed in 1978 in his *Les Systèmes Politiques Africains* that 'whether the 'capitalist' path or 'third path' of 'socialism' has been chosen, the post-independence period manifests a constant policy which, by its vacillation, tends to maintain the African populations in a situation hardly different from the colonial one'.<sup>36</sup>

The 1980s were characterised as the 'lost decade' because, contrary to expectations, Africa's problems grew deeper. While countless studies are keen to lay the blame for Africa's deepening crisis at the feet of multilateral lending agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the locus of the problem should be in the roots of the crisis, that is, the reasons why these economies requested the lending institutions' aid in the first place. According to Aderanti Adepoju, 'much of the blame rests with the economic crises that preceded structural adjustment, but clearly the adjustment measures themselves contributed significantly to this decline'.<sup>37</sup> This view is widely shared and one can understand Africans'

frustration. Unfortunately, at this stage, it might be too late to complain. What is important is to figure out how to alleviate the severe problems created on the continent before and after the IMF and the World Bank.

**T**he last decade of the twentieth century began with a great deal of relief. The end of the Cold War and political events in Eastern Europe hastened the democratisation process on the continent.<sup>38</sup> A rekindling of civil society and the military's positive contribution brought democracy back to Africa. After the successful national conference that triggered a peaceful political transition in Benin, several other African countries followed suit with more or less success. Although the initial enthusiasm and euphoria about the transition from authoritarianism or totalitarianism toward multiparty politics have now given way to more nuanced assessments, the hope is that the worst is over, and democracy will allow Africans to finally live their overdue dream of having a decent life. Given the millions of Africans still affected by dire poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illnesses, and inadequate education, the cry for freedom from want should be louder.

### What Went Wrong?

Trying to figure out the causes of Africa's dismal performance since independence is a serious challenge, and the volumes of books and articles that have attempted such a task should testify to that. The literature on Africa's never-ending crisis has looked at the continent's problems from several angles, with the bulk of the critique directed towards the shape and meaning of the African state. Depending on the views, African states have been

depicted as 'soft,' 'collapsed,' 'failed,' 'shadow,' or 'quasi'.<sup>39</sup> Of course, these concepts describe different aspects of the decline of an African state that has become incapable of fulfilling its basic duties. As Jean-Francois Bayart explained in *The State in Africa: the Politics of the Belly*, political power on the continent is centrally concerned with access to wealth.<sup>40</sup> Although some scholars would like to view the nation-state as the curse of Africa,<sup>41</sup> a closer look demonstrates that the gangrene of the African state lies rather in its current leadership. The grip of African leaders over their states widened the state-society gap, and with civil society forced into a coma, the little pressure that existed vanished, and the result turned out to be catastrophic.

Another explanation of the 'African crisis' lies in the continent's lagging economic performance. Regardless of the sector concerned, be it agriculture, industrialisation, or international trade, the picture seems bleak. Agriculture is the locus of the most economically productive activity in Africa. As the sector generating the bulk of the continent's exports, agriculture is the main source of foreign exchange. Unfortunately, there are several problems hindering the progress of that sector.

For a start, the climate does not always co-operate, creating droughts, flooding, irregular rainfall and other adverse conditions that impede production. Due to existing patterns of agricultural production, a growing scarcity of arable land is bringing shifting cultivation to an end. The attempt to grow crops beyond subsistence production earns a negative return because African governments have no control over the market. Even with the best of intentions, such a lopsided policy can only turn the terms of trade perpetually against the raw material-producing countries.

As far as industrialisation is concerned, few African countries derive their national income from industry. Industrialisation is not only a symbol of the desire for economic transformation, but also the focal point of structural change in African economies. Yet African leaders have disregarded the reality that the world demand for African agricultural goods is growing too slowly to generate any significant economic growth. Only industry, with its greater potential for increased productivity and its close links with modern technology can help African countries achieve parity with the developed world, in terms of wealth and control of their own future.

International trade is central to the economic development process. African

nations continue, unfortunately, to remain part of a world trading system that is unfavourable to them. Since the state of economic autarchy prior to the colonial era is no longer possible, Africa has to deal with more powerful continents. In fact, Africa inherited at independence an economic structure that was outwardly directed. Such a legacy gave the continent very few options.

Without calling for a disconnection from the world economy as suggested by some scholars,<sup>42</sup> because it is not a realistic option at this point, it is crucial for contemporary African leaders to grasp the real meaning of the international division of labour and comparative advantage. According to these concepts, Africa seems to be good only at generating raw materials. Of course, there are those who still believe that Africa could maximise its gains from its external opportunities by allowing world market forces to determine its economic structure, according to comparative advantage. Such theories put Third World countries in general, and African countries in particular, in a vulnerable position because they have to depend on the rich industrial nations for the expansion of trade opportunities. The commercial policies of the richest nations are not always fair to the world's poorest countries. Protecting domestic agriculture with tariffs, price supports and subsidies can restrict exports from developing nations. Under such circumstances, it will be tough for any continent to perform well, and a blind leadership in Africa simply adds insult to injury.

One variable of the 'African crisis' equation that is often overlooked is the leadership factor. One of the objectives of the nationalist movements as aptly stated by Ken Post was 'a reaction against foreign rule, seeking above all to restore the dignity of people who felt themselves degraded by centuries of exploitation and control'.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, after independence, most former nationalists lost sight of their commitment. Former allies during the nationalist struggles became enemies because of the drive for power. But things got much worse under the second generation of African politicians.<sup>44</sup> In the face of the suffering majority, entrenched leaders have utilised their positions to amass wealth and authority, which in turn helped them to cling indefinitely to power.

Unfortunately, one of the dire consequences of holding on to power by all means necessary, turned out to be the

debasement of the office of the president and other leadership positions in Africa. Clientelism and corruption became the main techniques of political mobilisation and control throughout the continent, creating harsh political and economic consequences. Given the economic and social advantages and benefits of being in power in Africa, it is not hard to comprehend why being involved in politics on the continent is so tempting. The first impression is that leadership has no requirements. Any buffoon, without intelligence or intellect, can become a leader in Africa, provided he or she knows how to play the game. What seems to matter on the continent, is not what one can do for one's country, but rather how much damage one can inflict upon one's country. Almost like vultures, African leaders devour anything they can lay their hands on at the expense of their country's economic development.

This sad reality has led a well-endowed continent into a frustrating situation. Africa's economies are lagging on all fronts, and appear incapable of taking off. And yet, very little has been written on the issue, probably because scholars, both African and non-African, have tried to be 'politically correct' by avoiding meaningful criticism of the leadership. The time has come to address this painful issue, by exposing current elites' blindness, ignorance and arrogance. One can only hope that a critical reflection on African leadership might help their followers to open their eyes and find alternatives for taking control of their lives.

A good example of the lack of leadership on the continent is the total failure of the Lagos Plan of Action. Following the Organisation of African Unity's 1979 recommendation to adopt a far-reaching regional approach to tackle Africa's economic problems, an important gathering was convened in Lagos, Nigeria, to explore the basic restructuring of the continent primarily based on collective self-reliance.<sup>45</sup> According to the 1980 meeting, Africa 'must map out its own strategy for development and must vigorously pursue its implementation'.<sup>46</sup> Although the Plan tried to transfer 1950s African nationalist values from the political into the economic realm, it failed simply because of the traditional distinction between countries that would

like to espouse laissez-faire policies and those that want to follow a socialist path.

Even several blunt statements from scholars and documents could not serve as a wake-up call. According to both the World Bank and the Brandt Report, the prospects for the 1980s in most of the poorer developing nations in general, and in Africa in particular, were extremely dismal. The former president of the World Bank, Alden Clausen, saw 'an absolute

**The first impression is that leadership has no requirements. Any buffoon, without intelligence or intellect, can become a leader in Africa, provided they know how to play the game.**

worsening of circumstances for millions of Africans in the years ahead'.<sup>47</sup> The Brandt Commission recommends that actions be taken, including emergency and long-term measures to assist the poverty belts of Africa.<sup>48</sup> Other writings and opinions of the 1980s were alarming enough to demand a follow-up of the

Lagos recommendations. One would think that a 1993 book edited by Professor Adebayo Adedeji, the former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, entitled *Africa within the World: Beyond Dispossession and Dependence*,<sup>49</sup> in which several prominent scholars depicted a candid, if anxious, picture of the continent, would have made a difference.

Two decades after the Lagos Plan, there has been very little progress. Such a state of affairs can only be imputed to the liabilities of African leadership. Through commission or omission, current African leaders have failed their continent. From the ongoing drama in Sudan, the genocide in Rwanda, to the vicious and pointless wars in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and between Eritrea and Ethiopia, to name but a few human-made disasters on the continent, these leaders' failures are evident. Instead of taking control of the destiny of their continent, African leaders remain incapable of resolving their own problems. Still seeing themselves as victims, they wrongly continue to expect other continents to come to their rescue. The outcome of the New International Economic Order or the North-South debate should teach any leader in the Third World what or how much to expect from the First World. Until these lessons sink in, African leaders will wait in vain, and their continent will become increasingly marginalised. Only

by ridding itself of the illusion that Africa's problems will be solved from outside, can the continent achieve any real progress.

### Is there any hope?

The independence of the Sudan in 1956, of Ghana in 1957, of Guinea in 1958, followed in 1960 by the majority of West and Central African countries, heralded a new era, filled with hope and promises. However, European powers were reluctant to grant independence to African nations. There were those who believed, probably because Africans were viewed as less than humans, that colonisation was the continent's economic hope. A different opinion defended freedom for Africa, with the expectation that the type of leadership shown during the struggle for liberation should take the continent to higher grounds. The grim results today seem unfortunately to vindicate those who swore by Africans' incapacity to take their continent out of misery.

**A**s a dispossessed continent, decolonised Africa entered the international scene battered and fragile. Despite its natural resources, it could only enter through the periphery, to use a Marxist or dependency theory concept. The hope was that very soon, it would be able to renegotiate its position, simply because most of what defines power in international politics was present. The only and most important variable that was missing was a good and enlightened leadership.<sup>50</sup> Sadly, since the end of colonial rule, Africa's politics has basically been one of total failure, leaving the continent stuck at the runway.

Out of plain ignorance of the unwritten rules of international politics, African leaders expect the richer nations in the North to help their continent. That rationale is based on the idea that for several centuries, Europeans exploited Africa and the time had come to compensate the continent. As wonderful as it might sound, the stark reality is that no foreign aid is given as an instrument of charitable intent. Countries use aid as an effective means of projecting their national interest. The birth of independent Africa occurred during the Cold War and both superpowers pretended the continent was important to them. The truth is that its strategic location and natural endowments made it a good candidate for foreign assistance. That early enthusiasm by the First and Second Worlds duped the African leadership with the false belief that aid to Africa is the foreign countries' duty.

Without being cynical, it can be argued that it is not in the real interests of the West to have a rich, powerful and vibrant Africa. The real and ideal goal of the more powerful countries is simply to have a stable and submissive continent. A united and economically powerful Africa seems to be viewed by the West as a threat.

**T**he obvious efforts put into using Africa as a battle ground for proxy wars during the Cold War, the unconditional support provided to guerrilla fighters like Savimbi of Angola, the backing of authoritarians and dictators despite their dismal records and the making and removal of governments on the continent, demonstrate the kind of power the West can have in Africa and will continue to have until a change occurs from within the continent. The very fact that it took foreign countries and donor institutions so long to realise that Africa needs 'good governance'<sup>51</sup> should tell Africans that they should rely on nobody but themselves. The deplorable conditions that forced the West to finally require a different type of government in Africa have been an open record for a while. Why now?

The need was simply not there. Until Africans took to the streets to demand more accountable governments and until it became evident that a new era had begun, donor countries did not feel the urgency to press for any real change. And the change did not happen because responsible governments had just been discovered to be a prerequisite for development. The new gospel according to St Democracy suits the interests of the West well. If democracies do not go to war with one another, according to what is known as the 'democratic peace theory',<sup>52</sup> and they seem to be the form of government most conducive to economic and social development,<sup>53</sup> then embracing democracy does make sense.

After several decades at the runway, Africa has to be taxied back to the concourse to start all over. As the wretched of the earth,<sup>54</sup> Africans now have an opportunity to demand a different type of leadership. The wave of democratisation should not subdue their newly retrieved sense of patriotism. Almost like Fanon, 'we must turn a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man'.<sup>55</sup> The gloomy record of African leaders shows that they lack the essential qualities or virtues required for dealing effectively with situations imposed by fortune.<sup>56</sup> It is a shame to observe that Africa, with all its potential, has been marginalised within the world economy, and that the only interna-

tional economic sphere where Africa has remained an 'important' player is foreign aid. The continent receives more aid than any other region and yet the situation in Africa remains bleak. It is about time Africans force their current leaders to open their eyes.

Through a vibrant and educated civil society, Africans can and should demand transparent and accountable governments. Africans should prevent vampire states and leaders from continuing to suck their blood. Catalysts and facilitators are needed in every community and village, to foster attitudes that could redress the misfortunes of Africa's social fabric. Both followers and leaders will have to co-operate to find solutions for their continent's problems. Although democracy by itself is not a panacea, it is the only chance Africans have to turn the tide. Robert Fatton put it plainly when he said, '[t]he development of democratic mechanisms of accountability and representation is the means with which Africa can begin to arrest its descent into hell and squalor'.<sup>57</sup> Through what Lijphart calls 'consociational democracy',<sup>58</sup> new leaders should be able to protect the vital interests of different nations or ethnic groups, making up African nation-states. In Chege's words, there are 'ways to reconcile cultural diversity with constitutional democracy',<sup>59</sup> and current leaders must seek these ways.

**A**fter several decades of distraction and amusement, Africans will have to work harder and smarter to catch up. The task ahead requires new leaders, not only competent, but also aware of the challenges of globalisation, the information age, and the global race for knowledge. Time does not seem to be on our side, and the sooner Africans react, the better it will be. Taking advantage of the new wind of change, Africans should get rid of any man of the people,<sup>60</sup> the prototype of leaders representing the thorn in Africans' side.

To take off requires more than taxiing to the runway, especially in the face of the bleak balance sheet of the continent. According to Paul Collier, Africa is currently more marginalised within the world economy than at any time in the past half-century. Its shares of world trade, investment and output have declined to negligible proportions.<sup>61</sup> The solution to that situation has to be found by Africans themselves. No amount of foreign aid can bring the kind of change needed on the continent. For quite a while, Africa has been waiting for Godot,<sup>62</sup> hoping to be rescued.

Unless the continent, through its leaders, realises that Godot will never show up, Africa's problems will only get worse.

### Conclusion

Although the first generation of African leaders negotiated a bad deal based on the assumption that bad independence was better than no independence, their mistakes and the failure of the second generation have proved to be the most persistent curse of and the deepest wound inflicted upon the continent. To cure Africa's problems, a change of guard seems unavoidable. Africa needs a new breed of leaders aware of the way international politics or relations work, to know what to do, how, when, and

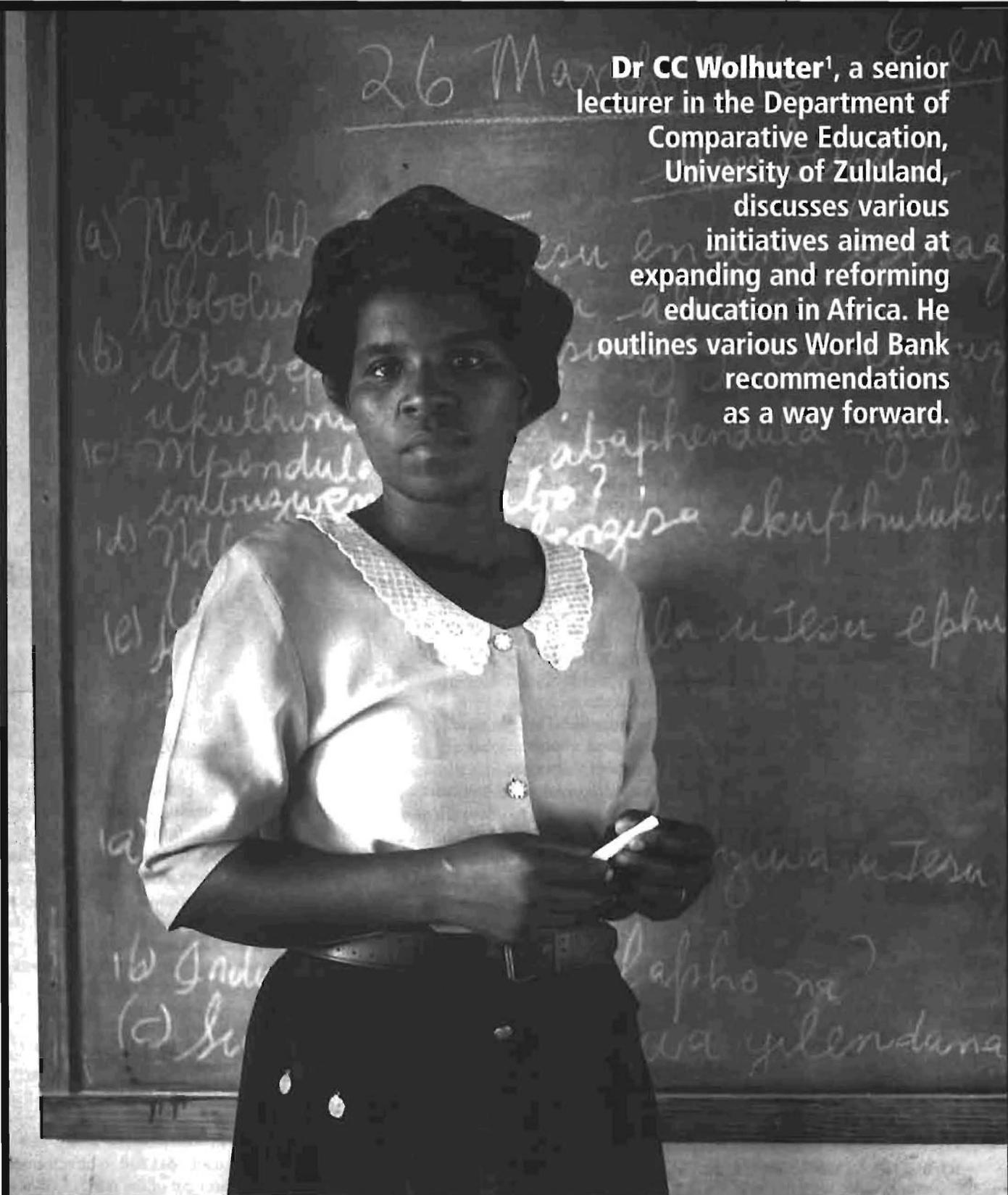
with whom. For Africa to bring itself in line with emerging global trends towards democratisation and good governance, Africans should demand a new type of leadership, or force the old guard to undergo a radical transformation. At the same time, Africans need to alter their mentality and attitude vis-à-vis power and governance on the continent. In Lewis's words, 'the assertion of civil society in Africa is a multifaceted process, entailing basic changes in the associational arena, the role of an emergent political society and the reconstruction of the state'.<sup>63</sup>

Any ground democracy has gained on the continent will be lost without the vigilance of both civil society and ordinary cit-

izens. An African political renaissance<sup>64</sup> will have to go beyond quick fixes and slogans, and rather tackle, as soon as possible, the seemingly intractable problems of economic underdevelopment, the dilemmas of state weakness or the challenges of communal division the continent has been experiencing. Africans should take necessary steps to prevent their leaders from crafting yet again pervasive clientelistic networks that ensure the flow of power through their hands rather than through formal institutions. There is clearly a new wind of change blowing on the continent. However, it might be the last chance for Africans to undertake an overhaul of their continent. ☉

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Strategies and initiatives for the expansion and reform of

# **Education in Africa since independence**

**After 40 Years: Time for Retrospectus and Prospectus**

Since the attainment of independence in Africa, education has laid claim to the biggest single share of the public budgets of most African states, and has occupied a central place in national development programmes. After forty years, the time is apt for a review of the African education experience, with the aim of correcting the compass for the future.

When reviewing post-independence educational strategies and initiatives in Africa, a very conspicuous feature is the role of foreign organisations, especially the World Bank. By the early 1980s international aid to education in Sub-Saharan Africa equalled 15% of domestic public expenditure on education.<sup>2</sup> Bearing in mind that running costs typically consume upward of 80% of public educational expenditure in Africa, the salience of foreign aid (which is mainly allocated to capital projects) can be appreciated. World Bank lending to education projects in Africa between 1992 and 1997 averaged US\$ 277.06 million per annum.<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this article is to review and describe the strategies and initiatives of educational expansion and reform in Africa since independence, and to compare the strategies and initiatives launched within Africa with those launched from outside Africa.

**1960 Launch pad: Skeleton Imported Education System Stretched over a Vast Untilled Field**

It could be accepted that the base of formal school systems in Africa was laid by nineteenth century missionaries.<sup>4</sup> Missionary schools were modelled after European schools, and reflected little in the way of African content. As the colonial era progressed, colonial governments became increasingly involved in education too. Their involvement stretched from the subsidisation of missionary schools to the creation of schools in their own right. Colonial education, however, remained a slightly adapted secular form of missionary education.

The indigenous populations were educated outside the context of their own cultures and environment. Schools were used to serve colonial interests: the quantity and quality of education that colonial administrations were prepared to supply were just enough to train staff for auxiliary and subsidiary positions such as clerks, interpreters and preachers.<sup>5</sup> Where education was for colonial administrators an instrument of social control, the indigenous peo-

ple saw it as a means for self-advancement.<sup>6</sup> The popular social demand for education increased towards the end of the colonial era. According to Samoff,<sup>7</sup> the rapid expansion of schooling was commonly viewed by the leaders of the newly independent states as a central element in the legitimisation of the new states. Political leaders in Africa saw education, firstly, as an important means to forge national unity (most of the new African states were very recent political entities, with borders arbitrarily drawn in the nineteenth century to suit the interests of the colonial powers) and, secondly, in the time of Schultz's Human Capital Theory and McClelland and Inkeles' Modernisation Theory, as the most important instrument to spur the economic growth of the underdeveloped African continent.

With, on the eve of Africa's independence in 1960, an adult literacy rate of 9% and primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment ratios of respectively 44%, 5% and 1%, the time was ripe for an education revolution on the continent, and education became a central policy issue in all the newly independent African states.

**1961 Addis Ababa: Charting a Course for Africa's Educational Development**

Most African countries attained independence in the early 1960s. The Ministers of Education of the 36 independent African countries met in Addis Ababa from 15 to 25 May 1961 to establish an inventory of educational needs and a programme to meet those needs in coming years.<sup>8</sup> The ensuing plan, titled Outline of a Plan for Educational Development in Africa, became universally known as the Addis Ababa Plan.<sup>9</sup>

In the plan, a belief in the economic returns from investment in education is once again stated. Chapter Two deals with Economics and Education.<sup>10</sup> Other prominent themes are the quantitative expansion of educational opportunities, a call for relevance in education, and the need to



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Objections have been levelled against examination systems as testing whether an individual is suited for the next level of education, rather than for the ability to use his qualities in the service of the community to which he belongs.

expand teacher training.

As far as quantitative expansion is concerned, the conference set the following enrolment targets for Africa to achieve by 1980: universal primary education, 23% secondary and 2% tertiary education.<sup>11</sup> Adult literacy campaigns should be launched too.

Making education relevant to the needs and situation in Africa meant, firstly, that curricula and textbooks had to be reformed so as to take account of the African environment and cultural heritage and, secondly, that education should be re-directed so as to make it more responsive to the needs of the economy. In this regard, a shift to technical, agricultural and vocational education (from academic education) had to take place.

On the subject of teacher training, it was stated that fully half of the teachers in Africa were unqualified; therefore the expansion of teacher training capacity should be a high priority.

TABLE 1: POST-INDEPENDENT ENROLMENT GROWTH IN AFRICA (X'000)

Level/Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995
Primary	19 312	33 372	61 284	80 595	95 378
Secondary	1 885	5 353	13 738	24 345	30 378
Tertiary	185	479	1 316	2 856	3 795
Total	21 832	39 204	76 448	107 796	129 551

Source: UNESCO, '97 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, Paris: UNESCO, 1997b.

### From Addis Ababa to Durban 1998: landmarks on Africa's educational journey since independence

The Addis Ababa conference was the first in a series of seven MINEDAF (Acronym for Ministers of Education of Africa) conferences: MINEDAF II: Abidjan, 17-24 March 1964; MINEDAF III: Nairobi, 16-27 July 1968; MINEDAF IV: Lagos, 27 January – 4 February 1976; MINEDAF V: Harare, 28 June – 3 July 1982; MINEDAF VI: Dakar, 2-6 July 1991; and MINEDAF VII: Durban, 20-24 April 1998.

The main themes of the Addis Ababa conference - expansion of educational opportunities, eradication of adult illiteracy, Africanisation of curricula, linking education with development, and increasing teacher training capacity - recurred at all the conferences, with additional focus points at each.

At Nairobi it was stated that the Africanisation of education also entails the replacement by the ex-colonial language as the medium of instruction in schools with indigenous languages.<sup>12</sup> This call was repeated at subsequent conferences.

At Lagos objections were levelled against examination systems.<sup>13</sup> These were criticised as testing whether pupils were

### Consequential Initiatives from within Africa

#### Quantitative expansion

Spurred by their belief in the power of education to accomplish economic growth and to forge national unity, the governments of the newly independent African states, pursuing the targets set at the Addis Ababa conference, launched massive education expansion programmes after 1961, to the point where education, as the biggest single item on national budgets, claimed as a rule a quarter of governmental expenditure. In one exceptional case, 45.8% of the 1988 public budget of Côte d'Ivoire was allocated to education. Table 1 shows the consequential post-independence enrolment explosion in Africa.

#### Unconventional modes of expanding school attendance

Multiple-shift schooling was introduced in high population density areas, as a way of obviating the problems of a shortage of school buildings and the under-supply of qualified teachers. Double-shift schooling was established in inter alia Burundi, Egypt, Zimbabwe and Botswana, while Zambia and Mozambique even instituted triple shift schools. At the other end of the spectrum multi-grade schools – where one

urban areas; it provides them with the Undugu Basic Education Programme, consisting of informal education with an emphasis on practical skills and literacy skills in Swahili and English, thus preparing them for self-employment. After completion, more capable children are channelled into primary schools.

#### Alphabetisation of adult population

Virtually every country in Africa has attended to the eradication of the high adult illiteracy levels it found itself with at independence. Six of the eleven countries that participated in UNESCO's Experimental World Literacy Project (1968-1974) were from Africa: Algeria, Ethiopia, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali and Sudan. The most prolific author on literacy initiatives in Africa, Bhola, distinguishes between three literacy approaches.<sup>16</sup> The project approach is the most conservative and gradual. Literacy projects are of small scale. An example is the integrated literacy projects in Mali since the 1960s.<sup>17</sup> The programme approach is nationwide but under bureaucratic control. An example of an adult literacy programme is the Botswana National Literacy Programme launched by the Ministry of Non-Formal Education in 1980.

The third type is the campaign approach: of big scale and involving high political fervour and popular mobilisation. Examples are the Somali urban literacy campaign (1973) and the Somali rural literacy campaign (1974). The most comprehensive adult literacy campaign in Africa was that of Tanzania in the 1970s<sup>18</sup> - according to Arnove, one of the world's most remarkable.<sup>19</sup>

#### Distance education

Hampered by a shortage of teachers and school buildings in their pursuit of lofty expansion targets, many post-independence African governments have turned to distance education projects to increase education opportunities.

Since the 1980s, increasing financial constraints have given an additional impetus and lease of life to distance education. Since the first education institution, the Centre d'Enseignement Supérieur, opened in Brazzaville, Congo, in 1962, a multitude of distance education projects have mushroomed, so that by the mid-1980s, distance education projects had been established in 18 African countries and commonwealth Africa alone had 25-35 distance training institutions.<sup>20</sup> In-school distance education projects use interactive radio to enhance curricula (such as the PALOP project - a

### Hampered by a shortage of teachers and school buildings in their pursuit of lofty expansion targets, many post-independence African governments have turned to distance education to increase education opportunities.

suiting for the next education level, rather than for the ability to use their qualities in the service of the community to which they belong. Since Dakar, the decline in educational quality,<sup>14</sup> in the wake of the economic deterioration that set in throughout Africa since the early 1980s, was identified as a cause for concern.<sup>15</sup> With the dwindling of available funds for education as a result of the economic decline, calls for community participation in the supply of schools were made at Dakar and Durban.

teacher teaches several grades in one classroom – were introduced to improve school access in the low population density regions of the Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Togo and Mauritania). In an attempt to provide education to nomad communities, Somalia tried a short-lived exercise of mobile teaching units in the early 1960s.

The Undugu project in Kenya (a non-governmental organisation established in 1973) targets destitute street children in

joint project of the five Lusophone African countries) and to broaden curricula (such as in Mauritius). Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe use a system combining correspondence, radio and supervision in study centres. Out-of-school distance education is used by countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya.

**Africanisation of curricula**

One of the major educational trends of African nations in the post-independence era has been the changes in the curriculum from content that reflected the world views and goals of colonial powers to knowledge and attitudes that build nationalism, African identity, and an appreciation of African history, cultures and environment.

Three major, continent-wide initiatives in the 1960s were the establishment of the African Mathematics Programme (started in 1963), the African Primary Science Programme (started in 1965, and renamed Science Education for Africa in 1970) and the African Social Studies Programme (started in 1968). Each had its headquarters in an African city and developed textbook series and manuals for teacher training, for the perusal of member countries. The most notable result was the institution of the subject Social Studies, to replace and integrate the traditional subjects of History, Geography, Civics, Economics and Anthropology in many African coun-

**The situation in Sub-Saharan Africa has remained unchanged: at some level in the primary cycle vernaculars are replaced by the ex-colonial language as the medium of instruction**

tries.<sup>21</sup> African states formed the African Curriculum Organisation in 1976, with its headquarters in Nairobi. The major thrust of this organisation is to develop the capacity of member states to undertake curricular reform.<sup>22</sup>

**Development of education through the medium of African languages**

While at the Abidjan conference (1964), sentiment was still in favour of the retention of the ex-colonial languages as the medium of instruction in schools, but in an about-turn at Nairobi in 1968, calls were made for their replacement by the indigenous languages of Africa.<sup>23</sup> At Lagos (1976) these calls rose to passionate pleas, and this change was seen as an essential element in the Africanisation of education.

TABLE 2: GROSS ENROLMENT RATIOS IN AFRICA (%)

Level/Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995
Primary	44	57	78	76	78
Secondary	5	11	21	29	31
Tertiary	1	2	3	5	6

Sources: UNESCO, *Statistical Yearbook 1976*, Paris: UNESCO, 1976; UNESCO, Seventh Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States: Development of Education in Africa: A Statistical Review, Paris: UNESCO, 1998a.

The Northern African countries swiftly made Arabic the medium of instruction after independence, but this is one area where, in Sub-Saharan Africa, few initiatives have been undertaken.<sup>24</sup> In Nigeria, Ife University launched the Yoruba project in 1976, using Yoruba throughout primary school. Spurred by the problem of having inherited two ex-colonial official languages (Italian and English), Somali was developed as the medium of instruction in Somalia. Apart from these cases, however, the situation in Sub-Saharan Africa has remained unchanged: at some level in the primary cycle vernaculars are replaced by the ex-colonial language as the medium of instruction.

**Examination Reforms**

As has been stated, at Lagos objections were levelled against examination systems as testing whether an individual is suited for the next level of education, rather than for the ability to use his qualities in the

world of work. These have taken four forms. Firstly, most states introduced vocational subjects in the curriculum, while some, for example Zimbabwe, made them obligatory for all pupils. A second type of initiative was the introduction of polytechnic education, whereby pupils spend part of the school day on farms or in workshops, as was introduced in Mali in 1962 or, on a more limited scale, the BEPAZ project in Zimbabwe.

A more extreme form was the turning of schools into production units, such as in Benin in 1971, 1967's Education for Self-Reliance of Tanzania, or the Brigades, a private initiative in Botswana. Finally National Youth Community Services Schemes were introduced in countries such as Malawi, Ghana, Botswana, Nigeria and the ZEMECHA project in Ethiopia. It should be added that these initiatives generally were not very successful, many of which the governments found impossible to implement.<sup>26</sup>

A notable exception is the Brigades in Botswana, which are an unqualified success.

**Teacher training**

Existing, conventional modes of teacher training could not supply the quantity of trained teachers required by the swelling enrolments at a fast enough rate, let alone train the huge percentage of unqualified teachers inherited at independence. In order to address these problems, some ingenious methods of teacher training have been devised, of which in particular two have attracted much attention and praise from comparative educationists.

The first initiative that won the praise of Comparative Education literature<sup>27</sup> was that of Tanzania. In 1974 Tanzania decided to train primary school graduates as primary school teachers, using an initial six week residential course followed by a combination of supervised (under qualified teachers) primary school teaching, a correspondence-cum-radio course, and a final examination after three years.<sup>28</sup>

Zimbabwe's ZINTEC scheme, a slight variation on the Tanzanian model, likewise is widely lauded by comparativists.<sup>29</sup> Other

service of the community to which he belongs. A related, frequent criticism is that examinations tend to measure pupils' ability to recall facts, with little attention given to higher order cognitive skills.<sup>25</sup> The sole country in Africa that undertook reform initiatives to address these problems was Kenya, with its primary school termination examination reforms in the mid-1970s. The examinations were changed in order to include a much broader spectrum of cognitive skills, as well as skills that could be applied in a wider range of contexts in and out of school.

**Linking the world of school with the world of work**

Virtually every African state has taken initiatives linking the world of school with

countries using modes of distance teacher training include Nigeria, Kenya, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia. Nigeria has established a Mobile Teacher Training Unit.

### **Community initiatives**

A commendable trail-blazing exercise in community initiatives with respect to the construction, financing and management of schools in Africa was the Harambee-school movement in Kenya. Following a call by Kenyatta shortly after independence, hundreds of Harambee or self-help schools mushroomed. These schools cater for more than half of Kenya's secondary school population.<sup>30</sup> At the Abidjan conference in 1964, delegates from Rwanda and Sudan reported that self-help schemes in the setting up of schools were functioning in their countries.

Other countries where community initiatives have contributed significantly to the expansion of education include Ghana, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Botswana and Swaziland. In Malawi, for example, 26% of all primary schools are wholly owned, financed and managed by local authorities.<sup>31</sup>

The cuts in governmental expenditure, in the wake of the economic deterioration of the 1980s, gave new impetus and a new lease of life to community initiatives and private schools throughout Africa. In Zimbabwe, for example, 80 to 90% of schools are private schools.<sup>32</sup>

### **Overall state: Progress and problems in African education**

Commencing with the quantitative (enrolment) targets set at Addis Ababa, as is clear from table 2, the ideal of universal primary education was not attained in 1980 - and is still eluding Africa. On the other hand, secondary and tertiary enrolments have slightly exceeded targets. The biggest reason for not achieving the primary enrolment target is the miscalculation of the demographic and economic parameters within which the educational accomplishments had to take place.

As far as the first is concerned, population growth has exceeded the projections at Addis Ababa, as was discussed in an analysis at the Harare conference of 1982.<sup>33</sup> In terms of the economic factor, the economic downturn of the 1980s has had a serious negative effect on the abilities of governments to supply education.

Progress on the other fronts is difficult to encapsulate in single indices. With respect to the Africanisation of curricula and teacher training, it could be stated that

while laudable initiatives have been undertaken, there still is a long way to go.<sup>34</sup> This is evidenced from examples found in Francophone West Africa, where a textbook of the 1940s was, with few changes, still used in the 1980s.<sup>35</sup>

In Cape Verde, Tanzania and Lesotho respectively only 36%, 70% and 77% of teachers are qualified.<sup>36</sup> Apart from Somalia, no progress has been made with the development of African languages as a medium of instruction at secondary school level in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **The strategy to restore and raise educational quality and output can be summarised in three key words: adjustment, revitalisation and expansion: adjustment to fiscal realities, revitalisation of the existing infrastructure and selective expansion.**

Turning schools into production units was - in the few instances where such a policy could get off the ground - not successful, with rare exceptions such as the Brigades in Botswana. Judging from rising schooled unemployment levels in Zimbabwe, for example, 250 000 school leavers each year are chasing 40 000 to 60 000 available jobs in the formal sector.<sup>37</sup> Tying education and the economy remains the Gordian knot in African education.

The wide-spread economic deterioration of the 1980s forced most African governments to sign Structural Adjustment Programme agreements with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. These involved the curtailment of state expenditure and, given the high proportion of government expenditure on education, have had serious implications.

Comparative Education literature abounds with examples of the resulting low and declining levels in the quality of education, such as the case of Zimbabwe, where only 7% of grade 6 pupils have a ruler,<sup>38</sup> or of Tanzania's primary schools, where the average ratio of pupils to desks is 3.7.<sup>39</sup>

As could be suspected, this low quality has resulted in poor achievement levels in schools in Africa - which is clearly evident from the available information on school output in Africa compared with that of other countries.<sup>40</sup> Despite expressing concern on the issue of the low quality of education at the Dakar conference of 1991, African governments have not yet launched any major initiatives aimed at attacking this problem.<sup>41</sup>

### **Strategies and Initiatives from outside: World Bank and Other**

The countries of Africa, like most developing countries, find themselves the subject of extensive foreign educational aid and investigations from organisations such as the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), the latter funded by the OECD countries. Since, however, the World Bank has emerged internationally not only as the largest single source of policy advice and

external funds for education, therefore exercising a degree of leadership amongst those international organisations committed to education, but also as the largest single producer of Comparative Education literature in the world, the focus will be on the World Bank.<sup>42</sup>

Besides having produced numerous case-studies on education and education projects in individual African countries, the World Bank has over the years released the following decisive studies cum policy documents: *Education Sector Policy Paper* (1980), *Financing Education in Developing Countries: An Exploration of Policy Options* (1986), *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion* (1988), *Primary Education: A World Bank Policy Paper* (1990) and *Priorities and Strategies for Education* (1995).

Similarly to educational policy-makers within Africa, the World Bank sees the prime raison d'être for the supply of education in Africa as the means to development, and in common with educational leaders within Africa, expresses concern over the deterioration of educational quality, and the ensuing poor educational output;<sup>43</sup> but has, in addition, in the light of comparative studies using the educational experience of other countries, formulated a plan as how to restore and raise educational quality and output.

This strategy could be summarised with three key words: adjustment, revitalisation and expansion: adjustment to fiscal realities, revitalisation of the existing infrastructure and selective expansion.

Adjustment to the fiscal realities means firstly diversifying sources of finance, and secondly unit-cost containment.<sup>44</sup> The following areas are identified as the most promising for unit-cost containment: utilisation of teachers, construction standards, and more extensive use of multiple shifts and distance education programmes.<sup>45</sup> Selective expansion, in this context, means the concentration of public resources on primary education, so as to ensure universal primary or basic education, and, on the level of higher education, a change from the previously used social demand approach to a more market-related policy: concentrating on fields wherein there is a demand in the employment market, and which have proven themselves to contribute to development.

**R**esources released by more privatisation, community involvement, unit-cost containment and curtailment of higher education could be used to enhance the existing infrastructure of especially primary education. On the revitalisation of this infrastructure, the World Bank identifies, in the light of international experience, the following areas to concentrate upon:

- training and use of teachers, including more use of distance training methods
- instructional learning materials
- language of instruction, taking a position in favour of the development of indigenous languages as medium of instruction
- nutrition and health of children
- curricular changes: fewer subjects, resulting in more time to spend on core subjects (mathematics, science, languages), as well as suggestions on how to improve the curricula of these subjects
- increase of instructional time, to that typical of developed countries, and measures to reduce unscheduled school closings, and teacher and pupil absences
- academic-vocational education: the World Bank recommends that primary and lower secondary education be a generally intellectual education, to which, during the senior secondary phase, widely applicable job-related skills (for example book-keeping or typing) are added; that schools should provide general skills that are widely applicable; and that the best place for specific job-training is the workplace itself
- examinations should be reformed so as to cover the full range of cognitive



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achievement specified in the curriculum - not only the requirements of the minority of pupils who proceed to the next level, but also those for the majority who do not continue - Kenya's reforms are held as an example for Africa

- finally, educational management should be improved, and in this regard, too, specific guidelines are given.<sup>46</sup>

**Collation and Correlation: Yokefellows rather than Contested Terrain**

There is agreement on the prime *raison d'être* of education supply in Africa, as being a means to development; and also common ground as to the concern over the deterioration of educational quality and output. Unlike the educational leaders within Africa, those from outside have a comprehensive plan on how to approach this problem, the elements of which range from the acceleration of existing trends in African education (privatisation, community involvement) to the expansion of initiatives undertaken by only a very few African countries (examination reforms, development of indigenous languages as

The World Bank has identified the training and use of teachers, including more use of distance training methods, as an area to concentrate on in revitalising Africa's education infrastructure.

medium of instruction) but which Africa as a whole committed itself to, to commitments which no country in Africa hitherto has made any attempts to put into practice - for example, the concentration of public educational resources at the primary school level. It should be mentioned that as far back as the Lagos conference in 1976 the governments of Africa resolved to shift resources in a bid to achieve universal primary or basic education, and an entire section of the report of the Lagos conference is devoted to this intention.<sup>47</sup> At the Jomtien conference of 1990, by signing the World Declaration on Education For All, they reaffirmed this stance, as they did again, when, at the Durban conference in 1998, they recommitted themselves to the goals of that Declaration.<sup>48</sup>

Other recommendations by the World Bank, for example enhancing management capacity or increasing instructional time, are not contrary to any of the strategies or

initiatives arising from within Africa. Finally, with respect to tying education with economic development, one area where initiatives in Africa have not been able to get off the ground, the World Bank offers guidelines based upon international education experience.

In other words, the educational strategies and initiatives pursued by the World Bank should be seen as complementary to those of the educational leaders within Africa, which is in opposition to the widespread view among scholars as a force working against the objectives and interests of Africa, or, in stark contrast, as a guiding light showing Africa the educational road ahead.<sup>49</sup>

### Conclusion: the way forward

On its educational trek since independence, Africa has not only embarked upon

a quantitative expansion of inherited education systems, but has, in its drive to extend educational opportunities, to eradicate adult illiteracy, to Africanise curricula, to enhance teacher training, to invoke community participation in the supply of schools, and to tie education systems with economic development, devised new, ingenious modes of education supply.

Exercises intended to promote examination reform and the development of indigenous languages as media of instruction have been launched. These initiatives have met with various degrees of success. The least successful were attempts to link education systems with economic development.

Another problem is the deterioration of educational quality and output in the wake of the economic crises that set in during the 1980s.

To address these problems, informed recommendations have been made by the World Bank. After falling in the decade 1980-91 at an average rate of 1,5% pa, the real Gross Domestic Product of Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 2,2% in 1994 and will, according to World Bank projections, expand by 3,3% – 4,0% pa, between 1995 and 2000.<sup>50</sup>

With this positive economic outlook together with the present (albeit slow and painful) process of political democratisation, Africa finally seems poised to take its place in the world of the 21st century that its demographic and geographic weight entitles it to. By effecting at least some of the above World Bank recommended reforms, decision-takers in Africa could enable education to play its role to its full potential in equipping Africa for the challenges of the 21st century. ☉

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# Just say no

## Zimbabwe's National Constitutional Assembly and the Constitutional Referendum

### Thoko Matshe,

Chairperson of the NCA, describes its origins and discusses what the 'No' vote in the referendum means for the government, the opposition and the ordinary people of Zimbabwe

### Background: Birth of the NCA

ALTHOUGH INITIATIVES TO SET up the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) started in earnest in 1996, it was not until 20 May 1997 that the first formal meeting was held in Harare to chart the way forward. This meeting was facilitated by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), whilst the background work was done by a small co-ordination team.

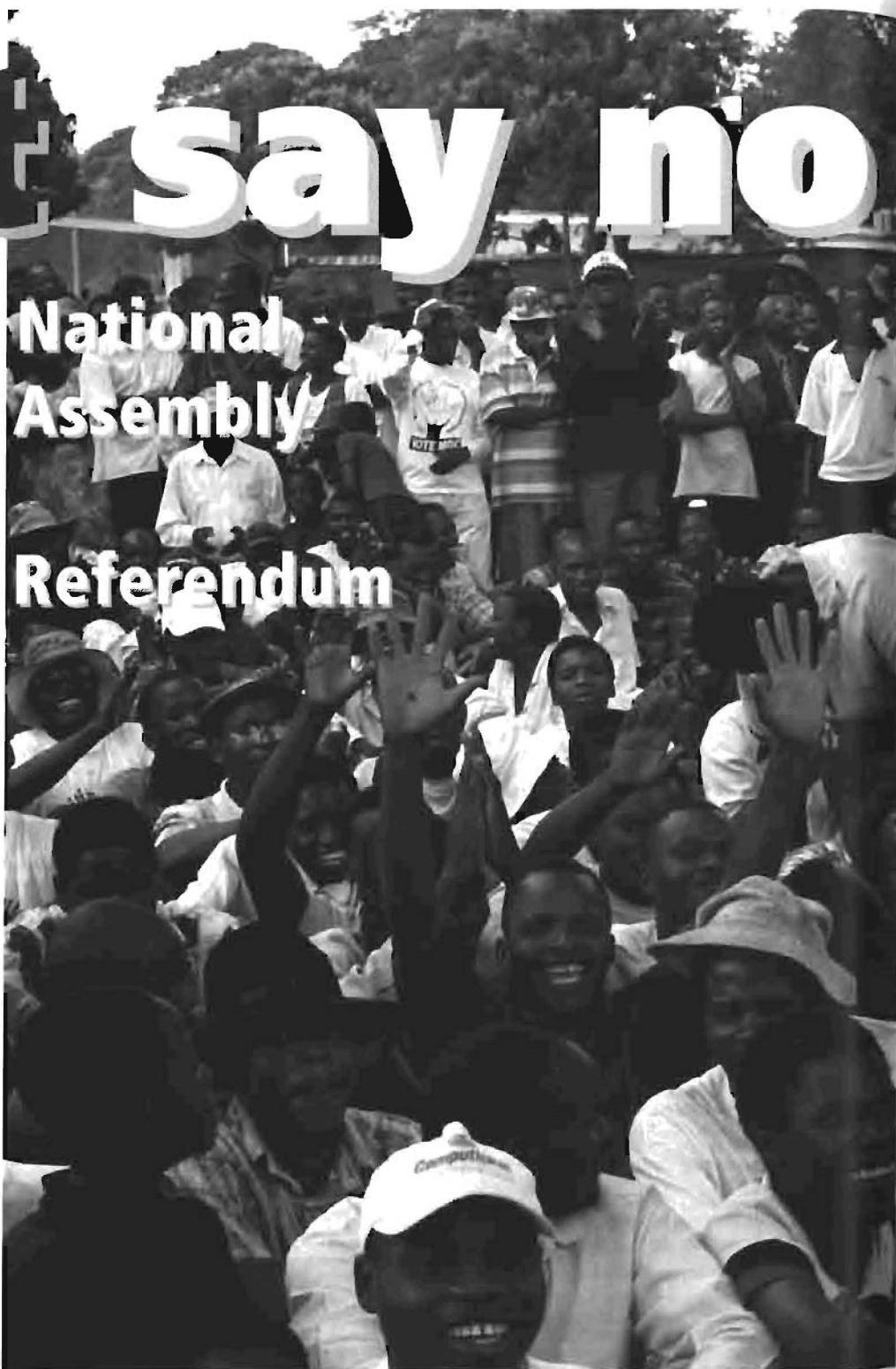
The first formal meeting was attended by officials from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC); *ZimRights*; Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU); Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP); Legal Resources Foundation (LRF); Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR); Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA); Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) and Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).

This meeting decided to hold a work-

shop for all stakeholders before the end of the year. A secretariat was put in place and mandated to approach political parties and other civic groups that were not involved in the first formal meeting.

### 1997: The Quest for Legitimacy

In 1997, the NCA had a dual agenda, namely (a) to spread its influence as broadly as possible across the country and across the broadest spectrum of political and civic opinion; and (b) to gain legitima-





**Members of Zimbabwe's opposition party, the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change), led by former trade union leader Morgan Tsvangirai, at a pre-election rally in Harare. The MDC poses the strongest threat to President Mugabe's rule in Zimbabwe since Mugabe took power at independence in 1980.**

Photo © Eric Miller

- 4 to nationalise the constitutional debate through existing civil society structures and networks.
- 5 to engage government in a dialogue on the above issues.

The NCA hoped to achieve these somewhat ambitious objectives through plenary discussions at national and provincial level. A national plenary discussion was thus held on 6 September 1997 at Kadoma Ranch Motel and was attended by over 70 participants from civil and political society. Moreover, provincial plenary discussions to introduce the NCA initiative were held countrywide, on 18 September in Bulawayo, on 4 October in Harare and on 16 October 1997 in Gweru. Other provincial plenary discussions were held in Mutare, Masvingo, Chinhoyi, and Bindura.

The NCA was finally launched on 30 January 1998, buoyed up by the enthusiasm which the NCA initiative was received nationally. Prior to the launch, the Co-ordinating Committee engaged government and later invited them to the launch, due to the NCA's deep commitment to making the constitutional project a broad National Partnership for Change between civil society and government. From its inception NCA never intended that the constitutional review process should be an antagonistic one. It viewed it as a peace-building and nation-building project.

### **1998 - The Quest for Ownership**

As can be seen from the above, 1997 was a formative phase for the NCA, with the prime focus being to introduce the NCA to the people.

In turn, 1998 represented the formal and earnest beginnings of proper civic consultation and the actual debating of the constitution-making process. In 1998 the NCA thus focused on the following:

- a) Strategy meetings, facilitated by consultants
- b) Process meetings to discuss the ideal way of making a constitution
- c) Sectoral meetings to discuss components of the Constitution and general principles
- d) Mass action
- e) Engagement of government
- f) Training of facilitators
- g) Development of education materials / Media campaign.

The sectoral meetings mentioned above included consultations and workshops with groups as diverse as business, land rights and reform groups, women's and youth organisations, and the media, with the

cy as a truly non-partisan, all-inclusive, people-driven initiative. This also included concerns about the representation of all regions, classes, ethnic groups and races, etc. Beyond representation, the NCA wished to ensure the participation of all citizens in the formulation and implementation of its programmes, especially the ordinary men and women on the streets.

The primary focus of 1997 was, therefore, five-fold:

- 1 to garner support for the initiative.

- 2 to pressure government to accept the need for an overhaul of the Lancaster House Constitution and to set up an all-inclusive, non-partisan and transparent process of constitutional review and supporting structures.

- 3 to undertake massive civic education on the Lancaster House Constitution and the need for a new constitution, as well as on the constitution-making process and constitutional principles in general.

emphasis on each group's specific relationship to and difficulties with the Constitution.

By the end of 1998, a lot of preparatory work had been done to consult the urban populace, and materials had been developed for the purpose. However, while some work had been done in rural communities, it was not enough. The challenge for 1999 was, therefore, how to reach the rural communities, urban working class communities and other disadvantaged groups, to enable them to fully participate in and own the NCA process.

The taskforce and indeed the assembly appreciated the fact that this process was about people and that the bulk of the people were yet to be reached. Over 70% of NCA's budget was thrown towards achieving this objective. It is clear that by this time, the NCA was beginning to have an impact - something which did not escape the government's watchful eye.

**1999 - Almost Ship-Wrecked**

The seeds for the failure of the constitutional review project were sown by government at the beginning of 1999. In particular, the ZANU-PF government took the following steps to discredit the process:

- Government unilaterally set up a Constitutional Commission of its own, without consulting those already involved in constitutional reform.
- The Constitutional Commission was dominated by ZANU-PF and its members were handpicked by President Robert Mugabe, with very little consultation, let alone consideration of civil society and alternative political voices.
- The Constitutional Commission began a rushed parallel process of information gathering, which could not be comprehensive.
- No legal safeguards, no legal framework and no coherent strategy was put in place to protect either the Constitutional Commission process or its outcomes.

In the light of this reactionary move by government, the NCA saw a new challenge for itself and for the democratic process:

- To safeguard citizens from deception and fraud
- To mobilise citizens to boycott the Constitutional Commission process
- To reassure its members and the public that the legitimate people-driven process of the NCA would go ahead despite the Constitutional Commission

- To defend NCA against childish slurs and fraudulent misrepresentation by Constitutional Commission propagandists and well-compensated Human Rights businesspersons
- To reassert the legitimacy, relevance and advantages of the constitutional reform process.

To achieve the above ends, the NCA was forced to adapt its methods of working. It now started workshops in rural areas, began training facilitators, set up the People's Constitutional Convention (PCC), initiated litigation, and undertook mass action. The PCC was and remains the largest ever gathering on constitutional discussion in the history of Zimbabwe. The body consisted of more than 5 000 delegates drawn from all over Zimbabwe, both rural and urban.

The NCA also took the initiative to acquaint itself as well as its members with other constitution-making processes in Africa, Europe and the Americas. This body of comparative knowledge formed the background for various reports on constitution-making in Zimbabwe.

In my opinion, the strategic planning meetings, the mass action, the plenaries on content issues have all resulted in a bigger and better NCA, and one which is more representative and vibrant. At present, the organisation has more than 30 000 registered individual members and 200 institutional members countrywide. The NCA thus represents the largest civil coalition in the history of Zimbabwe and one of the most successful ones in Africa as a whole.

**A**t the People's Constitutional Convention the resolutions that emerged with regard to the Constitutional Commission (CC) were unequivocal. They stated that the NCA should continue to register rejection of the Constitutional Commission's process as inherently defective and at the same time should also mobilise and educate the people on its reasons for rejecting the Commission.

The PCC mandated the NCA to implement an alternative constitution-making process. As a strategy, the major aims of the CC boycott were to undermine the legitimacy of the CC, present an alternative process, and provide an overall national presence that would oversee the initiatives produced by the government. In following this strategy the NCA was drawing on the support, legitimacy and authoritative presence in the constitutional debate that it had developed since 1997.



The CC embarked on an outreach programme, ostensibly to gather people's views on the Constitution. They began a massive publicity campaign, which dominated the public sphere. Moreover, while the CC's publicity campaign dominated and even saturated the print and electronic media, the NCA experienced problems with the state-owned electronic media, and was refused permission to air programmes until a week before the referendum on acceptance of the government's Draft Constitution.

On 29 November 1999 the CC presented its Draft Constitution to President Mugabe amid protests and discontent from some of the Commissioners who alleged that the document had been fast-tracked and, furthermore, to a large extent was not reflective of what the people had said in the outreach initiative of the CC. From the time the Draft Constitution was made public the response from civic society organi-

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Thousands of ZANU-PF (ruling party) supporters welcome President Mugabe back from the G-77 meeting in Cuba.

sations was extremely critical. The NCA thus entered the new millennium with a widespread campaign to reject the Draft Constitution, beginning with the proposed referendum.

### The Referendum

The referendum on the Draft Constitution came at a time when the government of Zimbabwe was facing unprecedented popular anger stoked by the deepening economic crisis, including fuel shortages, a scarcity of foreign currency and soaring food prices. Inflation and interest rates were at 60% in January 2000, the unemployment rate at 50% and 76% of the population was living in abject poverty. In addition to most western donors, the

IMF and World Bank suspended their aid programmes, largely due to economic mismanagement and Zimbabwe's costly involvement in the DRC war.

The NCA vigorously campaigned for a 'No' vote in the referendum, while government, ZANU-PF and the CC campaigned for a 'Yes' vote. The CC saturated the media with its campaign while the NCA still battled to get airtime, but resorted to other alternative forms of publicity. These included 'blitzes' at shopping centres in the rural areas. The NCA based its campaign for a 'No' vote on two grounds:

- that the process that brought the Draft Constitution into being was defective and an insult to the people of Zimbabwe. The constitution-making process, it argued, should not be subject to the will of one person or one group of people.
- The Draft Constitution, whatever its improvements on the current Constitution, was so defective in many fundamental respects as to be unacceptable even as a so-called 'starting point'.

The NCA's 'No' vote was thus multidimensional, reflecting the complexity of the constitutional reform process. Firstly, it was a 'No' to the current Lancaster House Constitution. This was the basic point of departure for the NCA, hence its advocacy for constitutional reform whose focal point was that the Lancaster House Constitution had outlived its political value.

Secondly, it was a 'No' to a defective constitution-making process. The NCA refused to be party to a process whose fundamental premise was to deny the people's supremacy in the matter. The President had sweeping powers to pack the final Constitutional Commission with his own supporters and to have a final say on what went on in the Commission; this was unacceptable to the NCA. No political party - no matter how popular - should dictate a constitution to the people.

Thirdly, it was also a 'No' to the defective Draft Constitution, which itself sought only to please ZANU-PF and had provisions, such as those dealing with land redistribution, which were unacceptable as a matter of principle.

At the same time, the 'No' vote was a 'yes' to a proper democratic constitution-making process in which the people's wishes prevail.

### What the 'No' vote means

As the NCA had hoped, the referendum result was a resounding 'No' to the Draft

Constitution, and the worst defeat of Mugabe's 20-year rule.

This was seen by many as a wake-up call for Mugabe and ZANU-PF to re-order their priorities or face the wrath of the people in the 2000 parliamentary elections, due to be held in April. The result was also a reaffirmation by the voters that they wanted a new effort to draw up a constitution that embraces all stakeholders. Voters obviously wanted a transparent process to draw up a national constitution that reflected their wishes.

The Zimbabwean people have spoken: they want long overdue change. The 'No' vote can also be interpreted as a protest by the people of Zimbabwe against the way the country is being governed, especially in the light of the economic malaise engulfing the country.

The vote was a way of telling government that the people have had enough of their lies, corruption and false promises.

The referendum was also a crucial test of popularity between the incumbent government and the new opposition party. Winning the referendum, the opposition won a psychological battle. It destroyed the myth that Mugabe is invincible and the opposition can build on that advantage in the elections.

Many political analysts see the 'No' vote as a vote of no confidence in Mugabe's government. They have predicted that government will try to gloss over the negative vote, but they know this is not just about the Constitution. Parliamentarians agree with analysts that Mugabe's governance and economic ruin of the country had been the main factors driving the 'No' vote.

### The Government's Reaction: Mischief

President Mugabe, in his address to the nation accepting the referendum results, stated quite clearly that the government would abide by the will of the people.

One would assume that this would mean that the government could not subsequently opt to selectively amend the present Constitution to suit its political agendas. The people rejected one particular version of the Draft Constitution, but they did not reject the concept of changing to a better Constitution than the present one.

The people want to make their own Constitution but have rejected this particular draft - and they will have to reject several more drafts before they finally endorse a Constitution of their own making.

At the end of February 2000, however, the government of Zimbabwe announced its intention to amend the current



Lancaster House Constitution to empower government to seize land without compensation. This proposal had been included in the Draft Constitution rejected by the people, which simply demonstrates the government's complete contempt for democracy. When was government given a mandate by the people to override their will as expressed in the referendum results?

The government's intention to impose its will on the people can only be construed as ignoring the democratic process it claims to honour. Its claims that, with the 'No' vote, Zimbabweans have 'lost an opportunity' are the height of mischief.

The government's notice that it will still attempt to bulldoze the unpopular 'land grab' clause into the current Constitution, can be interpreted as a regrettable but desperate political move intended to boost ZANU-PF's prospects in the forthcoming elections. The Zimbabwean government

thing in the fight for independence? Ex-combatants did not operate in a vacuum. Ordinary Zimbabweans sacrificed a lot. This is a misinterpretation of the referendum results. The war veterans have no special claim to land, particularly ahead of peasant farmers who bore the brunt of the liberation struggle.

One wonders what has changed in the short space of time since the referendum. Is it democratic that government now proposes that 150 people will reverse the decision of the majority of voters in the referendum? A result, one might add, which the President stated would be accepted. Why did we hold a referendum and waste millions in the process if the result was not meaningful and there was no intention of accepting the results? Zimbabweans have never been fools but have been very tolerant over the past two decades. Having said no to the Draft Constitution, the people

vote was a protest against the idea that government can take people for granted, that it can put together any document and expect them, sheeplike, to endorse it, simply because the government's spokesperson has said that it is a fine document.

People rejected the Draft Constitution because it was not designed to promote the change they had told the CC they wanted. Despite the lavish expenditure of the taxpayers' and donor money in the campaign for the 'yes' vote, people were still convinced that the draft constitution with its contradictory and vague provisions, that promised virginity and motherhood at the same time, could not guarantee freedom and political pluralism.

The 'No' vote was a victory for all Zimbabweans, including those who voted 'yes', because the referendum debate helped us as citizens to appreciate our strengths as well as our limitations.

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had 20 years in which to address the land issue through a legal act of parliament, yet it did not do so. Therefore it is government that has failed the people and not those who campaigned for a 'No' vote.

Moreover, attempts are still being made to politicise the constitution-making process using party politics, racism and poverty rights, to mislead ordinary Zimbabweans into believing that the document is intrinsically linked to land rights. For example, government has sought to explain the recent massive farm invasions by war veterans as an indication of 'the people's' displeasure at the 'No' vote. Yet how can ex-combatants dispute the majority 'No' vote? Vice-President Msika's suggestion that those who voted 'No' were not a majority of the population displays not only a total disregard for or ignorance of basic arithmetic skills but is also tantamount to saying that Mugabe and his ZANU-PF government were not popularly elected by a majority, since only a fraction of the eligible electorate ever bothered to cast their vote. Mugabe is on record as saying that 'ex-combatants feel the 'No' vote much more because they sacrificed their lives for us to get our land'. Can he point at those who did not sacrifice some-

now need to be consulted before any changes are made.

It is only in Zimbabwe where a common criminal convicted of forgery and with fraudulent tendencies is made chairperson of a dormant organisation and given a platform to create more havoc without being sent to jail where he rightfully belongs. It is also only in Zimbabwe where the economic interests of the whole nation, present and future, are subordinated to the will of a party trying to gain every cheap yard of political mileage.

#### Lessons learnt

The stunning referendum defeat set alarm bells ringing for ZANU-PF, and served to drive Mugabe back to the drawing board to plot his party's survival. The Politburo huddled together to discuss the referendum's implications and this meeting was followed by an emergency ZANU-PF Central Committee meeting.

People who believed that the future of Zimbabwe was doomed because of the strength of ZANU-PF will now recognise that they have a chance. This will bring fresh courage and revive the political life of Zimbabwe. The 'No' vote showed that the country is ripe for a change. The 'No'

#### The Way Forward

Although the Lancaster House Constitution has been rejected, it still remains the legal Constitution of Zimbabwe. However it has lost its political and moral authority and cannot be allowed to remain the Constitution of the country for long. For the NCA there is no question of the Lancaster House Constitution remaining our Constitution longer than is necessary for Zimbabweans to produce a genuinely home-grown Constitution.

The question also to be asked is, as the Lancaster House Constitution remains the legal Constitution of the country, does it follow that the 2000 elections should be held under its provisions? This will depend largely on the political parties. Those parties grouped within the NCA have put forward a proposal to government that certain minimum conditions should be incorporated into the current Constitution to level the playing field. These include independent electoral commissions, equal access to media and abolishing presidential appointments to parliament.

The 'No' vote should make Zimbabweans aware that it is important to build national consensus on such critical national issues as the Constitution. The starting point should be that all stakeholders should be involved in framing the new people-driven constitutional process. Agreement of the stakeholders on the process should translate into an appropriate legal framework which sets a time frame for the process.

#### Conclusion

The referendum has been won, with a

resounding 'No' vote, although the future remains unclear. In the midst of political double-talk and obscurity, the NCA's achievements thus far are clear milestones of democratic progress in Zimbabwe:

- Over the years, the NCA has developed into a people-owned National Assembly.
- It has retained autonomy from internal and external political sources.
- It has achieved a landmark in being the first national elective body to be chaired by a woman and to display decent cross-gender representation at policy-making level.
- It is the first and only constitutional review project in Zimbabwe that has included the youth and the disabled at a policy-making level.
- It is one of the few civil society (or people-driven) constitutional review projects in Africa, and has been successful in achieving its aims.
- It is the only Constitutional review project that has convened a meeting of such a large number of citizens in a dialogue for review of the Constitution.
- It has simplified the existing Constitution and translated it into Shona and Ndebele, Zimbabwe's local languages.
- It engages in extensive civic education prior to and during the process of consultation.
- It successfully defeated the government's bid to hijack the people's process of reviewing the current Constitution.
- It stood up for its principles even in times of great and often violent adversity.

The NCA thus represents a step forward for Zimbabwe. It is hoped that its reform process and its democratic example will help to shape the future of the country. ☉

*This paper was first presented at a seminar hosted by the African Institute. The Zimbabwean High Commission and Transparency International, who also participated, have been invited to submit their papers for publication.*

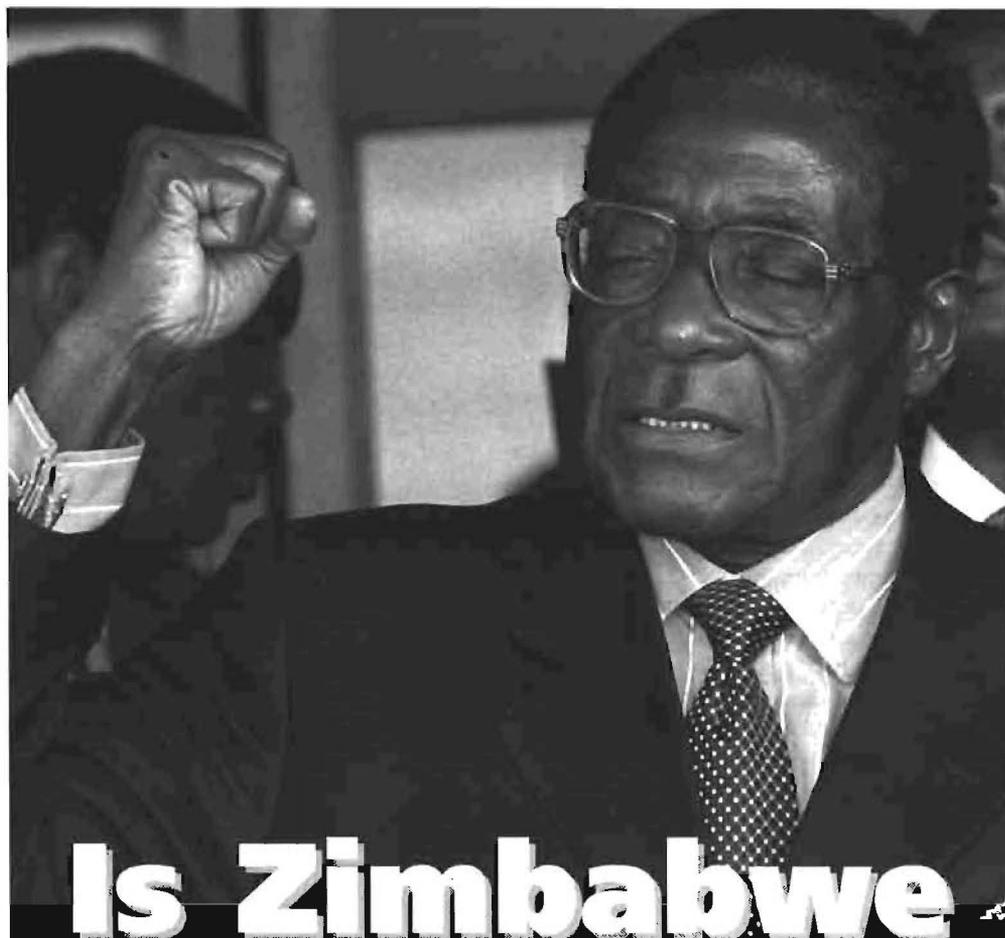


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# Is Zimbabwe on the brink of a dangerous precipice?

## A TEST FOR SADC SINCERITY

**Hermann Hanekom** offers a perspective from outside Zimbabwe, arguing that events in Zimbabwe may well have a negative spill-over effect into other Southern African countries, thus presenting SADC with its greatest political test yet.

**A**FTER 20 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE and 14 amendments to the Constitution, Zimbabwe went to the polls in February 2000 to vote on a highly controversial proposal for a new Constitution. The Constitution would have, among other clauses, increased the executive powers of the President and enabled the expropriation of selected farms for redistribution to former war veterans - without compensating the current owners. The results were unexpected and significant: the 'no' vote prevailed, in what many interpreted as a vote of no confidence for

President Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party.

Since the results of the referendum, Mugabe's woes seem to have increased dramatically. Fuel shortages have become increasingly serious, with the fuel crisis hitting Zimbabweans at all levels - from the motorist and transport companies to households struggling to obtain paraffin or kerosene for domestic purposes. Attempts to secure relief for the fuel crisis from Kuwait have failed. In addition, a large number of productive commercialised farms are heading for agricultural collapse as veterans from the liberation struggle occupy these farms with the concurrence and encouragement of Mugabe. To crown these crises, a diplomatic row with the United Kingdom was provoked when Zimbabwe violated international diplomatic practice by seizing and opening a consignment of diplomatic mail addressed to the British High Commission in Harare.

How do these events impact on Zimbabwe and the Southern African region on the eve of the general elections scheduled to take place by mid-2000?

All of these events, and their combined effect on the rapidly declining Zimbabwean economy, are posing a serious threat to ZANU-PF in the upcoming elections. The ruling ZANU-PF party is now facing its first real challenge from the recently created Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangirai, the former Secretary General of the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions. A survey undertaken by an independent opinion polling group indicated that over 60% of Zimbabweans would like to see Mugabe step down and are ready for a change of government.

**B**eyond doubt one can now accept that the occupation of commercial farms has been orchestrated by Mugabe and ZANU-PF. Frightening noises have been issuing forth from Zimbabwe since mid-March. Ndlovu, a spokesperson for the veterans association, has threatened openly that should ZANU-PF not win the elections, then Zimbabwe will return to a state of civil war. The reasons given are that the war veterans currently occupying



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commercial farms would not accept a party winning the elections that is suspected of receiving financial aid from white Zimbabweans and from Britain and that, in their opinion, would return Zimbabwe to the type of government that prevailed during the liberation struggle.

The veterans association has declared its willingness to return to war and to put a military government in place that over a period of five years 'will fix the country'. Such threats make it clear that intimidation of the voters' corps prior to the general election has already started. This raises the question of what credibility, if any, one could attach to the democratic character of the forthcoming elections.

It has come to light that 80% of those squatters illegally occupying the hundreds of invaded farms are not veterans from the time of the liberation struggle, but members of ZANU-PF who are unemployed and who are being paid a daily rate of

**The entrance to Pearson Farm, about 40 kilometres outside Harare. War veterans invaded the farm and refused entry to the farmer when he returned. They evicted several foreigners who were renting a cottage on the farm, and chased off journalists wanting to talk to them. A ZANU-PF party flag, with President Mugabe's picture on it, hangs on the front gate.**

US\$1,20 to US\$5 to join the occupation process. Government vehicles have been seen to bring food and other basic necessities to the squatters. Moreover, farmers and farm workers have been attacked by the veterans and their supporters. The occupation of nearly 20% of Zimbabwe's commercial farms, mostly white-owned, has clearly turned into intimidation of a section of the Zimbabwean population as revenge for the government's losing the February referendum. At the time, Mugabe

cast most of the blame for his loss on the country's white population, accusing them of having influenced the people to cast a negative vote, and of supporting and financing the newly formed opposition movement, the MDC, with whom, according to Mugabe, they are conspiring to overthrow the government. Britain is the other subject of Mugabe's excuses for who is to blame for Zimbabwe's problems.

**T**he ruling class in Zimbabwe has clearly lost sight of several important facts. The first is that the highest estimates of the white population place their numbers at around 80 000 - less than 1% of the estimated total population of 1,5 million. Secondly, the Movement for Democratic Change cannot by a long stretch of the imagination be considered a white-inspired movement, as it originates from the advanced black Zimbabwean political rationale that started from within the labour movement. Interestingly, though, it is now welcoming whites into the fold. Thirdly, it is now becoming clear that ZANU-PF itself, under the leadership of Mugabe, is seen as the cause of the country's woes.

It may now only be a matter of time within the framework of the election campaign before South Africa will become the next target of Mugabe's venom. However, it can already be seen that intimidation of the voters' corps by ZANU-PF is going to be dominant in all events leading up to election day.

The Zimbabwean Commercial Farmers' Union decided to take the occupation of commercial farms to court. On 17 March the Court found the occupations illegal and ordered all squatters to leave the farms within 24 hours. (As an aside, the High Court judge who handed down the eviction order is black.) The veterans association's response was perhaps only to be expected. Chenjerai 'Hitler' Hunzvi, leader of the War Veterans Association, refused to comment on the High Court's ruling, but veterans who were picketing outside the court told three white Supreme Court judges to step down or be forced to do so through physical force. Posters carried by the picketers proclaimed that Zimbabwe had been born through the barrel of a gun, and that the country's problems would now also be solved through revolutionary means and not through 'repressive law courts'. White farmers were warned 'not to play with fire, or the whole land will be grabbed.' The police have refused to act in accordance with the eviction order, claiming that the issue is political, not a police matter. The

impression is that they are waiting for a cue from government before they act, which in turn implies that the police force is an extension of ZANU-PF and not a national police force in the true sense of the word. The court order is evidently worthless: Mugabe has come out in favour of inaction, defending his stance on the basis that evictions could provoke an outbreak of violence, specifically against white Zimbabweans.

The implications of such actions are



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**The ruling ZANU-PF party is now facing its first real challenge from the recently created Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangirai, the former Secretary General of the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions.**

chilling. After twenty years in power it is now clear that Mugabe and his camp do not accept the whites of the country as true Zimbabweans. Furthermore, Mugabe's persistent refusal to apologise to the Matabele for the 1980 massacre in which more than 10 000 Matabele were killed, raises the question of whether the ruling party regards Zimbabwe as Shona country only and whether other Zimbabweans of whatever creed are of no consequence. Mugabe has been quoted as having said during a public speech in the eastern town of Mutare that 'Those who try to cause

disunity among our people must watch out because death will befall them'. This warning - an overt threat even - was issued broadly to all political opponents, including whites and all blacks who oppose ZANU-PF. From such threats, one could conclude that, for Mugabe, ZANU-PF and the War Veterans Association, democracy has lost its value and meaning, and that racism and ethnic despotism have become the guiding lights in the political thought of the Mugabe camp, which now appears to be desperately clinging to its hold on absolute power.

This perhaps explains Mugabe's attitude towards the United Kingdom. Relations between Zimbabwe and Britain have now deteriorated to the point of a vendetta against Prime Minister Tony Blair. Mugabe has received a blunt warning from the office of Peter Hain not to 'hold a gun' to Britain's head, as the British government will not be blackmailed. Britain is going ahead with preparations to evacuate up to 20 000 Zimbabweans holding British citizenship.

**W**hen, from the premise of an early warning analytic approach, the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe is looked at, a number of

threatening scenarios come to the fore, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive and could play out in tandem. The first is the possible disruption and cessation of food production due to the occupation of the country's largest farms, resulting in a man-made collapse of the commercial farming sector.

Secondly, the holding of free and fair democratic elections in April - now postponed to May at the earliest - seems to have become a remote dream that will be overshadowed by intimidation of the opposition by the Mugabe camp. This has already led to acts of violence. On the other hand, the elections could well be postponed again by Mugabe in the hopes of gaining time, during which he could work on weakening the opposition. It should be noted that such a weakening is unlikely as the economic downslide of the country, which seems unstoppable in the



short to medium term, may strengthen the hand of the opposition. In turn, this could again increase the threat of intimidation and violence by the Mugabe camp. Mugabe may also declare a state of emergency on the grounds of maintaining security and stability which is currently threatened by the economic collapse and occupation of farms. This tactic could serve to postpone the elections indefinitely.

Such a scenario is very likely to be accompanied by an increase in racist and ethnic sentiments, and the rejection of democratic principles by precisely those who fought for freedom and democracy in 1980. This would encourage a resort to force as the means of governance. In a worst-case scenario, voter apathy in rural areas, such as was shown during the referendum, could lead to ZANU-PF losing the elections and prompt the veterans to carry out their threat of returning Zimbabwe to a state of war.

**E**vents in Zimbabwe may well have an effect on the entire Southern African region, currently beginning to recover from devastating floods and years of civil war. The negative course of developments in Zimbabwe could turn out to be the greatest political test yet for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Treaty and the respect of member states for the treaty itself, in particular its human rights provisions (articles 4 and 6).

Mugabe's threats to opposition groups and Zimbabwean whites, and his constant violations of the SADC Treaty's political and human rights provisions are being met with dead silence. This silence from members of SADC leaves an impression of political impotence and disregard for human rights prevailing within the organisation. If Zimbabwe explodes into a state of racist and ethnic anarchy it will most likely have serious negative spill-overs into adjacent countries, thus further taxing the political will of the leadership of SADC member states to act in accordance with SADC's treaty in the interest of regional security and stability.

At present Zimbabwe is showing all the signs of a country that could

explode and pull all of Southern Africa into a vortex of violence and instability. However, as was the case in Rwanda in 1994, action will have to be taken by SADC in good time to prevent a cataclysm.

Although some thirty years later, events now taking place in Zimbabwe raise the frightening spectre of the 1970s Uganda of Idi Amin. Then, too, the world watched as Uganda suffered total disregard for ordinary human rights and freedom of possession, while government appeared to regard itself as being above the courts and the rule of law. Could Zimbabwe be going down the path of repression and dictatorship? Another parallel is that, like President PW Botha of the old South Africa in the late 1980s, Mugabe and ZANU-PF appear to have lost touch with reality and the sentiments of the people at grass-roots level.

However, unlike the South African situation, Zimbabwe does not offer the possibility of a 'constitutional coup d'état' which could force a 'voluntary resignation' by Mugabe due to the lack of realism and credible leadership within the ranks of the senior political leadership within the ruling party.

The events currently taking place in Zimbabwe place the country's future and the integrity of SADC in the firing line, with both facing a barrage of questions and doubts within the framework of globalisation and the advancement of democracy on the African continent. The situation also places the greatest challenge and impediment to date to the vision of the African Renaissance. If SADC cannot effectively act to prevent a collapse of law and order, to ensure human rights are honoured and democratic principles are respected in this troubled country within its fold, then it is doubtful whether the organisation will attain effective success in its other regional disciplines such as agriculture, tourism and water resource management. ☉

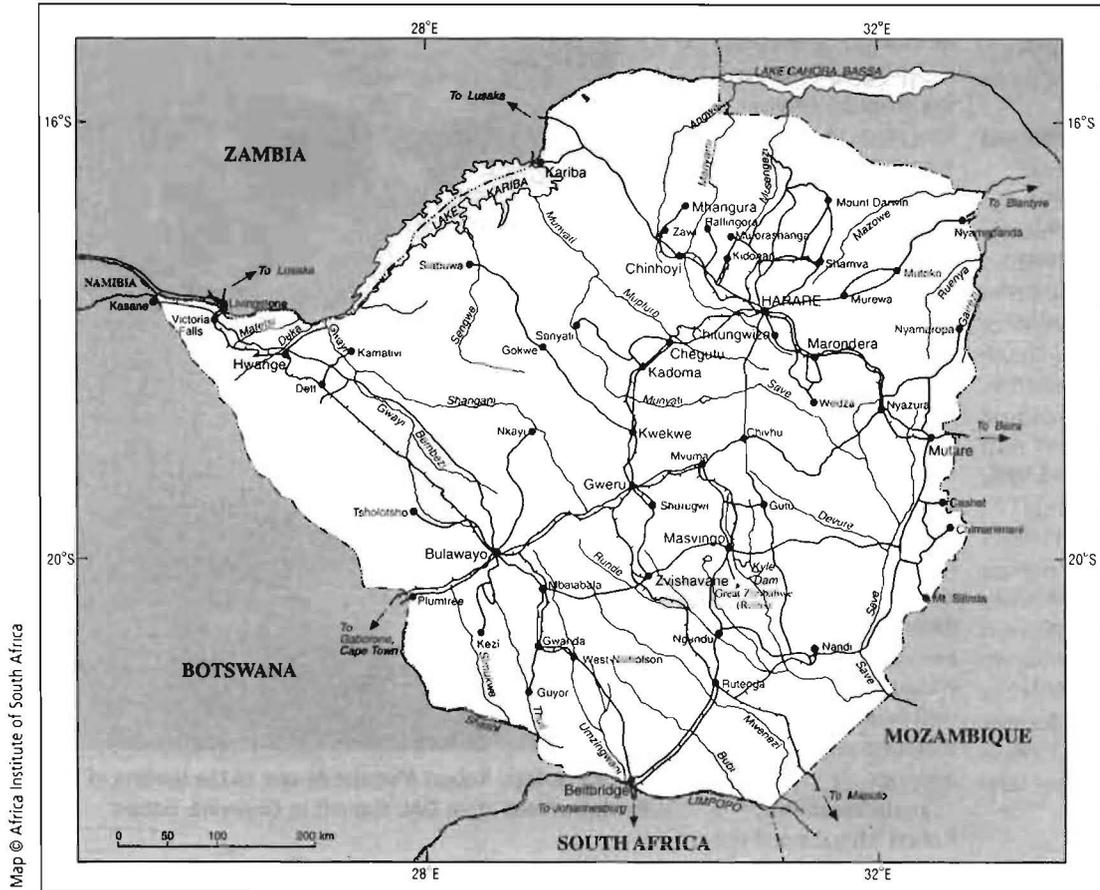
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## The Alchemy of Robert Mugabe's Alliances

**C**ONTEMPORARY EVENTS IN Zimbabwe should not be particularly surprising for those with some knowledge of the modern history of the making of its ruling class. To be more precise, it should not be unexpected for those who combine this knowledge with a persuasion more akin to 'radical pessimism' or 'tragic optimism' than romantic nationalism.<sup>2</sup> A brief look at how Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's current president, has maneuvered his way out of past situations in which his back has been against the wall might shed some light on today's seemingly chaotic situation.

## ZIMBABWE



abrupt turns and shifting coalitions. These twists and turns have variously included and jettisoned groups within the guerrilla soldiers, along with military and political leaders. The winding road to the presidential pedestal also brought many international powers in and out of the orbit of Zimbabwe's current political leaders. That path included Britain and the United States as well as China and, while in the fragile Patriotic Front with Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the Soviet Union.

If our histories of Zimbabwe had been written correctly<sup>9</sup> – and looked as much at the internal dynamics of the war as the high levels of international intrigue and diplomacy – we would not fall prey to the media consensus that all the 'veterans' are sup-

Historically, as in the present, Mugabe and his closest allies have been adept at alchemy. They have put together short-lived alliances and created uneasy amalgams of ideologies and practices to firm their hold on the national mettle. Such options are not uncommon among the leaders of unevenly developed social formations such as those in the southern African region: societies which are almost bound to throw up the politics of populism and authoritarianism<sup>3</sup> during their march towards modernity (or, in old-fashioned language, capitalism).<sup>4</sup>

They become more desperate and seemingly irrational as the policies of structural adjustment hit, creating huge inequalities of wealth and wellbeing while negating any truly 'home-grown' and state-initiated efforts to redress the complexities of colonial legacies and the current era of globalisation's pressures.<sup>5</sup>

In spite of such expectations, it is surprising to note the historical and contextual amnesia of much of the reportage on the current events north of South Africa. In them, Robert Mugabe seems to appear out of the blue as a suddenly panicking politician turning into a dictator. Other - more conservative - perspectives lump him in with a long and seemingly inevitable

African tradition ranging from Idi Amin to Laurent Kabila. Some knowledge of his actions during the struggle for liberation (or, more prosaically, majority rule) from Ian Smith's style of settler-colonialism might alter both of those standpoints.

From the late 1950s to 1980 that struggle ranged from constitutional wrangling to guerrilla war and included much of the two 'fronts' simultaneously. Mugabe was adept at straddling them both, and still is - although he may have unleashed the fodder for his prevarication a bit further this time than previously. Nevertheless, an historical perspective would go some way in explaining some of the longer-term causes of the post-independence crises leading up to this one: including, of course, the Matabeleland massacres, in which Robert Mugabe's North Korean trained Fifth Brigade murdered thousands in pursuit of a group of dissidents.<sup>6</sup> It would put the seeming ability of the ruling group to marshal or forestall the 'veterans' militancy at will in context too.<sup>7</sup> It could even put to rest the notion that he is a 'reformed Marxist'.<sup>8</sup>

**T**he rise to power of Robert Mugabe and his closest allies during the nationalist struggle was marked by

porting Mugabe. We would be wondering just who among the war veterans supposedly invading the largely white-owned commercial farms of their own will are allied with their President, and what the many guerrillas he alienated on his route to the Presidency are thinking and doing.<sup>10</sup>

Also, if we had related the internal struggles more closely to the external ones, we would not assume that Mugabe's posturing against Tony Blair's 'gay gangsters' is more than skin deep.<sup>11</sup> Mugabe has turned against the soldiers who brought him to power more than once in the past and has simultaneously marshaled the British to his cause when he has had the need. There is no reason to suppose he will not 'switch sides' again.

### Mugabe's Road to Power

The Portuguese coup of 1974 accelerated the independence of Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and (lest we forget) East Timor in the 1970s. In its wake, Tiny Rowlands, Kenneth Kaunda and John Vorster decided that it was time to bring Zimbabwean nationalists into the fold of moderation. To that end, Zimbabwean nationalists were released from Ian Smith's goals for détente discussions in Lusaka. The presidents of the frontline states,

including Samora Machel for the first time, were confronted with the fact that Secretary-General Mugabe and a few of his cellmates had deposed Ndabaningi Sithole from his ZANU presidency. Machel's response was, 'What? You've done a coup in prison?!'<sup>12</sup>

In the months following that prison coup a number of 'rebels' were killed by ZANU's militariat, and national chairman Herbert Chitepo was assassinated. Opinion in Zimbabwe is still divided over whether those responsible for his death were Rhodesian agents, 'tribal' opponents,<sup>13</sup> or - and these words are being spoken in Zimbabwe more often now than before - Mugabe's emissaries. There is nothing new about such speculation.

Even as David Martin and Phyllis Johnson's official version<sup>14</sup> of the assassination was prepared in 1985, the Politburo deliberated for weeks about its veracity and the wisdom of its publication. Long before, Harare bar-room talk suggested both the Rhodesian and the 'Manyika' interpretations (the latter was the view of the Zambian government's Special International Commission on the Assassination of Herbert Wiltshire Chitepo, resulting in the imprisonment of many of ZANU's military and political leaders, including commander-in-chief Josiah Tongogara) were sidelining the 'Zezuru' (ie Robert Mugabe) from the equation. Certainly, death lists were circulating far and wide, even reaching Australia.

In the wake of the internecine struggles inspired by this 'revolution from above' the Zambian state declared ZANU illegal and incarcerated those of its soldiers within its borders. This left a small, very young, very radical and very well trained group of officers with the task of reigniting the war from bases in Mozambique and Tanzania. Sithole lost his credibility with them because he did very little to get them out of Zambia's prison camps. Nor did he intervene when Zambian soldiers shot some of the Zimbabwean soldiers.

The new military leaders resumed the war in short order. They gained Julius Nyerere's support literally hours before Sithole arrived at the Tanzanian president's office in hopes of gaining the kingmaker's imprimatur. One of their mandates was to unify the ZANU and ZAPU armed forces, and they made a credible attempt at that task. They also established Whampoa College<sup>15</sup> devoted to creative materialist analysis of the shortcomings of nationalism as they were experiencing it and to

foster a way forward from Soviet and Chinese ideological differences, which were compounding disunity. To make a long story short, they succeeded on the military front to such an extent that Henry Kissinger and his peers soon arranged to revive the moribund détente and convene at the infamous Geneva Conference of October 1976. There, the leaders of the 'free world' could find out who they could deal with among the many pretenders to Zimbabwean nationalism's mantle. Also, once there Mugabe could forge new alliances with the widespread - and often well educated, on foreign scholarships - ZANU diaspora.

In the meantime, Robert Mugabe and colleagues such as Edgar Tekere had trekked to Mozambique in an attempt to gain control of the guerrillas. They were soon cooling their heels under house arrest in Quelimane. The new young leaders of the war were admitting him to their camps - against the wishes of the Mozambicans - because they had been so badly betrayed by Sithole. Even though they were concerned about his preoccupation with 'getting the ethnic balance right' and his lack of interest in their ideological preoccupations, Mugabe was the only one in the 'old guard' they could trust to some degree - or so they thought. He took this grace as the signal that he was their man. When he visited London courtesy of the BBC World Service - telling the Mozambicans, who would have preferred him to stay put, that his wife was in hospital - he announced to the world that he was with the guerrillas. He was also cultivating the support of Labour Party stalwarts. Further afield, he was cultivating the social democrats in Sweden.

When the call for the Geneva conference was issued, the young soldiers were told by the frontline presidents to 'pick a leader.' They refused, advising instead the formation of a coalition that could not be torn asunder by Smith. Such a united front would have even included 'puppets' like Muzorewa and Sithole, because they did not see much difference between them and



Photo: AISA archives

The early days: Robert Mugabe as one of the leaders of the Patriotic Front at an OAU summit in Libreville, Gabon.

the leader who appeared to be speaking in their name. Their stance was essentially that of the national democratic revolution: if a decent victory could have been scored at Geneva, they would have been glad to return to Zimbabwe and fight a good, clean democratic election on behalf of the workers and peasants. But they did not think a victory was ripe for the picking at Geneva in any case. Deprived of their chance for a united front, they refused to go until forced.

Mugabe never forgave them. By early 1977 they were in Mozambique's prisons, where they stayed until the 1980 elections. Ironically, they were only released when the British High Commissioner, on notification by some ZAPU members, persuaded his government to make Mugabe's return to Zimbabwe contingent on the release of the 'young Turks.'

It is possible they could have challenged Mugabe's hold on the soldiers in the Mozambican camps, but the guerrillas who had preceded the younger ones and were in control of most of the security apparatus were against them. Also, had they followed popular pressure in the camps the Mozambican army may well have intervened: for reasons that he may well have later regretted but followed him to his grave, Machel had turned against the young Turks. In any case, the young men referred to later by Mugabe as traitors

actually cautioned their even younger colleagues against adventurism. The vashandi (workers) were close to the point of 'popular power' in the camps, but did not have a hold on the monopoly of force.

Furthermore, the leaders of the vashandi were well aware of the complexities involved in 'applying' Marxism to an underdeveloped social formation. The possibilities of success in forcing Mugabe to take them on as allies, is, of course, now a matter of speculation.

But there is no doubt that Tongogara (released from Zambian jails to go to Geneva and to bring the young radicals to heel) had a very difficult time 'pacifying' the camps even after the leaders were imprisoned. Kangaroo courts were the order of the day, and a second round of arrests took place, committing many 'dissidents' to prison pits until the Mozambicans removed them from the camps.

During Mugabe's consolidation of control, Ian Smith did manage to pull the slacker nationalists into his desperate prognostications, thus prolonging the war by more than three years. It took nearly a year

before ZANU could get the war going again. Half way through 1977 Mugabe consolidated his leadership at the first party congress since 1964 with a declaration that the ZANU axe would fall on the heads of people with critical tendencies. He appropriated the language of these left-wingers more vociferously than before. About half a year after that, a group of 'old (and middle-aged) guard' members of the Central Committee tried to re-do the vashandi's counter-hegemonic move, but failed and were sent to the same Mozambican camps.

Further afield, the young soldiers' efforts at bottom-up ZANU-ZAPU unity were maintained only at a tactical, very fragile, political level, under the 'Patriotic Front's' thin banner. The Matabeleland massacres show how deep that unity was. By the end of 1979, the Lancaster House agreement set the stage for Mugabe's presidency. Tongogara was killed in a car accident on the way to inform the soldiers of their victory (conjecture similar to that around the Chitepo case

surrounds that mishap). Before the election Mugabe announced that land would be available for all. After it he was keen to reconcile with settler colonial capital.

### Implications for current events

The upshot of this very abbreviated excursion into history is to say: it is doubtful that the land invaders in Zimbabwe's countryside and the demonstration busters in Harare represent all the 'war veterans,' let alone the Zimbabwean 'masses.' They resemble the anti-democratic and anti-intellectual allies recruited by Mugabe and his diasporic allies in the mid-1970s. As then, it is likely they will be jettisoned after serving their purpose.

During the latter stages of the war for Zimbabwe, the soldiers were not unified in support of the leader who claimed it. Nor are they likely to now. He exceeded their mandate then, and seems to be doing so in the current crisis. Then, he allied with an authoritarian and militarist populist who seemed to have more wherewithal than does Chenjerai 'Hitler' Hunzvi, the man who appears to be Robert Mugabe's lieu-

## Notes & references

- This article is a longer version of 'Don't Forget Mugabe's History,' *Mail & Guardian*, 7-13 April 2000. It is based on the author's 1990 doctoral thesis, 'The Contradictory Construction of Hegemony in Zimbabwe' and subsequent interviews in Zimbabwe. Some of the published results of that work can be found in 'Democracy, Violence and Identity in the Zimbabwean War of National Liberation: Reflections from the Realms of Dissent', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol 29, no 3, December 1995; 'The Zimbabwe People's Army: Strategic Innovation or More of the Same?', *Soldiers and The Zimbabwean Liberation War*, N Bhebe & T Ranger, (eds), London: James Currey, 1995; and 'The Ideological Formation of the Zimbabwean Ruling Class,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 17, no 3, September 1991.
- 'Radical pessimism' was a term thrown with contempt at leftist or Fanonesque skeptics by liberal nationalist historians such as Terence Ranger in Africa in the 1960s. It was taken up by Zimbabwean nationalists themselves e.g. N Shamyuria, 'Liberation Movements in Southern Africa,' 8th Annual Hans Wolff Memorial Lecture, African Studies Program, Indiana University, Bloomington, 14 April 1977. 'Tragic optimism' is the phrase applied to Africa in John Sender's attempt to steer a hard-nosed Marxist perspective through Afro-pessimism and the nostrums of 'people oriented development.' It resorts to some selective statistical manipulation and a version of capitalism relying on a lot of state spending and welfare: 'Africa's economic performance: Limitations of the current consensus,' *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol 13, no 3, Summer 1999, pp 89-114. In a wider historical and comparative sense, the work of Michael Mann could be placed within this framework: see 'The Dark Side of Democracy: The Modern Tradition of Ethnic and Political Cleansing,' *New Left Review*, vol 1, no 235, May-June 1999, pp 18-45. Both views could be shared by progressive realists who know that the struggle against colonialism and racism, and for equitable development in Africa, be it 'capitalist' or 'socialist' is not easy: nor has been any transition into or out of capitalism.
- It is not certain whether such scholars would condone leaders like Mugabe in the name of solidarity with 'historical necessity' or if they would countenance the abuse of power in the name of African identity or socialist construction. If they do not, in the heat of media attacks and counterattacks sometimes it is hard to separate this mentality from that of racists for whom any African leader would have led Zimbabwe to ruin, or from conservatives who think the cause of Zimbabwe's downfall is Mugabe's 'Marxism.'
- The phrase 'authoritarian populism' is borrowed from Stuart Hall, 'Popular Democratic vs. Authoritarian Populism: Two Ways of Taking Democracy Seriously,' in Alan Hunt (ed), *Marxism and Democracy*, London: Lawrence Wishart, 1980, pp 161-185. I have also utilised the dichotomy of 'transformational militancy' and 'authoritarian militarism' as a way of signifying the gradations of right and left within the liberation movement.
- See Patrick Bond, *Uneven Zimbabwe: A Study of Finance, Development and Underdevelopment*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 1998; and Dale McKinley, *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Political Biography*, London: Pluto, 1998, for portrayals of this syndrome.
- Mark Duffield, 'Post-Modern Conflict: Warlords, Post-Adjustment States and Private Protection', *Civil Wars*, vol 1, no 1, Spring 1998, pp 69-71; 'Globalisation and War Economies: Promoting Order or the Return of History?', *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol 23, no 1, Fall 1999.
- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, *Report on the 1980s Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands*, Harare: March 1997. This report makes a conservative estimate of 7 000 killed: journalists often cite 20 000.
- At the time of writing this version (mid-April 2000), Vice-President Joseph Msika - a 'Shona' founding member of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) who stayed with Joshua Nkomo until just after the attainment of majority rule, when he moved to ZANU - has called the 'land invaders' off. Robert Mugabe, at a Group of 77 meeting in Havana, has apparently not agreed. By the time this article is in print we may know if Msika and a moderate group have had their way against Mugabe's will. Alternatively, Mugabe's deal with British Foreign Minister Robin Cook to assure British funding of 'orderly' land resettlement after a fair election, made in Cairo during the previous week's OAU meeting with the European inheritors of the Berlin Conference, may have been enough for the President and his absence in Havana gave him the opportunity to let someone else 'back down.' Mugabe may have to betray his 'veterans' again.
- This is a much repeated nostrum, e.g. J Stackhouse, 'Robert Mugabe: An African hero's fall from grace', *The Globe and Mail*, 15 April 2000, who claims that 'his ideology turned Marxist during the armed resistance to white rule, when his ZANU party relied heavily on military aid and diplomatic support from China and the East Bloc.' It is more likely that he appropriated the language of the young militants as they were simultaneously sent to Mozambique's prisons: [www.globeandmail.com/gamv/TopInternational/20000415/UMUGAN.html](http://www.globeandmail.com/gamv/TopInternational/20000415/UMUGAN.html)
- More precisely: if critical histories, or indeed current accounts, had been heeded, we would not have been so surprised. For example, see JS Saul, 'Transforming the Struggle in Zimbabwe', in *The State and Revolution in Eastern Africa*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979.
- The story of the rise of the War Veterans' Association is a crucial one, remaining unstudied. It is unclear at which point the WVA turned from being very critical of the ruling party's policies towards the veterans into allies, but the award of substantial pensions in the late 1990s was certainly part of it. The policy to levy a surtax of five per cent on the rest of population to pay for them - in combination with the lifting of subsidies on maize meal - resulted in riots in early 1998. By then the WVA and Mugabe needed each other.
- For an uncommonly perceptive journalist's view of the balance of rhetoric and reality on this, and the actual extent of governmental 'land grabs' in Zimbabwe, see RL Swarns, 'Zimbabwe Talks Tough but Steps Softly in the Battle over Land', *New York Times*, 11 April 2000. For excellent academic analysis see S Moyo, 'The Political Economy of Land Acquisition and Redistribution in Zimbabwe, 1990-1999', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 26, no 1, March 2000, pp 5-28, and his earlier work noted therein.
- M Nyagumbo, *With the People: An Autobiography from the Zimbabwean Struggle*, London: Alison and Busby, 1980, p 221.
- The classic ethnicist work is M Sithole's *Zimbabwe Struggles within the Struggle*, Salisbury: Rujeko, 1979.
- David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, *The Chitepo Assassination*, Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985.
- So named after Chiang Kai Shek's war school in China, designed to bring together nationalists and those with greater aspirations. The literature also refers to the college as Chitepo College, but that was initiated by some of the ZANU 'old guard' after the young militants were deposited.

tenant in charge of the invading 'veterans.' It will be interesting to see the latter's fate.

Furthermore, it is just as likely now as then that a good proportion of these ex-soldiers would support the broadest range of allies as the 'national democratic revolution' would allow. Mugabe has skewed the coalition so many times in the past that its alchemy - a precarious one at any time, as members of the 'triple alliance' in South Africa can attest - has just about given up the ghost. The Movement for Democratic Change may be part of the revival of that process, if it does not go too far in appeasing the same IMF and World Bank minions who have made it difficult for the hard-working reformers still existing under the ZANU umbrella to have any transformative effect.

**N**o matter its ideological direction and class alliances, if its democratic push is to persevere the MDC will have to make some careful alliances with the soldiers in and out of uniform. One would think that even the most skeptical of vashandi types would agree that MDC democracy offers more hope than what appears to be a horizon of feudalism.

Moreover, if one remembers Robert Mugabe's 1975 trip to England, one should not rule out a deal with the old colonial masters. They have always preferred a firm hand they can count on to the unruliness of democracy. It is likely that even now Mugabe is more reliable to these old hands than the MDC - especially if he can claim to have old and new soldiers on his side.

Maybe they are orthodox Marxists in disguise, believing that countries like Zimbabwe must go through a feudal stage before democratic capitalism can take its place in history.

Regardless of their philosophical ruminations, if the MDC did win the election and hold a Commission for Truth and Justice, it would not only be Mugabe's past - albeit one with promises of amnesty - that would be on open display. History would be remade once again. ☉

# Land and Power in Zimbabwe

## LESSONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

**O'mano Emma Edigheji**<sup>1</sup>, a PhD candidate at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, draws parallels between events in Zimbabwe and Malaysia, and considers the implications for South Africa.

**I**N THE LAST FEW MONTHS, ZIMBABWE HAS BEEN ON THE international news not because its national football or cricket team has won a major international event nor because of the discovery of a vaccine or drug to prevent and cure the dreaded HIV-AIDS that is ravaging its people daily. Rather it is on everyone's minds because of the dashed hopes and expectations of liberation.

The liberation of Zimbabwe led by ZANU-PF held high hopes for all Zimbabweans, particularly the black population who for centuries were dominated and oppressed by a racist colonial regime. Under the colonial regime, the minority white group dominated the social and political system and controlled the economy including the land and the formal business sector. Black Zimbabweans, like their South African counterparts, were marginalised in the informal and subsistence agricultural sectors. Thus, at independence there was an expectation that black Zimbabweans would participate in the mainstream of the economy through access to the corporate sector as entrepreneurs, managers and workers. It was also expected that blacks would gain access to fertile land and that many would become commercial farmers. It was similarly hoped that there would be an increase in black participation in the public sector. It was in the context of these expectations that black Zimbabweans and many of their brothers and sisters from the



Zimbabwean war veterans who have occupied a section of Unadale farm, south of Harare. When the veterans arrived on the farm they took up residence in a small church on the property, but three days after their arrival the farmer demolished the church. They intend dividing the farm and growing their own crops.

rest of the African continent regarded President Robert Mugabe and his colleagues as heroes and heroines.

The events of the last few months, however, have dashed the expectations of the people. The Zimbabwean post-independence period has been marked by endemic corruption, soaring inflation, HIV-AIDS and the continued dominance of the economy and land by the white minority - who are notorious for paying low wages to black farm workers - as well as a lack of access to basic social and physical infrastructure by the majority of the black population and increasing poverty and unemployment resulting in about 76% of Zimbabweans living below the poverty line and one in every two Zimbabweans being unemployed. In addition, there are reports that only a few ZANU-PF officials and members have been beneficiaries of the limited land reforms and redistribution that have taken place.

Worsening economic conditions have marked the last few years. The case of a

shortage of foreign exchange to pay for imports, including petrol and gas, is an apt example. Hence there were long queues of cars waiting for petrol at fuel stations. Mugabe's inept management of the economy is also evidenced by his inability to transform it from an agricultural to an industrial and technologically-based economy - it is thus unable to absorb the increasing labour needs or to earn adequate foreign exchange in a global order marked by a decline in commodity prices. Under these circumstances, the country has been a keg of gunpowder waiting for the right time to explode.

Over the years, the ruling elite has ignored the sufferings and yearnings of the people, not least because of an absence of a credible opposition movement to the ZANU-PF party and its leadership. This changed with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai, a popular trade unionist.

Having previously marginalised or forced other opposition figures to toe the line or be cast into the political wilderness, Mugabe tended to treat Tsvangirai and the MDC as inconsequential. This showed a lack of appreciation of the socio-economic and political situation, which to all intents and purposes indicated that the people of Zimbabwe wanted an end to Mugabe's mismanagement of the economy and the

country's drift to one-person rule. Zimbabweans forcefully brought this message home to Mugabe when they rejected his recent attempt to change the constitution in a referendum. With his political dynasty about to crumble, Mugabe has had to resort to extra-constitutional measures in an attempt to cling to power. Like most of his dictatorial ilk on the continent, including the late General Sani Abacha of Nigeria, Jean Bedel Bokassa of the Central Africa Republic, and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, he has turned to ignoble means as the only option to save a sinking ship.

As Chabal and Daloz observe, bad governance, lawlessness and political disorder are the preferred and chosen instruments of those such as Mugabe.<sup>2</sup> In so doing, he will stop at nothing even if Zimbabwe literally goes down the drain in the process or even if his actions have negative reverberations on the socio-economic situation in the Southern African region or reinforce the negative perception of Africans and their leaders among whites, especially Europeans.

This is how we should see the developments in Zimbabwe in the last couple of months. Mugabe instigated the attacks on white farmers whom he describes as 'enemies of the state'. His support has provided the impetus for the illegal occupation and burning of white-owned farms by so-called war veterans (some of who are too young to have participated in the liberation struggle).

Since the beginning of the crisis, ten people - including three black farm workers, three white farmers and a police officer - have to date been killed by the veterans with about a hundred people injured and a score more abducted. These veterans and Mugabe's supporters have openly disobeyed court orders to stop their illegal occupation of white-owned farms. The regime has been making the ridiculous argument that the police lacked the capacity to stop the veterans yet it seems that the same regime has the capacity to send soldiers to fight a war of destabilisation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

What Mugabe could not achieve through a popular mandate, he now intends to get through the backdoor. His attempt to acquire white-owned farms without compensation, having been rejected in a referendum, has now been enacted through legislation, shifting responsibility for compensation to the British government. It is true that the British government has not fulfilled its 1988 commitment to fund land redistribution in Zimbabwe.



However, this is not surprising given the track record of the British and other European colonialists regarding the exploitation of African resources. But this is besides the point; the real question is why has Mugabe waited 20 years before fulfilling his promises to redistribute land to black Zimbabweans? Election years require desperate measures by autocrats hoping to cling to power! Why did he not exert pressure on the British before now? Mugabe's incitement of the recent violence and his anti-white and anti-British rhetoric should be understood for what they are: attempts to gain political mileage from the genuine grievances of the people.

The point needs to be made at this juncture that land redistribution is long overdue and a struggle for its implementation is a just one. But without subscribing to the British position, land redistribution cannot be implemented outside the rule of law, as this would amount to anarchy, as is currently the case.

**M**ugabe is famous for his ruthless repression of opponents within his party in the 1970s, his violent attack on the Ndebele in the 1980s, and in the 1990s his unwarranted and persistent persecution of the gay community and press freedom - he ranks next to the late Sani Abacha in terms of attacks on press freedom on the continent. This is the kind of leader he is. Peter Evans would describe him as a 'predator', presiding over a predatory state where he is the law.<sup>3</sup> Rather than harness the country's resources, both human and capital, to transform the economy, the predator destroys such resources and is incapable of mobilising society around a developmental project.

The Mugabe government has been condemned by the opposition movement and the international community for his incitement and support of the occupation of white-owned farms. This is justified, because his action violates the rule of law and human rights. It also threatens the peace and stability of the country. Moreover, a politically unstable Zimbabwe could be a grave danger to the entire Southern African region. There is no doubt that such instability could result in mass migrations to other countries in the region, particularly South Africa because of its relatively better economic conditions. An unstable Zimbabwe would also adversely affect the region's economic recovery leading to a higher unemployment rate and erosion in investors' confidence in the region.

South Africans of all shades including the white business community and the

Democratic Party (DP) have highlighted these concerns. They have called on the African National Congress (ANC) government to condemn Mugabe and to intervene with a view to resolving the crisis. Indeed, the quest for an African Renaissance being championed by President Thabo Mbeki makes it imperative that he intervenes to resolve the crisis. While these are just calls and we all hope that the crisis in Zimbabwe is peacefully resolved and that Mugabe allows a free and fair election in May (without any further postponement), two important questions need to be answered. First, is the event in Zimbabwe an isolated one in the context of countries divided along racial lines and whence after independence there was no concerted effort to redress the racial imbalances of the past? Second, what lessons can South Africa draw from the Zimbabwean experience?

### Malaysian parallels

With respect to the first question, it should be noted that in racially-divided countries where minority racial groups had dominated the political and economic system, if after independence there were no concerted efforts to redress the racial imbalances, the outcome has been political instability. We need not look further than Malaysia in the 1960s. At independence, Malaysia was divided along racial lines and race was associated with economic activity as the minority Chinese controlled the economy while the Bumipetras (Bumis), the majority racial group, were largely confined to subsistence agriculture. The immediate post-independence coalition government (like the South African Government of National Unity after 1994) did nothing meaningful to redress the racial imbalances as it continued to pursue a *laissez-faire* economic policy.

Although this led to economic growth, it reinforced the racial imbalance in the country in the first decade of independence. The Malay political elite was awoken by the May 1969 racial revolt which not only threatened its political survival but also the country's political stability. This was the background to the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) that came into effect in 1971. The NEP was a form of affirmative action or empowerment strategy with two aims: to eradicate poverty among Malays and to redress the economic imbalance through increasing Malays' equity ownership from about 2.4% in 1971 to 30% in 1990.<sup>4</sup>

To achieve these, the government actively intervened in the economy. Education and skills development (includ-

ing reserving quotas and providing scholarships for Bumi students) were promoted to enable Malays to participate in all spheres of the economy as entrepreneurs, managers, workers and consumers. Other measures to build a Malay entrepreneurial class included preferential trading licenses, procurement policies and provision of access to land, as well as government guaranteed loan schemes, some at a zero interest rate. Ownership in a number of economic activities was also reserved for Bumis. The result has been the remarkable transformation of the Malaysian economy from primary sector based to industrial and technologically based, as well as relatively equitable income distribution. Malaysia has earned itself a high middle income and second generation Asian Newly Industrialised Country (NIC) status, as well as a relatively stable polity, at least until the last few years, when the dictatorial streaks of Prime Minister Mahithir Mohamad came to the fore. The Malaysian experience thus shows that political stability and sustainable democracy require concerted efforts by the post-independence government to redress past racial socio-economic imbalances, transform the structural basis and promote the principle of shared economic growth. This is a necessary condition for economic growth and development, but proponents of free markets often fail to acknowledge this.

The fall of the Suharto regime in Indonesia also bears testimony to this claim. The protest that led to the downfall of Suharto in 1998 had as much to do with the frustrations of the indigenous people over the continued control of the economy by the minority Chinese racial group as much as with protests at the corrupt regime.

Based on this analysis, one could argue that black Zimbabweans were bound to protest the continued control of the land and economy by the white minority. This is not to support the lawlessness that has marked the protest and the exploitation of their genuine grievances by Mugabe for his political advantage.

### Lessons for South Africa

This brings us to the second question: what lessons can South Africa learn from the Zimbabwean experience? The ANC government has put some measures in place, although uncoordinated and incoherent, to redress some of the past racial imbalances. These include its affirmative action policy in the public service, the Skills Development Act, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Employment Equity

Act, the 10-Point Plan, the Procurement Act, reservation of a certain percentage of shares in privatised state enterprises for blacks and various policies to ensure that they participate actively in the mainstream of the economy. Most of these policies have been opposed and continued to be opposed by white business and white-based political parties like the DP. Some of the arguments advanced are that affirmative action policies would lower standards in both the public and private sectors. As Thabo Mbeki, then Deputy President, noted in his famous two-nation speech:

*In the majority of cases, the call for transformation of both the public and private sector institutions and organisations, in particular to address the issue of racial representativity, has been resisted with great determination by the white community especially white business. Indeed, one of the issues of great agitation in our politics is the question of affirmative action. To ensure that it does not happen, some of what is said is that black advancement equals a white brain drain and black management ...equals inefficiency, corruption and lowering of standards.<sup>5</sup>*

We are also told that such programmes and government intervention will erode investors' confidence in South Africa. These are some of the excuses used to maintain white privilege in the new South Africa.

Furthermore, the white business community has shown little commitment to the promotion of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). It has promoted only a narrow version of BEE, i.e. black ownership of capital, what I refer to elsewhere as a 'minimalist approach' to BEE.<sup>6</sup> But even on this limited version, white business has been far from forthright. Their support for black entrepreneurs has primarily been limited to shares acquisition in companies listed in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) at an unprecedentedly high price per unit in the history of South Africa. The emerging

black business class has seen the value of their share price drop in some instances by over 75% following the plunge of the JSE by over 40% between April and September 1997. This situation resulted in high indebtedness among the black business class (although a few of the politically connected ones have become 'filthy rich'). Where the gullible black elite are unable to pay their debts, white financiers have taken over the ownership of such companies. The consequence, according to the South African Business Think-tank, BusinessMap, has been a drop of black equity stakes from a peak of about 9% of all JSE listed shares in 1998 to about 2.9% in March 2000.<sup>7</sup>

**M**oreover, the narrow version of BEE has ensured that blacks occupy non-executive directorships and that whites continue to occupy managerial positions in so-called BEE companies. Thus major decisions in the corporate sector continue, on the whole, to be made by white males. Even in the Small, Micro and Medium Enterprise (SMME) sector, big white business has shut the door against black SMMEs. Coupled with other factors, black and female participation is confined to the survivalist sector, according to the government agency, Ntsika.<sup>8</sup>

All these are coupled with the fact that only about 4% of land has been redistributed since the 1994 democratic elections. Over 600 000 jobs have been lost in the formal economy, while the economy has been unable to absorb an estimated 450 000 (mostly black) new entrants to the labour market annually.

What opponents of affirmative action and a genuine BEE are unwittingly doing is sowing the seeds for future political instability in South Africa. Although there is the possibility that the ANC would not behave like ZANU-PF in supporting the violent occupation and destruction of white-owned properties, it is unlikely that the black population will not protest the continued white control and domination of the economy and the rising unemployment

in the black community, as well as the increasing inequality within the black population. Opponents of genuine BEE and affirmative action programmes should also realise that there is a positive correlation between high unemployment and the high crime rate in the country. As the Malaysian and Zimbabwean cases demonstrate, it is unlikely that black South Africans will accept their continued marginalisation and peripherisation in the economy for too long. In the event of political instability, white communities (and the new black elite) are likely to be the target of attacks. Thus, if the white business community and the DP are genuinely committed to economic and political stability and a reduction in the crime rate, they should support the ANC government in vigorously pursuing policies that will enable blacks to participate actively, and on equal basis, in all facets of the social and economic life of the country.

## Conclusion

The Zimbabwean and Malaysian cases show that the struggle to redress past inequalities is a question of entitlement, and a matter of rights. Questions of rights can only be resolved through democratic rather than autocratic means; a point that both Mugabe and white Zimbabwean farmers should recognise.

In conclusion, just as the political survival of the ANC elite depends on their ability to correct past racial imbalances and transform the economy, it also behooves the white establishment to ensure genuine BEE and affirmative action programmes as the only path to political stability and sustainable democracy, which are necessary conditions for economic growth and development. This should also be a concern for the emerging black business class and bureaucratic elite.

One way to guarantee that they enjoy their newly acquired privileges, including comfortable homes in previously white suburbs, flashy cars and cellphones, is to ensure that the economic fruits of political independence are spread to as many blacks as possible. ☺

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# Road Construction and Small Enterprise Development

## THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD<sup>1</sup>

**Chris Rogerson**, of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, provides an analysis of the international experience and a review of policy issues concerning road construction and small enterprise development in the developing world.

**R**OAD CONSTRUCTION IS AN IMPORTANT SPHERE for the development of small enterprises, particularly in the context of the developing world. This article aims to review and survey experiences across the developing world of small enterprise development linked to programmes for road construction. In particular, the core focus is to identify the best policy practices in overcoming constraints to the growth of small road construction enterprises.

### From Equipment-Intensive to Labour-Based Road Construction

The first step in understanding the role of small road contractors in the developing world is to trace the shift which occurred from equipment-intensive to labour-based approaches in road construction. The equipment-intensive approach reflects a framework conventionally used in developed countries which applies heavy and capital-intensive equipment to the business of road construction and maintenance.

By contrast, the labour-based or employment-intensive approach towards road construction stresses that 'optimal use is made of labour as the predominant resource in infrastructural projects, while ensuring cost-effectiveness and safeguarding quality'.<sup>2</sup> This approach involves a judicious combination of labour and appropriate technologies or equipment (generally light equipment) to ensure that it does 'not degenerate into 'make-work' projects in which cost and quality aspects are ignored'.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it must be stressed that the term labour-based 'indicates that a flexible and optimal use is made of labour as the predominant resource, while cost effectiveness and quality aspects are ensured'.<sup>4</sup>

Historically, however, in many developing countries the institutional framework for the road construction sector was one that was designed essentially 'to meet the needs of expatriate administrators'.<sup>5</sup> This framework was inherently biased both towards the application of industrialised equipment-intensive approaches as well as for the use of foreign rather than local contractors. Across the developing world the institutional frameworks inherited from the colonial period demonstrate a 'predominant interest in the products rather than the process of construction'.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, in many developing countries (particularly in Africa) the local road contracting industry, where it existed at all, remained undeveloped with road construction activities

dominated either by inefficient governmental operations or foreign road contractors.<sup>7</sup> Governmental force account units were public agencies that carried out all aspects of construction 'in house', including direct supervision, management and control of both machinery and labour. Operations conducted under force accounts are associated with working in a well-regulated, albeit often inflexible, environment with fixed regulations.<sup>8</sup>

Since the late 1970s a widespread shift has been observed across the developing world away from force account operations towards the greater use of contracting out of work, either using equipment or labour-based approaches.<sup>9</sup> In particular, the ILO 'has been promoting a gradual shift away from the direct execution of labour-based road works by the government towards the sub-contracting of these works to small and medium-sized enterprises in the construction sector'.<sup>10</sup>

**T**he merits and problems of the different approaches towards road construction have been much debated. Edmonds estimates that if equipment-based methods are used for road construction in the developing world as much as '60 percent of the cost is in foreign exchange'.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, with the use of labour-based methods 'then as much as 70 percent of the total cost is in local currency and stays in the country and for each kilometre built 1 500 to 2 000 man-days of employment are created'. In 1995 an ILO comparative analysis of labour-based vs. equipment-based approaches used in the Lesotho road sector showed that the labour-based option in rural areas was 37% cheaper than the equipment-based construction.<sup>12</sup>

Nonetheless, the choice of labour-based techniques should not be made on grounds of employment creation per se but primarily 'because it is believed that they can achieve the same technical standards as

equipment-intensive techniques at equal or lower cost'.<sup>13</sup>

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the ILO and World Bank led a series of detailed investigations into the feasibility of labour-based technologies. This research was underpinned by the belief that work done by equipment could be as effectively done by labour, thus reducing the foreign exchange costs of road construction in the developing world. It was disclosed that the actual large-scale application of labour-based techniques in developing countries faced many challenges, not least the fact that systems and procedures in the road construction sector were often based on industrialised country models. An important landmark in the shift from equipment intensive to labour-intensive road construction was a major rural road building programme in Kenya which was launched in 1974.

The Rural Access Roads Programme (RARP) was targeted to produce all-year farm to market access throughout Kenya. Although the programme of building 14 000 km of all-weather roads was a major undertaking in itself, 'it was the manner of its execution that was to be particularly novel and significant'.<sup>14</sup> Specifically, the proposed construction methods were to be 'as labour-intensive as is commensurate with technical and economic efficiency', a commitment that was beyond simply that of employment creation. Indeed, the RARP was 'the first real attempt to implement the use of labour-based methods as an effective alternative to the use of equipment'.<sup>15</sup> Prior to RARP, the use of alternative technologies was largely ignored because of the view that labour-based technologies were 'backward and inferior in terms of quality and productivity'.<sup>16</sup> The enduring achievement in RARP of constructing good-quality roads was to prove 'that labour-intensive construction methods are economically and technically viable, provided that organisation and management techniques are adapted to their use'.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the Kenya programme demonstrated that such forms of road construction technology are suited to the socio-economic environment of the developing world.

**M**any of the key lessons from the RARP programme were confirmed by experience in other African countries. For example, in Ghana a feeder roads improvement programme was undertaken by introducing appropriate labour-based technologies in an environment which had been geared traditionally

to building and maintaining roads by equipment.<sup>18</sup> The Ghana experience further demonstrated that the success or failure of labour-based approaches 'depends largely on the introduction of efficient management techniques, effective organisational and administrative structures and procedures, the provision of good quality tools and implements and last but not least, the availability of a cadre of middle level supervisory staff well trained in the application of the chosen techniques: ... the bad reputation of labour-based civil engineering projects is mainly caused by the fact that such projects have generally been implemented without due consideration of the above factors'.<sup>19</sup> The experience of the ILO in Madagascar also demonstrates that the use of small contractors for road project implementation is economically viable, particularly if backed by suitable training and support systems. Key issues in Madagascar included simplified contract bidding systems, the award of contracts in small lots, access to credit and light equipment, faster systems of payment and the possibility of longer-term contracts. Indeed, Garnier and Majeres conclude that these interventions in Madagascar had 'the effect of strengthening the SMEs and of allowing them gradually to acquire the capability to participate successfully in medium-scale construction projects'.<sup>20</sup> Finally, in Latin America, Colombia is a good example of the use of small enterprises for road maintenance works; in 1993 some 400 small contractors maintained the greater part of the 25 000 km of Colombia's road network.<sup>21</sup>

Overall, the World Bank and the ILO's work in the road sector concentrated on demonstrating the benefits of labour-based as compared to equipment-based approaches. Initial World Bank studies in the 1970s found that substituting labour for equipment in low-wage countries was technically feasible and generally effected the same quality product. Nevertheless, later studies which observed the economic feasibility of labour-based methods in India and Indonesia concluded that traditional labour-based construction methods were not economically competitive with those using modern equipment. Further research reversed this conclusion suggesting that labour-based methods could be fully competitive with equipment-based methods 'as long as workers were provided with adequate tools, good incentives and effective management'.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, several ILO studies carried out in Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Nigeria and Senegal supported the conclu-

sion that labour-based technology options are technically and financially competitive with equipment-based approaches. It was found, for instance, that the labour-based option in providing infrastructure of comparable quality to that of equipment-intensive techniques is 10 to 40% cheaper in financial terms, reduces foreign exchange requirements by between 30 to 60% and generates 2-4 times more employment for the same amount of investment.<sup>23</sup> The ILO's core recommendation in terms of road construction was not that jobs should be created at any cost; rather, it stresses that the labour-based option should be deliberately and systematically considered and applied only when technically feasible and justified on financial and economic grounds.

The importance of the watershed shift in debates concerning appropriate technologies in road construction is that it paved the way for new institutional and policy frameworks. In turn, these frameworks would open new opportunities for assisting local entrepreneurial development in the construction sector. Overall, it is argued that well-designed labour-based construction programmes 'offer better prospects for small entrepreneurs to establish themselves in the domestic market for civil works, which has so far been dominated by large-scale and non-local firms in most developing countries'.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, ILO research stresses that a national policy that favours a labour-based approach as far as possible can be important in terms of developing an appropriate enabling environment for labour-based methods.<sup>25</sup>

In opening up new windows of opportunity for small contractors, the World Bank has been working with other donors and African governments to support the use of labour-based methods through the Rural Travel and Transport Programme, which is a component of the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Programme. The works of the ILO, however, have been major driving forces in programmes for the development of small road contraction enterprises, particularly through the Construction Management Programme.<sup>26</sup> This particular programme, which was initiated in the mid-1970s, included a series of landmark ILO studies examining the constraints and policy options for small road contractor development across the developing

world.<sup>27</sup> During 1998-1999 the ILO produced two major volumes of research which provide guidelines respectively on labour policies and practices in relation to labour-based construction<sup>28</sup> and capacity building for small-scale contractors.<sup>29</sup>

### Constraints on Emerging Road Construction Enterprises

Although a number of studies touch upon the constraints on emerging road contractors, there is little detailed research. Indeed, Miles draws attention to the 'relative neglect of research on contractor development'.<sup>30</sup> The most important

**Labour-based methods can be fully as competitive as equipment-based methods as long as workers are provided with adequate tools, good incentives and effective management**

research into the problems of small-scale contractors comes out of the ILO Construction Management Programme, which has produced four important studies.<sup>31</sup> In addition, there are several other useful studies which stress the importance of appreciating the wider institutional environment as a core constraint

impacting upon emerging road contracting enterprise.<sup>32</sup>

### Structural Conditions

At the outset, it is important to acknowledge that in most developing world countries, as a result of the weakness of local contractors, the road contracting market has traditionally been dominated by large companies of expatriate origin or which rely heavily on foreign expertise and backing.<sup>33</sup> For example, Miles notes that in Lesotho 'the shortage of local engineering, technical and managerial staff during a period of rapid expansion, led to heavy dependence on continuing expatriate assistance in road construction'.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, in many other African countries, such as Rwanda, 'besides the work carried out by force account, the road sector business is largely dominated by international contractors'.<sup>35</sup> Overall, Rausch observes that 'few truly African contractors have developed over the past decades in such a way that they could handle major road construction contracts'.<sup>36</sup>

Small contractors function in a business environment typically characterised by uncertainty, particularly concerning fluctuations of work (demand) as well as the obvious uncertainties of winning a tender competition for work.<sup>37</sup> In Cameroon, for example, one of the core constraints affecting the emergence of local road contractors

is that 'frequent budget cuts caused by economic crises do not allow for a steady workload'.<sup>38</sup> Operating within such an uncertain structural environment means that the contractor cannot plan investments efficiently if adequate utilisation rates for equipment cannot be guaranteed. Road equipment is generally written off within a 4-10 year period and no contractors are willing to invest in an environment of considerable uncertainty with 'no guarantee that even workloads will enable him correctly to depreciate his plant'.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, with an unstable workload, small contractors cannot assemble and retain an experienced and productive work force.

The net effect is that the key strategic response of small contractors to such an uncertain pattern of demand is the minimisation of overheads, through hire rather than purchase of equipment, reliance on casual labour as and when necessary, and subcontracting.<sup>40</sup> Further adding to the difficulties of small contractors during downturns in demand is the tendency for large enterprises to move downmarket in terms of contract value, primarily to maintain a minimum aggregate cash flow to cover their overheads. In such circumstances of 'downward plundering', large enterprises can potentially threaten to drive small contractors out of business.<sup>41</sup>

It must be acknowledged, however, that road contractors in the developing world 'by no means represent a homogeneous group'.<sup>42</sup> International experience suggests that such road contractors emerge from a variety of backgrounds.<sup>43</sup> One set of origins relates to the trade or industry itself as former employees or supervisors set up their own businesses. A typical trajectory is represented by a contractor who begins as a labour recruitment agent on behalf of a large firm, then becomes a labour-only contractor, then after purchasing some equipment becomes a sub-contractor before finally becoming a general contractor. Another less common route to becoming a contractor would be called the 'management route' where enterprises are established by former supervisors or site managers. Finally, a small number of contractors have their origins outside of the road construction business, such as entrepreneurs in industry or commerce who seek to enter construction because it is seen as offering opportunities for further profit.<sup>44</sup> The most common situation is, however, that of small building contractors who shift into road construction to diversify and enter new markets.<sup>45</sup>

In terms of enterprise growth there are generally two avenues open to the small

contractor, viz., lateral expansion and upward movement. Whereas the former path involves taking on a greater number of small contracts simultaneously, the latter involves successively larger contracts. Such options are not necessarily mutually exclusive, although it is unlikely that enterprises would follow both paths simultaneously. It is important to appreciate that both lateral expansion and upward movement can induce financial problems for an emerging small enterprise.

As contractors minimise their overheads or fixed costs of production to combat uncertainty, they have few capital assets in the form of premises or equipment. Accordingly, the financial gearing of construction work is high, especially in respect of the amount of work done relative to capital assets or net worth. In addition, as turnover expands this financial gearing becomes ever higher creating severe problems in terms of sourcing working capital from the formal finance sector.<sup>46</sup>

#### **Difficulties and Constraints**

The ILO has found three sets of difficulties or constraints which can seriously hamper the development of small-scale road contractors in the developing world. These constraints relate to problems deriving from the business environment, clients, and contractors themselves. The first two would be termed external constraints whereas the last category relates to internal constraints.

In terms of the business environment, major difficulties relate to uncertainties about future workloads or prospects and to the predatory practice of larger enterprises for downward plundering of contracts. Indeed, small-scale contractors in the developing world are often resentful that past performance often does not improve a road contractor's chances of securing future contracts. In Ghana, small road contractors are classified and registered in the lowest civil engineering category which limits the types of work that they may tender for.<sup>47</sup> Accordingly, because the key issues in awarding contracts are those of tender price and basic pre-qualification for size of contract, at least one study concludes that the difficulties of small enterprises in procuring work relate 'mainly to the

absence of a national policy on allocation of work for small firms'.<sup>48</sup>

A second problem related to the business environment is access to investment and working capital. In a case study of the underdevelopment of small road contractors in Ghana the main problem was identified as 'lack of finance'.<sup>49</sup> Equally, in Cameroon, despite the wishes of government to promote small road contractors, SMEs 'encounter great difficulties in obtaining bank credits'.<sup>50</sup> Problems of access to capital relate to the generally weak nature of the institutional structure that supports the construction industry in developing countries and to the collateral requirements of the formal finance sector.<sup>51</sup> The stringent regimes applied by the finance system compel many road contractors to seek out credit from private or informal moneylenders, a situation which further compounds their difficulties as they take on very high interest rates. Third, in addition to access to finance, another core problem is that of securing equipment. The situation in most developing countries is that such necessary equipment as well as spare parts is often unavailable or only at very expensive charges.<sup>52</sup>

The core issue relating to client constraints is the timing of payments for completed work.<sup>53</sup> Regular payments to contractors are crucial for the success of labour-based programmes of road construction because of the often large numbers of temporary workers on the pay rolls of small enterprises.<sup>54</sup> In the Ghana feeder roads programme significant problems

related to 'cumbersome payment procedures and delays in payment of processed certificates'.<sup>55</sup> Yet, often contractors are compelled to make an initial outlay to cover for example bid bonds or insurance on a contract.

**As a result of weak local contractors, the road contracting market has traditionally been dominated by large companies of expatriate origin or which rely heavily on foreign expertise and backing.**

**O**nce again, the costs of securing such performance bonds are beyond the means of small contrac-

tors, which makes the business of contract financing for emerging contractors an extremely onerous affair. With often complex bureaucratic regimes to be dealt with before payment is released, small contractors are at the mercy of their clients in terms of their financial cash flows. Indeed, in the African experience, Rausch points out that 'it is already common practice in case of local funding that contractors are

not paid in time within the contractual periods'.<sup>56</sup>

Miles contends that in many developing world countries, complaints concerning delayed payments are strongly justified.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, he notes that requests for payment for contract work sometimes 'had to go through no less than 30 separate stages before the cheque eventually reached the contractor and the whole process never took less than 14 weeks (and often a great deal more)'. Moreover, despite limited access to bank credit, emerging contractors in the developing world 'are afraid to demand interest on late government payments for fear of being blacklisted'.<sup>58</sup> In Ghana, however, small contractors with limited access to working capital can delay payments to material and equipment suppliers but cannot delay payments to their labourers without risking a work stoppage.

Finally, one set of serious constraints is internal rather than external to the operations of small-scale road contractors. Such constraints are typical of emerging small enterprises as a whole. Major issues relate to the capacity of road contractors to tender (particularly due to the complexity of tender procedures), their ability to manage the enterprise administratively, and issues of general book-keeping.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, Rausch stresses that in African small road contracting enterprises accounting procedures 'are generally very poor'.<sup>60</sup> Miles adds that such internal issues underscore the weakness of training in terms of the inadequate management skills of road contractor entrepreneurs.<sup>61</sup>

Overall, the record of the developing world underscores the critical importance of access to finance for the development of small road contracting enterprises. Nevertheless, as Larcher argues, a listing of the main problems experienced by road contractors in developing countries 'shows that while financial problems make up a sizeable part there are other factors inhibiting the development of road construction businesses'.<sup>62</sup> In an analysis of the constraints on labour-based road contractors an ILO study pointed to the following list of problems: access to work and irregular planning; lack of advice and access to local equipment; difficulty in obtaining credit; troubles with an adequate cash flow; not being paid on time; operating within very demanding contractual obligations; ease of entry into contracting in circumstances when anyone can declare him or herself to be a contractor; lack of professionalism; and deficiencies in training.<sup>63</sup>

Based on a scan of experiences across a range of developing world countries,



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Larcher identifies eight major sets of problems that commonly confront road contractors:

- bank finance is difficult to obtain for working capital or loans;
- contractors experience long delays in receiving payment;
- lack of equipment to hire or buy;
- standard contract documents and tender procedures are over-complex;
- lack of work continuity;
- contractors lack financial or business management skills;
- contractors consider that the cost of learning a new technology or skill is too high; and
- contractors find difficulty in managing large workforces.<sup>64</sup>

### Overcoming Constraints: The Record of Small Contractor Development Programmes

What is being done to address such constraints that confront individual emerging road contractors? In most industrialised countries, contractors are 'developed' as a result of market demands 'usually with little capital or training, but with access to equipment hire systems, experienced technical staff and well established contracting industry associations'.<sup>65</sup> By contrast, in most of the developing world, such conditions do not exist thus negating the applicability of models of assistance drawn from conditions in developed countries.

**Despite limited access to bank credit, emerging contractors in the developing world are afraid to demand interest on late government payments for fear of being blacklisted**

This section examines the record of small contractor development programmes in the developing world. The ILO has once again been at the forefront of evolving programmes for local contractor development.<sup>66</sup> A number of best practices have emerged from this experience in terms of overcoming the constraints that confront emerging road contractors.

### Small Road Contractor Development Programmes

The activities, performance and key features of road contractor development programmes in a range of developing world countries are highlighted. At the outset, however, it should be noted that the objectives in these programmes can vary between the promotion of labour-based construction per se with contractor development a subsidiary goal to programmes in which contractor development is the core objective.<sup>67</sup>

#### \* Ghana

Ghana is one of the few African countries that in the post-independence period has actively begun to promote the develop-

ment of a local road contracting industry.<sup>68</sup> An ILO small contractor development project began in 1986 and has provided comprehensive business and management training to the staff of 93 enterprises working on labour-based road construction or rehabilitation projects.<sup>69</sup> Since 1993 Ghana has been committed to programmes of contracting for labour-based works for road construction.<sup>70</sup> At the beginning of 1997, there were 54 fully trained and equipped labour-based contractors registered with the appropriate Ministry.<sup>71</sup>

The training programme is promoted by a newspaper advertisement campaign and selection is based on the criteria of education, previous experience and location of business. The training programme has three major stages which are linked both to the needs of contractors and of the Ghana Department of Feeder Roads (DFR) Staff: first, contractors undergo 20 weeks of classroom and fieldwork training, followed by a four-month trial contract of 5 km carried out under supervision, after which they undertake a 4 year development programme with on-site training.<sup>72</sup>

Following initial training, contractors are provided with a set of equipment financed through a bank loan to be repaid over the following four-year period. As this loan repayment represents a significant element of overheads, the DFR guarantees contractors that contracts will be awarded for the first four years after training. According to Larcher, although the project attempted to operate these contracts under a competitive tender system, 'the formation of cartels forced the DFR to adopt a schedule of rates for the initial four-year period'.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, following the repayment of the equipment loan, contractors compete for work through competitive tendering in an open market. Significantly, the basic tender documents were modified and simplified to make them more appropriate to new techniques of road construction.<sup>74</sup>

Moreover, whereas equipment-based contractors have to bid for projects on a competitive basis, there is no bidding for labour-based contractors. Rather, 'projects are prepared and awarded to labour-based contractors on the basis of rates negotiated with the Labour-Based Contractors Association'.<sup>75</sup>

#### \* Philippines

Unlike Ghana, the Philippines represents a situation in which the promotion of labour-based techniques was the primary objective and that of contractor development a secondary goal. The background to

the Philippines programme was a recognition that many labour-based construction techniques were more profitable than equipment-based approaches and offered major potential for employment creation.

The emphasis in the Philippines was on the contracting of work to labour-only sub-contractors. Other activities continued to be undertaken by force account operations. This meant that the 'contractors were limited to certain tasks and had no opportunity to build integrated commercial contracting skills'.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, the projects allocated to labour-based contractors did not provide any training input to contractors. Although potentially complementary business opportunities for local contractors were identified, the over-riding priority was to promote short-term employment opportunities rather than long-term contractor development. Accordingly, few activities were directed towards strengthening the emergent contractors, 'with the result that they were effectively confined to a casual labour only role and dependency on a single client'.<sup>77</sup>

Overall, the advantage of the Philippines project was its demonstration effects of labour-based approaches; the major disadvantage was its lack of attention to contractor development and thus of long-term sustainability.

#### \* Lesotho

In Lesotho a Labour Construction Unit (LCU) was established within the Ministry of Works as far back as 1977.<sup>78</sup> In 1992 the LCU began a three-month programme to train local contractors to maintain road networks. The World Bank sponsored the Enterprise Development for Labour-based Road Maintenance Contractors Project which was managed by the LCU with technical input from the ILO.<sup>79</sup> Small local firms and individuals were invited to apply for the training programme.<sup>80</sup>

The Lesotho programme centred heavily on training issues both in terms of upgrading the technical and managerial skills of the contractor and the retraining of the LCU staff for contract supervision.<sup>81</sup> The training programme was a mixture of on-the-job training and classroom work designed to meet the needs of contractors. To address the technical training needs the programme used the highly regarded Road Maintenance and Regravelling (ROMAR) package which was linked to handbooks on 'Improve Your Own Construction Business'.<sup>82</sup> The training was designed 'to enable participant contractors to climb a ladder leading to full accreditation as ROMAR contractors'.<sup>83</sup>

Throughout the training period, all costs were met by the project. At the beginning of their trial contracts contractors were given a basic set of hand tools which were paid for during the trial period; in addition they were offered the opportunity of hire purchase agreements to obtain vibrating pedestrian rollers.<sup>84</sup> Any further equipment they were expected either to hire or purchase through a financial arrangement set up with a local bank. The six-month trial contract period consisted of a routine maintenance contract awarded at price, followed by a regravelling contract. Miles argues that the Lesotho project 'was successful in delivering trained contractors'.<sup>85</sup> This positive assessment is confirmed in recent ILO work.<sup>86</sup>

#### \* Indonesia

The Indonesian example primarily involved contractor development and training focused on developing course curricula and training materials. In particular, it sought to deliver 'one shot' two-week training courses to small contractors and labour-only contractors throughout Indonesia. The large numbers of trainees provided over the duration of the project suggests that it was successful.

Nevertheless, Miles qualifies claims of success, arguing that there are major dangers in adopting the Indonesian model of a 'one shot' two-week course as a training model.<sup>87</sup> Of critical importance to such initiatives is that materials and methodology are well-prepared, technical and business training are integrated, and training intervention is followed up and sustained over a longer period. These comments place serious question marks on the wider applicability of the Indonesian approach towards small road contractor upgrading.

#### \* Tanzania

In Tanzania the Labour Based Road Contractor Development Project began in 1992 with the goal of establishing a labour-based contracting capacity in the country. The project has to date trained 24 contractors in two regions; on average each contractor enjoys an annual turnover of \$60 000 and employs 70 labourers. An important element of the programme is training in labour-based technologies. After training, contractors undertake six-month trial contracts to maintain a 5 km stretch of road. All the contract work is undertaken with hired equipment which is secured on the open market. However, to ensure that contractors are able to obtain the necessary equipment to carry out the road construction work, they receive a

mobilisation payment which is equal to 30% of the contract. The payment is structured so that 15% goes directly into the contractor's bank account while the other 15% is paid directly to a plant hire company as an advance for plant hire costs.<sup>88</sup>

### **Overcoming Constraints: International Best Practice**

The core factor underpinning any successful intervention for small road contractor development is 'the commitment of the government' at all levels.<sup>89</sup> In most developing countries, government is the largest single customer for road construction works and thus exerts a strong influence on patterns of demand as well as impacting on the structure and workings of the sector.<sup>90</sup>

Although there is 'no definitive answer to the design of a contractor development programme',<sup>91</sup> currently the best practice for small-scale enterprise in road construction derives from the lessons of road contractor development programmes in the developing world.

Over a number of years, the ILO has been developing a comprehensive programme in which 'local contracting development is at the forefront'.<sup>92</sup> The ILO's strategy seeks to involve the business community and government in the joint application of labour-based road works, whilst developing a supportive environment and introducing simple and effective administrative systems.<sup>93</sup> At the heart of this strategy are issues of institution development, business management and technical training, and transparent and streamlined procedures for payment. Overall, the ILO strategy seeks to address the constraints that affect emerging road contractors through three sets of initiatives: policies to improve contractors' access to work and to forge a more favourable business environment, and programmes for training and technical advice.<sup>94</sup>

In terms of the first initiative, several measures are noteworthy. To address work uncertainties, the ILO recommends that the planning of demand be based on a rolling programme over a time-span of 2-3 years. Another important issue is the appropriate packaging or sizing of road contracts. The need for projects to be suitably packaged for small-scale contractor participation is self-evident as regards both contract size and duration.<sup>95</sup>

A second means of increasing access to work is through price preferences or tender biases to favour small contractors. Linked to this issue is the use of pre-qualification procedures to address the problem of



**In an environment which allows timely payment and applies simple and transparent contract systems, labour-based methods offer a good launching pad for small contractors.**

downward plundering by large contractors. Such practices can be curbed and the access of small contractors to work be improved 'by specifying lower value limits of contractor eligibility as well as upper limits'.<sup>96</sup> The promotion of the subcontracting of work from larger contractors is another avenue to enhance access to work by small contractors.<sup>97</sup> However, because of the existing limitations in many developing countries of reliable subcontractors, the ILO is cautious in recommending subcontracting networks. Instead, it recommends an initial audit of the numbers, specialities and competences of emerging

contractors followed by the gradual introduction of inducements to encourage subcontracting.

**F**inally, improvements in tender procedures and policies that restrict the scope of tendering to particular target groups of contractors are further measures to enhance the work opportunities of small road contractors.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, adoption of targeted procurement programmes can be critical for supporting networks of emerging small contractors. Targeted procurement encourages the contractor to actively search for ways to meet the socio-economic targets set out in the contract. Although the issue of targeted procurements is raised in ILO research, one missing element is any discussion of gender-related issues such as the development of women-run road contracting enterprises. South Africa

Photo: Paul Grendon

is one of the first countries to apply targeted procurement methods in which 'resource specifications are used in a competitive bidding environment to secure the participation of targeted groups'.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the ILO identifies South Africa as currently one of the most innovative examples of stimulation of the small enterprise economy in the road construction sector.

The ILO also promotes several policies and programmes designed to improve the business environment. The ILO recommends as a starting point a relaxation or abandonment of the use of performance bonds for small contractors. It argues that 'through the operation of pre-qualification lists or selective tendering the public sector has alternative ways of protecting itself against incompetent or unscrupulous contractors'.<sup>100</sup> To address the imperatives for improving access to working capital for small-scale contractors, the ILO suggests government intervention to offer guarantees on working capital loans to small contractors. Although there are difficulties in running such a scheme, the ILO favours a decentralised loan guarantee to respond quickly to the working capital needs of contractors. Another avenue for enhancing access to working capital is through the payment of advances or mobilisation allowances, which can range from 5 to 20% of contract value. Given the negative experiences of such mobilisation allowances in Sri Lanka, the ILO recommends the targeting of allowances to particular groups of contractors, and that such allowances be made payable only to a commercial bank nominated by the contractor or 'offered as matching contributions to working capital only to those contractors who could show that they had successfully negotiated credit facilities in fact or in principle from a commercial bank'.<sup>101</sup>

Another key area for policy intervention relates to improving the access of small contractors to tools and equipment. The key issue is that most contractors prefer to have their own equipment rather than rely on the uncertainties of hiring.<sup>102</sup> At a macro-level government can seek to catalyse local small-scale industry programmes to improve the availability of tools and necessary equipment as a whole. In terms of equipping individual contractors, the major factors relate to their existing level of equipment and the availability on the open market of road construction equipment.<sup>103</sup> If the

emphasis is on labour-based approaches, then within existing training programmes, small contractors can either be given a small amount of tools and equipment or required to hire such equipment from independent suppliers. The approach chosen is ultimately dependent on the existence of plant hire companies in the country.

It is recommended when contractors are given equipment that such equipment be paid for through work undertaken during training. Ownership of tools and equipment results in higher productivity as well as contractors taking care of their assets. If

the contractor is to be provided with equipment, Larcher argues that 'it is essential that it is carefully chosen to ensure reliability and that it is suitable for the work and working procedures that the contractor intends to execute'.<sup>104</sup>

Another crucial area where government could improve the business environment is to speed up and simplify the procedures for making payments to road contractors.<sup>105</sup> In turn, this demands the introduction of an appropriate control and monitoring system and an efficient payment system to authorise payments at regular intervals.

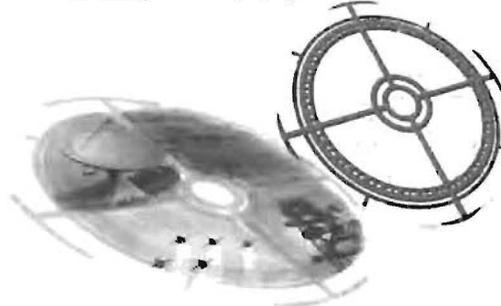
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The final area for developing a package of policy interventions relates to issues of training and advisory services. The internal constraints on individual small contractors provide an important area for the development of appropriate training programmes. The international experience has created certain standardised training packages, such as IYCB and ROMAR.<sup>106</sup> A critical element is the use of mentorship phases in road contractor development programmes.<sup>107</sup> The ILO-ASIST view is that such an initiative represents the last phase of a contractor development programme and should be based on the principle of problem-solving rather than teaching.<sup>108</sup> Its activities would normally include assistance to individual contractors to solve problems, special learning sessions for commonly identified problem areas and solving of conflicts that may arise in a contract procedure.

The ILO's comprehensive approach points to the support of contractor associations or a contractor development agency as 'the most direct, comprehensive and practical method of providing assistance to small-scale national contractors'. A contractor association is seen both as a support

structure for emerging road contractors and a vehicle to 'represent the interests of small-scale contractors as a group'.<sup>109</sup> The notion of supporting such organisations was initially put forward in a study by Edmonds and Miles<sup>110</sup> and has been further emphasised in more recent research.<sup>111</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, it is necessary to caution that experiences across the developing world reveal certain limitations imposed on small contractor development by the wider structural environment of economic domination by large construction enterprise. This structural context points to the importance of creating an enabling environment that favours the implementation of labour-based as opposed to equipment-based approaches for road construction. The international record suggests that 'in an enabling environment which allows regular and timely payment and applies simple and transparent contract systems, labour-based methods offer a good launch-pad for small contractors'.<sup>112</sup>

Another key element in the environment, which is stressed by ILO research, is the need to establish clear national guide-

lines which facilitate the activities of small-scale road contractors.<sup>113</sup>

ILO-ASIST research provides a useful summary checklist of the 'major elements of a strategy' to support local road contractors in the developing world:

- training of contractors in the basics of labour-based technologies;
- training of contractors in contract procedures (tendering) and management aspects;
- splitting up contracts into sizes which fall within the technical and financial capacity of available contractors;
- simplification of contract procedures and tender documents;
- provision of working capital;
- improvement in access to credit through guarantee systems that facilitate access to equipment;
- introduction of a classification system for small contractors with incentives for contractors performing well;
- introduction of improved payment systems;
- operation of mentorship programmes; and
- establishment and encouragement of contractor associations.<sup>114</sup>

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URBAN RESTRUCTURING DURING TRANSITION:

# A Model for South African Urban Development in the 21st Century

Photo © Guy Stubbs

**Dr SE Donaldson** of the Department of Geographical Sciences (Vista University, Mamelodi Campus) and **Prof IJ van der Merwe**, Dean of Arts at the University of Stellenbosch, examine the urban outcomes experienced in South African cities during transition and propose a model for urban development in the 21st century.<sup>1</sup>

**T**HE FATE AND SHAPE OF THE SOUTH African city and its transition in the post-apartheid period has attracted considerable debate. South African cities and towns entered the 1990s with a legacy of segregationist planning. Three characteristic urban spatial patterns are low density sprawl, fragmentation and separation,<sup>2</sup> all of which contribute to the dysfunctional structure of the South African city. The urbanisation rate (55% in 1997) and the persistence of inequality and poverty

that financial pressures exaggerate in most municipalities are also cause for concern. Urban planners, policy makers and managers are thus faced with the task of reconstructing a spatially segregated, highly fragmented and dispersed urban society.

Restructuring, transforming, reconstructing and integrating separate and divided cities pose pertinent spatial planning challenges, as acknowledged by numerous authors.<sup>3</sup> The post-apartheid policy formulation responsible for aspects of the restructuring of social, economic, spatial and local governance administration had one major responsibility: to redress the historic legacy of apartheid in urban spaces. An explicit move away from general urban planning to development planning principles was seen as an alternative strategy for providing the correct approach to urban developmental challenges in South African cities.<sup>4</sup> The main challenge is the development of urban areas 'away from dispersed and racially divided urban growth patterns, towards more compact, integrated, accessible and productive urban systems'.<sup>5</sup> This paper investigates the most important policies formulated during transition, as well as the urban outcomes resulting from such policies, and postulates what the 21st century South African city may look like as a consequence of actual and expected urban outcomes during and after transition.

### Urban-related policies

The transitional phase of emancipation, policy formulation, reconciliation and reconstruction extended over a ten-year period that included dramatic changes in politics. Three distinct processes of change have taken place in South Africa since the 1990s: transition, transformation, and reconstruction. Political change in South Africa directly manifested itself in urban change. According to Saff, when distinguishing between transition and transformation,

*The foundation upon which the formal political order rests can be thought of as a substructure of domination - social interactions, cultural norms, economic activities, and informal power relationships that create the basis for compliance with the prescription of the ruling groups. Changes in this underlying*



*structure are often the precursor of and condition for alteration in the political systems superstructure, the formal system of power. Basic alterations in the former substructure of power, can be thought of as involving political transformation, and can be distinguished from political transition, the movement from one formal arrangement of power to another. Transformation prepares the way for transition.*<sup>6</sup>

This phase was characterised by multi-party negotiations, policy formulation, reconciliation and reconstruction (development and upliftment of underdeveloped and disadvantaged areas). Local government restructuring through the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) provided the impetus for all other restructurings that followed, since it was the restructuring of local governance that hampered logical integrated spatial development planning in the first place. Policymakers thus produced many related policy documents during the transition period aimed at the spatial integration of urban areas. The five most important are the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the LGTA, Development Facilitation Act (DFA), Urban Development Strategy/Urban Development Framework, and the Business Act.

Although such policies changed South Africa's outlook dramatically, this period of policy formulation was done 'within discrete national line-function departments, with little reference to the activities in other departments',<sup>7</sup> which contributes to a fragmented and distorted urban planning

In certain gentrified areas the residential character has changed, with decentralised nodes that have developed since the 1970s as suburban shopping centres becoming a characteristic feature.

and development period. The outcome was the conflicting policies of certain departments, resulting in a confused, cumbersome planning system.

### Reconstruction and Development Programme

The ANC-led government's philosophical vehicle to rid the country of its apartheid past was based on their policy document of 1994, the RDP. Focusing on all facets of transformation, the RDP is based on six fundamental principles:

- 1 an integrated and sustainable programme
- 2 a people-driven process
- 3 peace and security for all
- 4 the eradication of a separated society
- 5 the linkage of reconstruction, development, growth and redistribution so that processes will not contradict each other
- 6 a democratisation process in which society, especially those affected by past injustices, will contribute to change.

In summary, the RDP is an 'integrated programme, based on the people, that provides peace and security for all and builds the nation, links reconstruction and development and deepens democracy.'<sup>8</sup>

Perceived as an idealistic document, the RDP created expectations among millions of people that the government would fulfil its promises within the anticipated five-year period. Nel warned that the 'existing challenges and cost implications would, however, appear to present potentially serious ramifications for the overall success and viability' of the strategy.<sup>9</sup> A first sign of this was the closure of the RDP offices at national and provincial levels. This did not mean the demise of the strategy, but simply that the policy was to be integrated into various other departments such as Housing and Constitutional Affairs which would incorporate and enforce its ideals. The success thereof is clear in the RDP policy audit recently done by Bond and Khosa (1999). Three policies emanating from the RDP that still have an impact on urban development were the DFA,<sup>10</sup> the Urban Development Strategy,<sup>11</sup> and its subsequent follow-up, the refined Urban Development Framework released by the Department of Housing in 1997.

### **Local Government Transition Act (LGTA)**

Local government transformation began with interim legislation passed by the former government. The Interim Measures for Local Government Act (1991) was rejected by the democratic movement because 'it failed to establish a nationally agreed set of guiding principles and often entrenched apartheid structures'.<sup>12</sup> Negotiations under this legislation were voluntary and conservative councils ignored it. According to Turok<sup>13</sup> only one in five towns came to any kind of agreement. Subsequent negotiations at national level led to the LGTA.<sup>14</sup> It is important to note that this negotiation process was taking place concurrently with the multi-party Negotiating Council (CODESA). It was agreed that structures seeking membership of this Local Government Negotiation Forum (LGNF) had to be 'nationally constituted, a stakeholder in local government... and be part of either the statutory or non-statutory delegations... Political parties, women's organisations, business groups and regionally based organisations were therefore excluded from the negotiations'.<sup>15</sup> Two broad groupings were present: governmental and non-governmental organisations under the banner of the South African National Civic Organisations (SANCO). The LGTA was thoroughly negotiated at this level by way of debates in the press, at various forums and at public meetings.

Administration and governance at local government level had to be restructured

according to the LGTA of 1993.<sup>16</sup> The Act provided for three phases during transition to a non-racial local government: a pre-interim phase of local negotiating forums that included negotiating and demarcating local government boundaries; an interim phase of a three-to-five year period after the election under which transitional councils would be elected; and endorsement of the country's constitution. The failure of apartheid is most evident at this level of governance where most urban areas had been separated into different sub-systems. The interim arrangement divided local government models into two categories: non-metropolitan and metropolitan areas. Non-metropolitan areas included Urban Transitional Councils (TLCs), also known as 'stand alone' towns; Urban Local Government Co-ordinating Committees (LGCCs); and Rural Service Councils, Subregional or District Councils. Metropolitan areas comprised Transitional Metropolitan Councils (TMCs) and Transitional Metropolitan Substructures (TMSs).<sup>17</sup> Legislation emanating from the White Paper on Local Government in 1998 may yet change the boundaries and structures of the LGTA.

Local government restructuring was functionally realised through the establishment of forums for negotiating new boundaries. The Negotiation Forum was able to make recommendations to the Administrator on forum boundaries and the demarcation of wards for the election in 1995, as well as the name of the transitional local council, while other negotiated duties included the delimitation of the area of jurisdiction. Five external factors had to be taken into consideration with the demarcation of boundaries. To reduce and/or eliminate resistance, the amalgamation of two or more local governments in a new transitional structure had to take economic linkages and politically sensitive situations into account. All discriminatory legislation and institutions had to be abandoned. People's fears - such as being dominated by a majority and the effect on their property valuations - had to be accommodated. The aim was thus to create financially viable, larger non-racial local government areas, to guide the integration of functional areas. This, according

to Robinson, resulted in a few surprising delimitations.<sup>18</sup>

Howick's refusal to be incorporated in the proposed Pietermaritzburg metropolitan area ultimately led to it being established as a TLC. Port Elizabeth, the fourth largest urban area in South Africa, also received TLC status. A very similar situation to the Northern Province and the surrounding areas of Pietersburg is that of Kwazulu/Natal, where the 'fragmenting spaces of apartheid themselves make for great difficulty of reintegration, and the legislation does not offer significant redress here, except through disbursements from the regional level of government'.<sup>19</sup> The most prominent example of controversy that eventually resulted in a constitutional case is that of the Western Cape Metropolitan Area.<sup>20</sup> In another example, the Boundary Commission did not base the demarcation of Pietersburg/Polokwane TLC on much of the agreed-upon criteria. The primary matter was to ensure that no Traditional Area under a Tribal Chief should be separated into different TLCs. Instead, boundaries were decided according to a representative from the Provincial or Local Government. The pre-interim phase showed similarities among small town case studies in that the process was 'enthusiastic, reasonably representative, and often contested' but also showed 'extraordinary tolerance, compliance and co-operation'.<sup>21</sup>

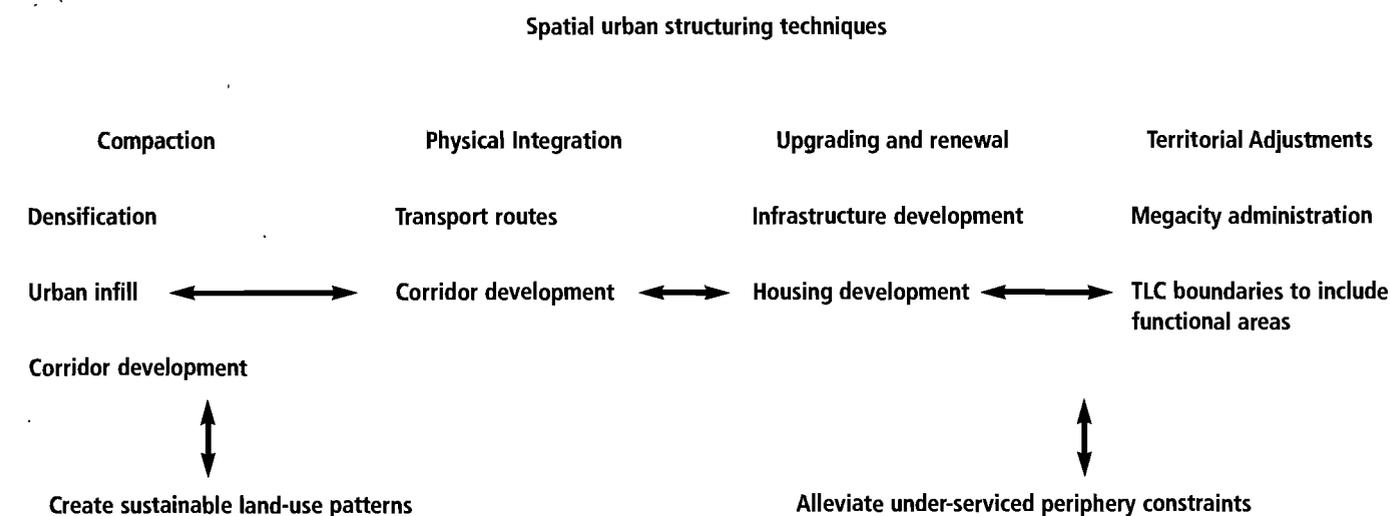
### **Development Facilitation Act (DFA)**

Apart from the policy documents formulated as White Papers, the most important piece of legislation to guide planning to reconstruct the legacy of apartheid cities is the DFA, formulated by the Department of Land Affairs. One of its aims is to override existing apartheid and related planning legislation. The DFA thus links its aims to the RDP to formulate and guide planning legislation that would subordinate 'local planning to metropolitan/district, provincial and national development planning'.<sup>22</sup> The principles of the DFA fall, according to Emdon,<sup>23</sup> into five categories:

- 1 restructuring of the spatial environment aimed at correcting the racial settlement pattern
- 2 general city-building principles that encourage the emergence of compact

**The local government restructuring process was 'enthusiastic, reasonably representative, and often contested' but also showed 'extraordinary tolerance, compliance and co-operation'**

FIGURE 1: SPATIAL URBAN RESTRUCTURING TECHNIQUES



• Local Authorities' choices will determine the success of integration or segregation of geographical areas

Source: SA Bollens, 'Urban Planning amidst ethnic conflict: Jerusalem and Johannesburg', *Urban Studies*, vol 35, no 4, 1998

- cities to prevent further urban sprawl and encourage mixed land-use and integrated land development
- 3 promoting the creation of sustainable cities
- 4 promoting transparent stakeholder involvement
- 5 capacity building which would involve active public participation.

The Act requires all local authorities in South Africa (except the Western Cape and Kwazulu/Natal) to formulate Land Development Objectives (LDOs) for a five-year development programme. Despite the noble aims of the DFA it has evoked some criticism.

Pycroft identifies four criticisms.<sup>24</sup> Firstly, the fluidity of the municipal environment may create a gap between identified needs in the LDOs and the changing needs of the community. Secondly, the timing of the LDO process is wrong because it is done simultaneously with the reorganisation and restructuring of municipalities, in terms of the new Demarcation Act. Thirdly, the flexibility of implementation of the LDOs is questioned. Fourthly, limitations of the DFA to provide a planning framework are acknowledged by the fact that the Integrated Development Plans for municipalities have to be created in an Integrated Planning Framework. Bernstein notes that integrated development planning 'remains very little more than needs-driven strategies'.<sup>25</sup> This is supported by van Rensburg, Cattanaach and Wall, who argue that it is still too early to test the outcomes of LDOs.<sup>26</sup> In their analysis of the LDO

process in Gauteng Province they found certain weaknesses in the process, including a lack of clarity in the relationship between LDOs and Integrated Development Plans, a need for time frames to be extended and the possibility that expectations have been unduly raised by the extensive consultation process. However, they praise the LDO process, because it laid the groundwork for a new planning paradigm. Donaldson, too, identified similar weaknesses in the Pietersburg LDO process.<sup>27</sup>

#### **Urban Development Strategy and Urban Development Framework (UDF)**

In 1995 the Office of the President released an Urban and Rural Development Strategy for comment. This was a first in the history of SA, and perhaps what makes it more extraordinary is that the arguments put forward were based on a non-ideological approach,<sup>28</sup> i.e. there was no political bias. Two years on, the Department of Housing formalised this strategy into an Urban Development Framework. The aims of this Framework were presented to the global community at the Habitat II conference in Istanbul, Turkey on 12 June 1996. The department anticipates that the aims of the UDF will be achieved by 2020 through four key programmes: integrating the city; improving housing and infrastructure; promoting urban economic development; and creating institutions for delivery.

Physical developmental plans designed to achieve this include the following: linking the component parts of the city through high-density activity corridors,

township upgrading, urban infill, development and integration of apartheid-developed buffer zones, inner city development, and land reform programmes (restitution, redistribution and tenure reform). Socio-economic, spatial and environmental planning will be integrated into a Development Framework, with standards, strategies, programmes and budgets covering all the different components of a LDO such as land-use, environment, education, safety, etc.

Improving housing and infrastructure to create habitable and safe communities is the second programme aimed at restructuring the past. The Housing Act of 1997 provides the basis for this key programme.<sup>29</sup> According to the UDF the aim of a development framework is 'to promote a consistent urban development policy approach for effective urban reconstruction and development, to guide development policies, strategies and actions of all stakeholders in the urban development process and to steer them towards the achievements of a collective vision'.<sup>30</sup> Spatial guidelines focus on the redistribution of services and funding for upgrading and RDP projects, and creating quality urban environments. The UDF's principles are solely based on the land development principles stipulated in the DFA.

The third programme promotes urban economic development initiatives to build on local strength and enhance capacity.<sup>31</sup> This is most needed in non-metropolitan areas and should be viewed within a national urbanisation strategy.<sup>32</sup> Access to informal economic opportunities is especially mentioned to reduce poverty among

the urban poor. Lastly the strategy calls for a programme focusing on creating institutions for delivery. In particular it calls for public-private partnerships that would involve civil society participation within a co-ordinated and co-operative set-up.

In summary then, national policy on urban development formulated during transition stipulates the following: integrated planning, rebuilding and upgrading the townships and informal settlements, planning for higher density land-uses and development, reform of the urban and planning system, urban transportation and environmental management, and restructuring of transitional local government arrangements (see Figure 1).

### **Business Act of 1991**

The transition to democracy contributed to an overemphasis on national-level political negotiations. As a result, little attention was paid to the new Business Act of 1991. The Business Act 'abolished [apartheid-created] licencing boards and all licensing requirements in some 76 business categories' and was seen as 'a significant step in the development of the informal sector'.<sup>33</sup> The Act provides a flexible framework for local governments, providing a choice between regulating the sector or not. By 1994, when the Act became effective, most TLCs in South Africa were in the process of restructuring their infor-

mal economy. By February 1998 sixty local authorities had formulated policy on street trading. A notable absence from the list are authorities located in former homeland areas, while authorities in the Western Cape, Gauteng and Kwazulu/Natal have been most active in promulgating legislation. However, with the acceptance of the informal economy, the approach, motivation and policy are very different from the apartheid era.

**A** major problem with the restructuring process is that policy formulation for the informal economy is not viewed coherently. Instead planning authorities regard compartments of it, such as street trading, home-based businesses, and small scale manufacturing, as separate components in the urban economy. Dewar and Watson's urban planning suggestions are worth considering, especially if aimed at desegregating informal business space.<sup>34</sup> They advocate changing the physical structure of urban public spaces, compacting cities and imploding growth, promoting a greater mix of land-use, physically integrating rather than fragmenting urban areas, decentralising wholesaling systems, maximising access to natural resources, providing publicly funded infrastructure in partnership with private sector, and democratising regulations, administration and policy formulation.

also impact on informal entrepreneurs as they would enhance 'the range and potential economic opportunities that would present themselves for all businesses'.<sup>35</sup> Because of fragmentation and low density sprawl, Dewar and Uytenboogaardt propose compacting urban forms as a 'pre-condition for generating small scale growth'.<sup>36</sup> This is in line with the densification programme which, according to Levin, 'would go a long way in serving the interest of the informal sector ... the mixed use activity corridor concept is a very applicable kind of physical development to serve the unique requirements of the informal sector'.<sup>37</sup>

### **The urban planning and development profession's view**

When evaluating proposed policy documents, the South African Institute of Town and Regional Planning (SAITRP) relates the identified principles for urban spatial restructuring to their checklist for urban form.<sup>38</sup>

The SAITRP's Position Paper on Urban Form promotes eight principles to restructure cities: (1) integration of built-up and non-built-up environments; (2) compaction and densification; (3) the integration of uses and activities within urban spaces; (4) urban development as a continuation process as opposed to fragmentation; (5) extroversion, as opposed to embedding, aimed at increasing accessibility to major transport routes; (6) reducing the dependency on automobile transport, thus aiming to increase convenience and lower costs; (7&8) collective places and spaces that would enhance multi-functionality beneficial to public finance.

The SAITRP formulated these principles in response to the World Bank's recommendations regarding the state of urban South Africa in the 1990s.

By the end of the decade - 'the period that now might have been an urban planner's dream' - the new policies and new political order's concern with the 'well-being of the majority of the population' have 'been marked by disappointment, and in many cases by disillusionment'.<sup>39</sup> The DFA and LGTA, as driving forces behind the urban restructuring process, have shown that 'while the intentions have changed for the better, in practice it has been business as usual'.<sup>40</sup>

Internationally the theoretical understanding and implementation of compact city policies have suggested densification,<sup>41</sup> corridor development<sup>42</sup> and mixed land-uses.<sup>43</sup> But how are these these practices implemented in South Africa?



Our cities have similar characteristics to divided cities in advanced countries. Here too we have enclaves of luxury and security, some old inner city suburbs being transformed into areas of gentrification.

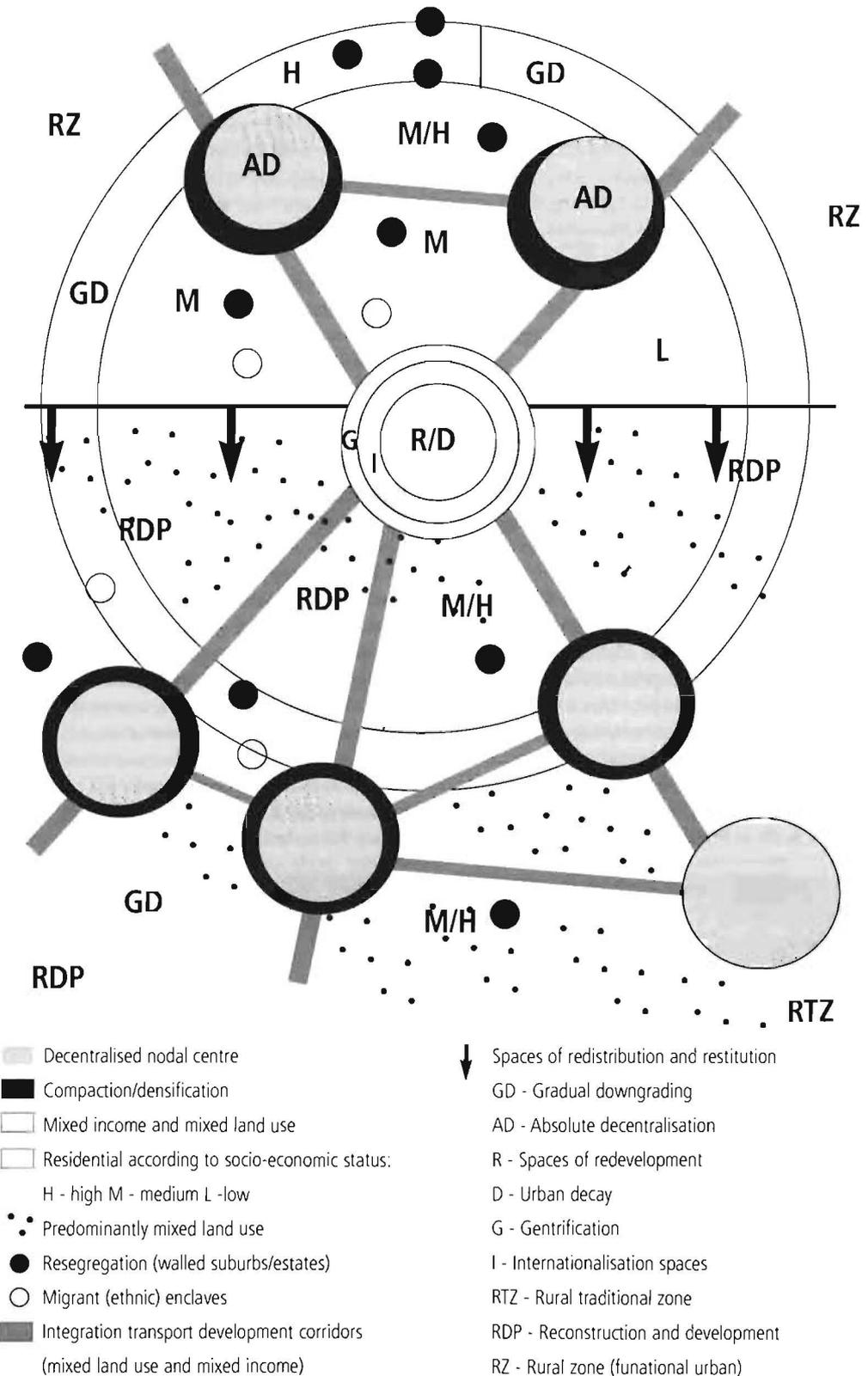
Planning should in essence be a partnership between public sector, private sector and informal economic participants. Compaction policies as promoted in the Urban Development Framework should

**Towards a 21st century South African city model**

Is it possible to construct an urban structure model to illustrate what the 21st century South African city should look like? Post-apartheid policies have been formulated, a future direction has been identified (LDOs), and an integrated phase of urban restructuring is now in place. Integrated urban development to restructure urban space would entail the re-demarcation of local government boundaries and the creation of spaces of opportunity. The restructuring processes of globalisation cannot, however, be ignored in visualising a sustainable 21st century city. A model based on the impacts of post-apartheid transformation and urban restructuring during the first phase of policy formulation and reconciliation needs to emphasise the kaleidoscope of globalisation trends and its local impacts. It should also stress the fact that the World Report on the Urban Future 'proceeds from the assumption that the independent, autonomous city is best able to cope with future requirements'.<sup>44</sup> What this implies is that cities may in future have more powers than provinces.

**T**aking cognisance of the phases of restructuring, and realising that all South African cities are transforming - and will in future be transformed by the same policies - one might suggest that a possible model to portray a 21st century city should be based on Davies' model.<sup>45</sup> In other words, while previous apartheid spaces (group areas) are still found in the same place, these are now being replaced by new urban spatial outcomes. Instead of using a completely different text and creating new symbols to understand urban space the model recreates meaning for new spaces. Through a dialectical interpretation of the legacy of the apartheid city and the proposed and planned (according to national and local legislation and policy) outcomes after apartheid, the model attempts to create a way of interpreting place and space within the context of a 21st century South African city identity. Hence there is a shift away from the labels 'apartheid city', 'modernised apartheid city' or 'post-apartheid city'. Given the complex nature

**FIGURE 2: A MODEL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY SOUTH AFRICAN CITY**



of settlement types in South Africa, one cannot generalise a specific form or structure. The model proposed below therefore has a strong emphasis on secondary cities and metropolitan development.

The following spatial features typify the character of the 21st century city in South

Africa (see Figure 2):

- former group areas become spaces of desegregation, segregation, resegregation
- former buffer zones become spaces of integration, unsustainability and resegregation, or compact, sustainable and

integrative spaces

- functionally, urban space becomes either controlled or non-controlled
- urban development practices to achieve compact sustainable cities include densification and infill, corridor development and activity spines
- socially engineered practices are applied to enhance socio-spatial integration such as gradual downgrading
- nodal development characterises no-control areas.

Trends of this structure are already evident in many South African urban landscapes and others will soon become increasingly familiar. Where inner city decay has occurred, it has resulted in active policy formulation to redevelop such areas. In certain gentrified areas the residential character has changed, with decentralised nodes that have developed since the 1970s as suburban shopping centres becoming a characteristic feature.

Absolute decentralised areas are thus far only occurring in the former white areas of cities and continue to portray spaces of affluence. Such areas will be linked to each other by integration and development corridors which indeed link all previously separated parts of the city. Along these corridors, mixed income and mixed land-use areas are contributing to the integration of urban society. Socially engineered policy such as gradual downgrading will specifically be implemented next to the former white side of the city to alleviate the mushrooming of squatters and informal settlements beside the former black townships.

Decentralised nodes in the former black, coloured and Indian suburbs will develop differently to those of the former

white areas. These areas should be seen as areas of opportunity because they lacked any normal form of urban development during apartheid. Here the degree of private-public initiative and investment (especially from black empowerment groups) will determine the degree of successful urban growth.

**S**pecific local government action such as the policy propagated in Johannesburg to stem development applications in edge cities, including Sandton, and allow development only in the inner city or formerly disadvantaged areas may also contribute to redistribution and redevelopment. Secondary cities that were previously located adjacent to homeland-border towns will incorporate the dispersed former ethnic towns and these will develop into decentralised nodal centres.

Although an eclectic land-use policy will be followed, cities will basically be separated into areas of mixed land-use and mono-land-use. The former non-white group areas will mostly have mixed land-use to cater for the legacy of no-control in these areas: home-based businesses, backyard shacks, street trading, squatting amidst formal dwelling areas and urban agriculture.

Mixed land-use in the former white group areas will be restricted, through control measures, to the absolute decentralised nodes and along integration transport development corridors. Mixed income areas will, apart from the aforementioned areas, also be restricted to proposed areas of downgrading. Compaction of the city will be enhanced through RDP programmes developing low-high and medium-high density low-cost housing units in suitable former buffer zones.

Redistribution will thus entail housing development, infrastructure creation and initiating the development of employment cores in the decentralised nodal centres.

### Urban outcomes: expected and observed

In an urban context the emphasis is on place and space. Thus, apart from the functionality of urban space (the modernist view), space is interpreted in terms of locality and complexity instead of as a category. Space has a symbolic and material meaning that is anti-homogeneous.<sup>46</sup>

Petsimeris and Racine note that 'intra-urban space is not only the result of nature and the restructuring of the contemporary society. Rather, it is principally the result of a former historical process, the result of a large number of economic [and political, in South Africa] transformations, the product of successive economic and social formations and the result of the dialectic between previous and emerging social formations. In urban analysis every process should be studied as a genesis, a development, and an evolution which has every impact on the form of economic and social structure.'<sup>47</sup>

### Socio-Economic Spaces of Segregation, Resegregation and Integration

The global transformation period has produced various new or revised urban restructuring and development concepts: a new division of labour, peripheral capitalism, agglomeration, movement towards concentration and centralisation, a decline in manufacturing and a rise in service industries. Democratic free enterprise is replacing profit-centred big business, and decentralised and dispersed urban entities are becoming more technologically feasible. Most of these processes are evident in the advanced cities of the world. The increasing number of conceptualisations of the changing form and composition of cities (e.g. the entrepreneurial city, post-modern city, transactional city, informational city and post-industrial city) are indicative of global change and its effects on localities.<sup>48</sup> The spatial consequences of urban and economic restructuring have brought about changes in the socio-spatial structure of cities.

In particular the so-called dual or divided city has generated much theoretical and conceptual debate. Manifestations of socio-spatial restructuring are increasingly related to urban form through social polarisation. Marcuse employs the concept of the dual city in various forms, including



Having experienced some form of residential desegregation, former whites-only suburbs will become the primary resegregated spaces because of increasing social polarisation.

the quartered city and the divided city, and of late has linked the residential city to the walled city idea.<sup>49</sup> He goes on to classify the spatial form of the residential and economic city in technologically developed countries: dominating (enclaves of the socio-economic-political elite); gentrified (professional, managerial, technical groups); suburban (skilled workers, mid-range professionals, upper civil servants, either in apartments near the centre or in single-family housing on the outskirts); tenement (low-paid blue/white collar workers living in cheap single family areas, rental and social housing); and abandoned (poor, unemployed and homeless).



If this interpretation of divided cities is interpreted in the South African context then Parnell's statement that 'the South African city provides a fascinating laboratory for the study of urban culture and form. As a caricature of the social divisions that now plague cities across the 'Western' and 'non-Western' worlds, the apartheid city experience served as a worst-case scenario of persistent social and economic inequality'<sup>50</sup> clearly shows that our cities have similar characteristics to divided cities in advanced countries. Here too we have enclaves of luxury and security, some old inner city suburbs being transformed into areas of gentrification,<sup>51</sup> suburban city life mostly confined to the former white suburbs now emerging in townships, tenement cities of rental accommodation in inner city and former under-serviced overcrowded townships, and abandoned city areas where squatting and homelessness is the norm. Social polarisation in cities of advanced countries is evident in the growth and size of the gentrified and abandoned city parts. In South Africa the divide occurs mainly between enclave and tenement and the abandoned city is 'evidence of new and powerful forces of fragmentation, represented by the suburbanization of forms of economic activity'<sup>52</sup> with the development of edge cities and continual mushrooming of informal settlements on the other edge.

Primarily, the former black townships will remain racially segregated from the other residential areas. Other non-desegregated spaces will also continue to be segregated. Having experienced some form of residential desegregation, former whites-

only suburbs will become the primary re-segregated spaces because of increasing social polarisation. Walled suburbs and estates and the centralisation of decentralised areas form the foci of socio-economic re-segregation. Bremner argues that despite the 'attempt to protect and preserve the image of middle class prosperity in the face of increasing socio-economic diversity ... the gap between the worlds of the township, the inner city and the suburbs are widening. The chances that the people of the city will develop a sense of shared space, of shared destiny grow slimmer by the day' and the spaces between walled enclaves are 'simply movement channels along which the body must pass in moving from one insulated enclave to another. The city is further fragmented, dispersed and divided'.<sup>53</sup>

This is the opposite of what the new urban development policies propagate: integration of separated areas. Socio-economic re-segregation will, however, take place in former black suburbs in the zones of affluence in townships. These areas, known for their heterogeneous spaces, will increasingly experience the benefits of property value. Already upmarket areas are being developed with a distinct middle to high income status. RDP spaces (mainly areas formerly used as buffer zones) are ideal for re-segregation because a certain class consciousness develops here. It is here that a gap exists between the overall aim of sustainable development and achieving the aims of housing delivery.

Mills states that the 'position of the

**Creating new suburbs in former buffer zones: unsustainable RDP housing developments. An aerial view of these developments resembles apartheid architecture at its worst.**

black majority and the basic features of their living environments remain unchanged since the colonial era, the only real changes to have occurred are in the aesthetic and technological details of their housing. Indeed, the socio-spatial blueprint, or dream, has remained constant, only the style of expression has varied'.<sup>54</sup> In terms of political transformation much has changed since that statement was made ten years ago.

Yet, in terms of black townships not much has changed with regard to housing and the creation of sustainable urban designs for low-cost RDP housing development. Are RDP housing developments done in a sustainable manner and do they relate to official policy? Are these new designs not just merely a political tool to propagate political ideas and practices instead of designing for sustainable spaces? Cynically speaking one can label these RDP houses as 'Re-Developing aPartheid housing'. An aerial view of these developments resembles apartheid architecture at its worst.

Dangor describes the RDP estates as having the 'same 'Housing Standard' feel as the old apartheid 'matchboxes', except that they're even smaller because of a lack of funds and the great number of people who need shelter. The lack of infrastructure and amenities, so characteristic of the

past, continues to be a feature of these settlements. No clinics, no schools, not even a patch of veld cleared to offer some compensatory sense of leisure'.<sup>55</sup> Now, the infamous NE 51/6 and 51/9 houses are being praised by township dwellers. The Department of Housing propagates urban densification projects 'aimed at moving away from the 'one household one plot' scenario'.<sup>56</sup> Yet no low-income housing development has planned for sustainable safe environments with innovative designs. Dewar concurs that these housing schemes are largely 'monofunctional... low density... [where] social and commercial facilities and other vibrant urban activities are notable mainly by their absence... Buildings are isolated events in a sea of space'.<sup>57</sup> He notes further that 'it is usually impossible to discern any social, economic or environmental concerns in the making of these schemes, which seem to have been ordered simply by questions of engineering efficiency'. Although these schemes defy official compact and sustainable city development principles, such planned and developed spaces soon transform after households move in. Home-based businesses of all types spring up and street corners become informal nodes of

sion policy and implementation, reflecting 'interdependence of urbanism, housing, architecture, finance, land tenure, ownership, affordability, quality, sustainability, technology, access and infrastructure'. Another success story is that of Springfield terrace in Woodstock (Cape Town), a high density infill housing scheme.<sup>59</sup>

**N**umerous authors on the urban restructuring process eschew an intertwining of global, national and local processes. Furthermore, integral changes in the organisation and technology of industrial production correlate with the deconstruction of the Fordist city and construction of new urban industrial developments.<sup>60</sup> Mabin's<sup>61</sup> postmodern application to the South African city highlights a shift in industrial products, processes, costs, profits and competitiveness, with a subsequent decline in industrial employment. Linking South African cities to the world economy, moreover, through a shift to a post-industrial society, may not appear to be showing much substance, but various characteristics of postmodernism are certainly evident. One instance is the internationalisation of labour, seen, for example, in Africa's southward migration. Harrison,

efit from these developments and remain subject to serious abuse'.<sup>63</sup> Case studies by the Southern African Migration Project also observe 'considerable hostility towards [new immigrants] and their business'.<sup>64</sup> The second migrant group contributes to the segregation of urban society in that they are resegregating into migrant enclaves. Specific areas within suburbs are rapidly taking on a new identity through the influx of these foreigners.

Residential integration (and in essence racial desegregation) will be socially engineered through mixed residential income developments and gradual downgrading. The White Paper on Local Government proposes mixed income residential areas, aiming to 'eliminate the 'ghettoisation' of the poor by locating high-income and low-income residential areas closer to one another. This proximity means the benefits of investment in affluent neighbourhoods will be shared by adjacent areas, and local facilities and amenities can be utilised by both high-and low income residents'.<sup>65</sup> This principle is already practised in townships, where houses of high property value are built next to shacks and informal dwelling units.

**A**lthough not yet legislated for, mixed-income development would release civil action to oppose it. Similar situations have already occurred in Mpumalanga and the Western Cape. For example, a low-cost residential development was sited next to an established residential area in Piet Retief. The public outcry and development initiative to prevent devaluation of property were answered by the practice of gradual downgrading property away from the established area.

High-priced developments have thus been placed on buffer strips between the areas.<sup>66</sup> Marconi Beam, a squatter settlement located in the predominantly white middle-upper income suburb of Milnerton in Cape Town, also showed how such a practice can be implemented successfully, and where property value did not decrease.<sup>67</sup> In Port Elizabeth, a policy entitled the 'City integration demonstration project' has been adopted to bring racially separated communities closer by introducing low-cost housing into former white residential areas.<sup>68</sup>

Transformation in the 1990s as seen in the legislation of property purchase has stimulated a search for the socio-spatial outcomes of democratisation, especially in terms of social intolerance. Predictions of conflict in South African cities made by Beavon, Bernstein and McCarthy, and

### **The gap between the worlds of the township, the inner city and the suburbs are widening. The chances that the people of the city will develop a sense of shared space, of shared destiny, grow slimmer by the day**

business activities - a replica of old township areas within a sea of newly painted structures.

Although high concentration as opposed to high rise developments are favoured by the community, their success lies in a wider perspective than the mere delivery of houses. The Housing Generator Project is an alternative idea for changing the mass production of uniform and monotonous low-cost housing into something different. The HGP revolved around a competition to deal with low-cost housing in Cato Manor, Duncan Village and Wattville, with the aim of 'develop[ing] innovative, qualitative and affordable urban development and housing through a process of investigation, research, workshops, conferences, a design competition and possible implementation'.<sup>58</sup> The expected outcomes show a different approach from the current housing provi-

however, contests that 'South Africa is rapidly integrating into an increasingly globalised economy', arguing that a 'failure to link the global and the local may be an important weakness within current thinking around South African cities'.<sup>62</sup>

Another form of resegregation is based on nationality: a low-income unskilled and mostly illegal group of foreigners (mainly from Africa) and a middle-high income group of skilled professionals and businesspeople (mainly from Asia and Africa). Xenophobia and/or cultural affinity are occurring with the internationalisation of certain middle-low income and inner city areas. According to Human Rights Watch, 'although South Africa, since the first democratic elections in 1994, has made remarkable progress towards establishing a free and democratic society based on respect for the human rights of its own citizens, foreigners have largely failed to ben-

Kotze and Donaldson have so far not materialised.<sup>69</sup> Before the 1994 elections, questions centred around conflict situations that might arise in conservative white towns when blacks settled there, but this has hardly occurred, which may explain the low level of residential integration in some suburbs and towns. Structural forces preventing integration may be attributed to ideological intolerance.

However, the socio-political reality emerging from the changing spatial picture of cities has so far been surprisingly peaceful. Expectations that house values might decrease in areas where the most integration has occurred have not materialised. In fact, in the city of Pietersburg, prices have kept pace with the normal increase in market values. Price hikes are thus not a defensive mechanism but purely a feature of supply and demand. Segregation will persist at micro-level but integration through the use of public and open spaces will create areas of integration and eventually assimilation.

**M**arcuse asserts that the economic city is not congruent with the residential city,<sup>70</sup> and thus identifies five economic divisions: the controlling city, advanced services, the city of direct production, unskilled work and the informal economy, and the residual city. Four manifestations of urban business space are observed, each taking place either formally or informally: desegregation, deracialisation, segregation and resegregation. The focus with these processes is on the level of post-apartheid change.

In other words, a lower level of racial integration occurs through the process of deracialisation, whereas desegregation is a higher level of integration in that racial integration takes place but previously disadvantaged groups are also advantaged now because they have access to infrastructure, opportunities, etc. The focus is thus on a shift from race to opportunity. Such processes can be distinguished as follows:<sup>71</sup>

- The scrapping of Group Areas legislation in 1991 resulted in the formal process of business desegregation, characterised by a class of affluent and professional blacks gaining access to offices, infrastructure, technology and services characteristic of the formal economy. In other words, class-based desegregation occurred on a limited scale. Also, affirmative action policies in the private and public sector have contributed to a rapid increase among blacks being admitted to the formal

non-secondary economic sector.

- A lower socio-economic class of informal business entrepreneurs has emerged in previously prohibited business areas through local government legislation. These entrepreneurs have access to 'white areas' but are excluded from its facilities on the basis of class - a process termed 'deracialised space'<sup>72</sup>. Street traders are a case in point.
- The resegregation of white business and professionals from CBDs to decentralised nodes in predominantly white affluent suburbs is taking place. This decentralisation process is a direct consequence of the desegregation and deracialisation of CBDs.
- Segregational planning has continued, based on economic disparities in the population structure and preferred places of residence. Strict planning regulations and policies (which are inherently segregational) are applied to former white areas under outdated Town Planning Schemes, as opposed to no regulation implementation in former black suburbs. Segregation is thus a manifestation of a legacy of fragmented planning policies. 'favouring' one section of the urban community over another. The lack of proper development of the informal sector, especially street traders in CBDs, is essentially segregational. However, it is based on class rather than race.

In his analysis of desegregation and deracialisation, Saff conceptualises the integration of urban space exclusively as residential space.<sup>73</sup> A parallel can be drawn between his conceptualisation and that presented here in terms of business space. Since street traders are generally engaged in such activities as a form of subsistence, it can be argued that, during apartheid, regulation of street traders was primarily based on race. Deregulation of such activities, therefore, resulted in the deracialisation of CBDs. However, as Saff points out, 'while spatially the racial impress of the apartheid city is changed by this process, it has little effect on [street traders] as they are excluded from access to virtually all facilities and social institutions' within the former whites-only CBD.<sup>74</sup> With the subsequent re-regulation of the sector, he anticipates that the process of desegregation will be accomplished because 'the challenge facing the urban poor will be to translate the deracialization of space into



genuine democratization of local governance and also the desegregation of, and equal access to, the resources and facilities in a given CBD'. The aim of re-regulation, therefore, is to desegregate business space, which should be accomplished by formulating new by-laws, and local government policy of the informal sector in general, aimed at providing facilities, access to credit, and infrastructure similar to that enjoyed by the formal sector. National planning principles also need to be integrated into a framework for formulating policy at local level.

**A**ccording to the 1996 census, almost 34% of economically active persons in South Africa are unemployed, with 26% earning less than R500 per month.<sup>75</sup> The Department of Housing acknowledges that 'while levels of distress are not uniform, the former townships and informal settlements are often marked by poverty and squalor ... employment for the urban poor is largely informal and economic activities are typically small, insecure (even illegal according to municipal by-laws in some cases)'.<sup>76</sup>

Urban transformation introduced the informal street trading phenomenon to the streets of former white-controlled cities. The transforming of outdated policies that prohibited informal economic activities in previously defended spaces occurred simultaneously with national policy.



**Continuation of old housing development strategies for the urban poor: the lack of infrastructure and amenities, so characteristic of the past, continues to be a feature of these settlements. No clinics, no schools, not even a patch of veld cleared to offer some compensatory sense of leisure.**

However, restructuring during the transition period has been hampered by relics of the apartheid past and ignorant policy makers. It is still race, albeit xenophobic, rather than a progressive movement towards the formalisation of the informal economy within a deregulatory approach, which is overshadowing the restructuring process. These factors contribute to the persistence of urban poverty.<sup>77</sup>

### ***Spaces of Redevelopment, Redistribution and Restitution***

Inner city redevelopment and gentrification, conterminous with mixed land-use areas, constitutes the basis of restitution. In some inner city areas, decay is not problematic and redevelopment will be easier to accomplish (see Figure 2). Desegregation of informal business, realised through creating opportunities in the CBD, will benefit from redevelopment, which will display eclecticism and a change in architectural style and building forms. Hindson, Byerley and Morris, how-

ever, warn against core city developments, such as revitalising the inner city, arguing that 'this could lead to the restructuring of the city into two socially and spatially polarized parts: a multi-racial and relatively affluent core city and a black, impoverished periphery'.<sup>78</sup>

Redistribution areas must thus embrace formerly disadvantaged areas in which massive infrastructure creation, housing delivery and other amenities need to be provided. Corridor development will link these areas directly with other developed constituents of the city. Located on the periphery, these areas will be planned to embrace redistribution as a space of opportunity - especially for local economic development.

Thusfar, implementation of such policies has failed. The prospects for generating economic activity in peripheral areas, especially aiming to develop certain nodes, are hampered by factors such as locational trends, crime and violence. Office, industrial and retail development are unlikely to succeed. Instead a node with a difference is envisaged in underdeveloped areas, to embrace the creation of economic infrastructure and SMME development through markets, hives, local service centres, SMME support services and public works. But the specific problem of the economic development of townships remains largely unexplored.<sup>79</sup>

The ghost of forced removals and the scars of apartheid's urban space may be re-created through demolition and deconstruction. Past lifestyles, fashions and building forms will be duplicated. Land restitution, resettlement and the re-creation of former demolished townscapes will be accomplished together with re-created place identities within spaces of restitution: land reform meets land restitution which meets reconstruction and development.<sup>80</sup> Former buffer zones, tracts of suburban land expropriated but not developed and derelict land (e.g. New Pietersburg and District Six) will take on a new identity.

### ***Spaces of Decadence***

Homelessness, poverty and unemployment have opened up spaces of decadence where crime, social evils and general decay characterise postmodern urban spaces. Robinson's interpretation of everyday dreams and nightmares of white South Africans presents a somewhat distorted picture of most urban areas in South Africa.<sup>81</sup> Although it is correct that apartheid protected living spaces have been replaced by 'private security arrangements around every home', it is an exag-

geration that there is 'rising fear of driving around town, the no-go areas (downtown, townships, 'white' areas that have become black, roads past new shack settlements, certain freeways at certain times of day or night, the street outside after dark), the reluctance to walk anywhere at all, the anxious looking around as they get out of their cars'. Whites will obviously fall victim to scrutiny and analysis after apartheid. But does crime have boundaries? It would appear that there is more crime in the townships than the suburbs. Should crime not thus be investigated from a class as opposed to a racialised point of view? Is urban space in its totality embraced by decadence - the aftermath of oppression and apartheid?

**D**ecadent spaces are responsible for desegregation through walled estates and security firms guarding property, invariably creating an impression of guarded decadence. The media has given much attention to the fortification and militarisation of urban space.<sup>82</sup>

Bremner relates the contemporary militarisation of society to apartheid, noting that 'while private security firms policed the suburbs, the former South African Police concentrated on policing apartheid'.<sup>83</sup> Inevitably security enclaves (walled suburbs with access control points) are becoming controlled spaces again. Jacobs' caution that 'thinning out a city does not ensure safety from crime and fear of crime. This is one of the conclusions that can be drawn within individual cities too, where pseudo-suburbs or superannuated suburbs are ideally suited to rape, muggings, beatings, holdups, and the like' is still relevant to the urban spaces adjacent to these surveyed and controlled walled areas.<sup>84</sup>

Interestingly, little attention is given to the potential of similar actions in undeveloped areas such as townships. Participation in voluntary associations among township dwellers (including Civics, Stokvels, church-based associations, social life associations, etc.) is anticipated to vary sharply depending on a number of factors such as educational level, socio-economic status, etc.<sup>85</sup> Mobilising against crime and criminals has seen certain vigilante organisations - Pagad, Mapogo a Matamaga and certain taxi organisations - fulfil the same role as walled suburbs and security firms, albeit in a different format. Alternatives such as community policing also tend to be vigilante-orientated, with police and legal functions performed by committees.<sup>86</sup>

### Spaces of Control

The location of spaces of business and development control depends on local governments' policies. However, if the apartheid legacy of control can be used as an argument for possible general spaces of control, then it can be said that former non-white areas will continue to constitute spaces of few or relaxed control regulations, particularly because of the lack of land-use regulations regarding home-based and informal businesses. Modernist planning outcomes of land-use regulations and by-laws will exemplify the postmodern notion of continuity amidst change. Functional regulations will continue to be applied in certain spaces of control, especially in absolute decentralised areas, i.e. the city-within-the-city notion. Spaces of no or relaxed control will build on the identity created in the new spaces of redistribution (the former disadvantaged areas) where mixed income and mixed land-uses will be characteristic features. In addition, former white low-income areas have also become areas of relaxed control. This is evident in areas such as Pretoria West and Pietersburg's Ladanna suburbs where mixed land-use has become the norm. Here, a 'new city is emerging, in which certain of apartheid's social and spatial divisions are being deepened, at the same time as other, largely illicit ways of controlling, managing and using urban space challenge its rules'.<sup>87</sup> These rules are based on necessity, speculation and crime.

Governance capacity, civil co-operation and private sector partnerships will determine the sustainability of urban space. Integrated development objectives work towards creating sustainable cities.

However, the specific spaces mentioned above may prove a deterrent to achieving the global aim of sustainable environments. Partnership success or failure will lead to sustainable, unsustainable or partially sustainable cities that can be classified as good, bad or ugly spaces. Good sustainable spaces will achieve Agenda 21 principles, bad spaces will partially

### Where mixed land-use has become the norm, a new city is emerging, in which certain of apartheid's social and spatial divisions are being deepened, at the same time as other, largely illicit ways of controlling, managing and using urban space challenge its rules

achieve them through successes occurring in only selected parts of the city, while ugly cities will not achieve them at all and will become wastelands.

### Conclusion

Because most countries are busy changing urban policy towards sustainable, 21st century cities to meet Agenda 21 and Habitat principles, little attention is given to the actual feasibility of implementing compaction policies.<sup>88</sup> Many questions are raised by in a book entitled *The compact city: a sustainable urban form for developing countries*. While it is acknowledged that 'patterns of settlement in South Africa are in line with international planning trends towards more compact, decentred cities',<sup>89</sup> very few of the research issues raised have been researched in South

Africa. Some questions which need research include spatial issues such as the significance of urban size for compact city policies; studies on urban centralisation and decentralisation trends, quality of life in different settlement types, the loss of open and agricultural land and natural habitats, the length of journeys, the use of public transport and energy emissions levels; and the spatial level of addressing urban compaction and sustainability issues.

Social issues that need to be researched include attitudes to the quality of life implications of compaction and urban sustainability policies; the effect of urban intensification, densification and containment policies on inequalities and segregation; the significance of urban violence and social disintegration for compact city policies and the effect of these policies on existing levels of violence, social alienation, crime and social disorder.<sup>90</sup> The identification of priority areas, and how such policies will be implemented, are also unanswered issues in South African cities. Policies formulated during the transitional period point to a compact urban form. But the experience in other countries during the last decade of the 20th century suggests that we are 'more likely to move relentlessly towards a multiplicity of worlds in a divided city'.

What is needed is vigorous and enthusiastic interpretation, comparison, evaluation and critical debate among urban scholars on urban transition and its outcomes in a similar fashion to how the apartheid city was researched during the 1980s. ☉

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# A STABLE AND PROSPEROUS REGION? Scenarios on the future of Southern Africa

In a time of globalisation, no state can operate in isolation, and events in one country can trigger ripple effects throughout a region. **Garth le Pere** describes various key trends in the Southern African region, which could lead to any of five startling scenarios.

**W**ith the momentous global and regional socio-political developments of the past decade, the southern African region and its multilateral institutions are in a state of flux and change. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa) have to redefine their aims and purposes in a rather turbulent and uncertain global environment.

A variety of global, regional and domestic factors continue to complicate this process. Of particular importance are the impact of globalisation, European Union (EU) integration, the evolving trade diplomacy in the World Trade Organisation, the recently concluded free trade agreement between South Africa and

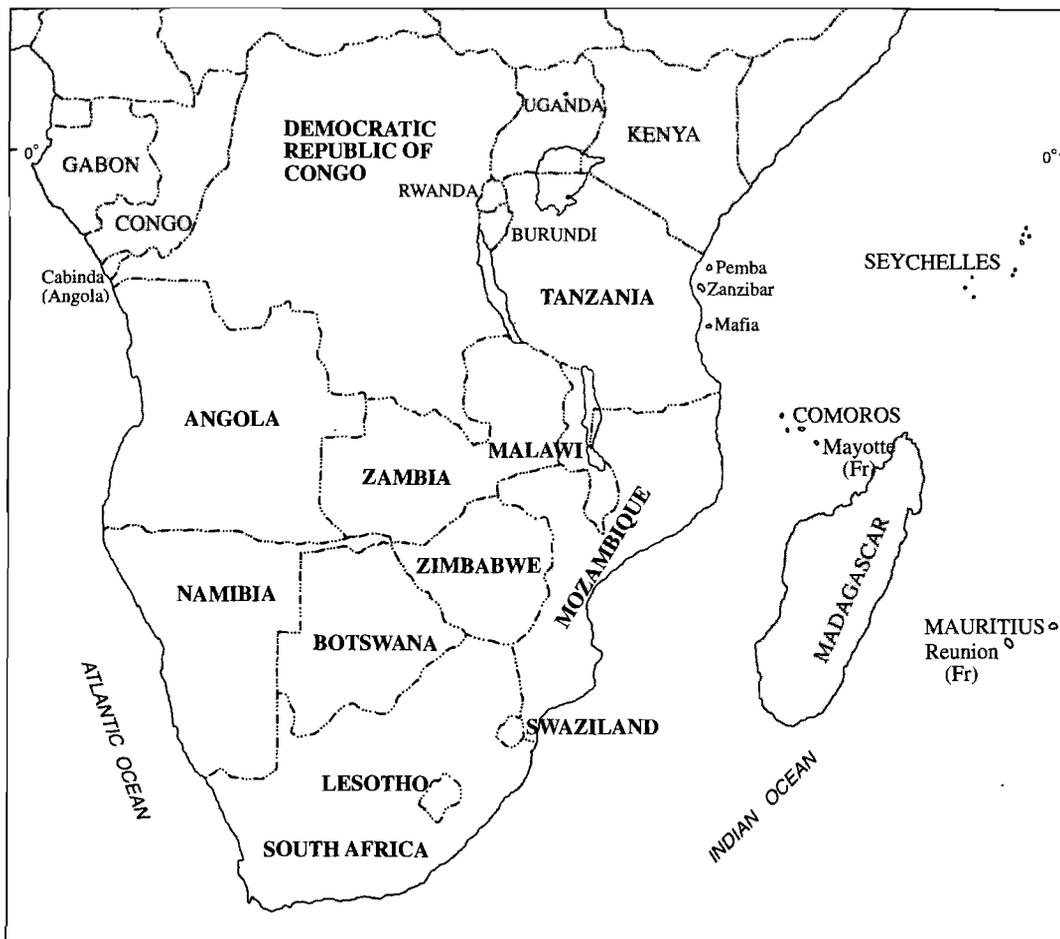
the European Union and the future Lomé framework governing relations between the EU and the group comprising the African, Caribbean and Pacific region.

The uncertain processes of democratisation have also had a profound impact on Southern Africa with varying effects, ranging from successful transitions to war,

communal strife, social instability and rather inchoate political futures. Although parliamentary elections are becoming a feature of change in the region, there is political turmoil in northern Namibia; Swaziland and Zambia, extreme volatility in Zimbabwe, a dangerous impasse in Lesotho, a nerve-racking crime syndrome in South Africa, flood devastation in Mozambique, and outright war in Angola and the DRC.

It is against this backdrop that SADC members are attempting to redefine the purpose of the organisation. New and ongoing initiatives include the possible rationalisation of the SADC architecture (including its development policies, sectoral co-ordination approaches, institutional restructuring, and project implementation strategies). Putting the machinery into operation of its Organ for Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS) remains a vexing and almost intractable problem. There is encouraging movement on the trade proto-

## SADC



col and reform of SACU. However, a plethora of issues remain unresolved and are a cause for concern. These include problems of membership, political stability, conflict resolution, economic development and illegal movement of people and goods across borders.

The contours of the SADC regional integration project are slowly taking shape but its final definition is far from complete. Perhaps the biggest setback is a perceived lack of overall political and strategic vision. What is the direction of SADC? What does it want to achieve? Will economic integration on its own address problems of sustainable development, democratisation, security, environmental degradation, South Africa's regional dominance and so on?

### The Scenario Approach

Drawing its inspiration from a number of scenario exercises developed over the last decade which provided insights into South Africa's transition to democracy, the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) with the assistance of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) developed scenarios on how the Southern African region might evolve over time in terms of some of the complex dynamics alluded to above. The

project, which took two years to complete, contains five scenarios - or alternative futures - showing what the southern African region might look like in 20 years' time. They are intended to help policy-makers and other role players understand how the region could evolve, and thus make more informed decisions.

The scenarios have been developed by a core team comprising analysts from the two organisations as well as additional contracted specialists. The scenarios were evolved in a multi-stage process involving academics, other analysts and planners from all over the southern African region.

The key question this project has set out to answer was: Given the current regional dynamics, what can be done to reach a key goal set in the SADC treaty of 1992, namely to create a stable and prosperous southern Africa?

The scenario approach has been adopted as the best way of addressing this question. There is no single or standard definition of scenarios. Clem Sunter, the author of a previous South African scenario exercise, describes them as 'simple and consistent stories about the future, illustrating the options available'. The authors of the Mont Fleur scenarios, on the other hand, characterise them as 'descriptions of alter-

native pathways into the future', projecting a 'range of possible outcomes which enable people to think about the future in different ways'.

For their purposes, the IGD/FES team defines its scenarios as descriptions of alternative futures which can help South and southern African policy-makers - and the public in the region - understand how the region may evolve.

Again, there is no standard method of evolving or constructing scenarios. Most methods centre on identifying major predictable factors about the future - which provides the context for the scenarios proper - as well as major unpredictable factors or uncertainties, which provide the variables for the scenarios themselves.

In line with this, these scenarios were evolved in several stages. First, the core team, in co-operation with a regional reference group, identified a number of fac-

tors deemed to have a significant bearing on the region's future. These were then arranged in a matrix according to their potential impact and predictability. Factors considered likely to have a high impact on the future as well as being highly predictable formed the so-called 'base scenario' - a description of current trends in the region which are likely to endure, and which therefore provide the context for the hypothetical scenarios. Those factors which are thought to have a high impact as well as being highly unpredictable were adopted as driving forces for the scenarios. Five driving forces were identified in this way: conflict, globalisation, visionary leadership, decay, and survival.

Using this basis, the core team began to think creatively about the future by writing speeches by imaginary figures likely to play key roles in each of the five scenarios, centred on the driving forces involved. The next step was to extrapolate 'future worlds' from the speeches and their implicit world views.

Following this, team members evolved 'scenario logics': abstract models of each of the scenarios in which the driving forces and other factors pertinent to the scenarios were related to each other. Five subsystems - political, economic, social, cultural,

and environmental – were created for every scenario. Next, draft scenarios were evolved by fleshing out the logics, and adding ‘plots’ or ‘histories’: plausible accounts of how the five scenarios could develop out of the present, and showing where the pathways to the different scenarios diverge.

Finally, a regional reference group was asked to test the scenarios for internal consistency and plausibility, and final amendments were made.

### The Base Scenario

As noted earlier, the five scenarios proper are underpinned by a base scenario, which creates the context within which those scenarios are devised.

Scenarios cannot be evolved in a vacuum. They have to take account of major political, economic and social realities in the country or region which will have a long-term bearing on its future, and which limit the ways in which those societies can develop.

Compiling the base scenario was an important part of the project which brought into focus extremely important features of the region and its possible development path.

#### *Negative factors in the base scenario*

The base scenario shows that, to a greater or lesser extent, countries in the southern African region are beset by a constellation of strongly negative factors. Among the most important of these factors is the trend that population growth is generally outstripping economic growth, and is likely to continue doing so. As a result, there are high and increasing levels of poverty in the region, and large and growing disparities of wealth.

There is large-scale urbanisation throughout the region as people flee impoverished rural areas. As a result, major urban agglomerations develop. Infrastructure and services in these areas are increasingly overloaded.

There is also large-scale migration among countries in the region, further weakening poorer countries in terms of human and other resources and overloading infrastructure and services in the richer countries. Countries in the region have a poor skills base. Furthermore, AIDS is undermining growth and weakening states and societies.

Natural phenomena are reinforcing these negative factors. Among these are a growing water scarcity, worsening droughts, and desertification. As a result, food security is undermined.

Negative factors extend to regional dynamics as well. Prospects for intra-regional trade are limited, and South Africa remains economically dominant. Regional development takes place on a ‘hub and spoke’ model, with South Africa serving as the hub. In a global context, the region remains marginal. Development assistance from foreign governments and aid agencies is declining, and trade preferences are eroding.

#### *Positive factors in the base scenario*

The outlook for the region is not purely negative, however. The base scenario also identifies some positive factors which point the way towards a viable future.

Among these are the trends that privatisation in the region is boosting infrastructure, and lessening the region’s dependence on aid; that ‘smart partnerships’ between the state and the private sector are boosting economic growth; and that transport corridors are boosting regional trade. Moreover, the formation of a regional power pool is likely.



On the international front, the threat of global financial instability, such as instability on the currency markets, is lessening, and debt relief for the region is likely.

While these factors are promising, they do not in themselves address or reverse the negative factors mentioned earlier. However, this is also possible. How? The base scenario shows clearly that if debt is relieved, if economies in the region are soundly managed, if domestic investment increases and if the region’s human resources are efficiently developed, then countries in the region could attain higher rates of economic growth. And as soon as a growth rate of 6% is attained, the most fundamental negative factors afflicting the region will be reversed: economic growth will begin to outstrip population growth, thus reducing unemployment; levels of poverty will be reduced, and disparities of wealth diminished.

This will leave the countries better able to deal with urbanisation and migration, the effects of HIV/AIDS, and natural fac-

tors such as drought and desertification. Prospects for intra-regional trade and more even economic development will improve, as will the region’s global standing.

Thus the base scenario shows clearly that a more positive future for the region can only be unlocked through high economic growth. Thus the base scenario points to the centrality of economic growth in the future of the region. It also clearly points to some key challenges facing policy-makers.

Against this background, the following scenarios were developed.

### Scenario One: Danger! Ingozi! Kotsi!

This scenario is driven by conflict. It depicts a region torn apart by violent conflict. Following years of discord, southern Africa is divided into an enclave of relative wealth and security in the south, centred on South Africa, and a series of weak or collapsed states in the centre and north, stretching from Angola through Zambia and Malawi to Mozambique. Dubbed the ‘arc of crisis’ by international analysts, the latter area is marked by growing lawlessness and endemic strife.

In the arc of crisis there are two kinds of states: weak states, which still have functioning governments, but whose capacity and control over their territories have been markedly reduced, and collapsed states, which still have notional governments, but have entirely lost their ability to govern. All these territories are the sites of endemic conflicts among various groupings, competing for resources and territorial control.

The enclave, or Confederation of Egori - consisting of South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and southern Mozambique - is ruled by authoritarian securocrats; in most federal units, democratic institutions have been suspended and a state of emergency imposed.

Economic relations are unequal and exploitative. The formal economies in the ‘arc of crisis’ have largely collapsed; the only meaningful economic activity is mining in privately protected areas by conglomerates based in the enclave. In the ‘arc of crisis’, most people rely on the informal economy for survival.

The enclave still has a sophisticated formal economy; however, it lacks the credibility to participate in the global economy and has largely disengaged from it. Trade between the enclave and the ‘arc of crisis’ is largely informal.

The region’s social problems have been exacerbated by natural and largely uncontrollable factors such as HIV/AIDS, new

strains of malaria and tuberculosis, and the El Niño phenomenon, which now occurs regularly.

The state of the region is symbolised by an electric fence erected by the enclave to stop the uncontrolled flow of migrants fleeing poverty and crime in their collapsing countries. In fact, the region has largely disintegrated; all attempts at regional co-operation have been abandoned.

### **Policy implications**

Conflict has the potential to wreak havoc in the region. As a result, policy-makers need to do everything possible to curb conflict. Thus an effective regional conflict resolution mechanism is urgently needed. If SADC's OPDS cannot fulfil this role, a regional defence / non-aggression pact may be necessary.

Regional leaders must also make every effort to ensure that the values and norms of democratic governance - as well as the need to maintain strong and effective states - are entrenched.

### **Scenario Two: Market Madness**

The driver for this scenario is globalisation. In this scenario, the region is characterised by unbridled private sector economic activity linked to a global free market. States and governments have been relegated to a subordinate role; many state functions have been privatised, and the main function of governments is to help big business make profits. States have largely disengaged from development activities and service delivery.

Countries and their economies are controlled by wealthy elites. While most or all countries in the region are democracies, only the elites participate in formal politics. Also, while economic growth rates are high, there is little or no employment growth or development. Big business - and the elite associated with it - make big profits, but the majority of people are poor and survive on the informal economy.

Economic growth has also occurred at the cost of the environment. Because of states' relatively limited role, and their unwillingness to offend or hamper big business, the region's environmental standards are low. This has resulted in Northern conglomerates relocating to the region in order to circumvent the costs of complying with stringent environmental regulations in their own countries.

Regional organisation is also controlled by capitalist interests; formal institutions have relatively little power to mediate in conflicts, and private sector networks play a more important role.

### **Policy implications**

While privatisation and public-private partnerships may be beneficial, governments should not relinquish overall responsibility for development and service delivery. The spoils of increasing trade and investment need to be managed fairly and for the public good by democratic governments, to avoid increasing polarisation between the rich and the poor.

Without a coherent regional economic strategy to industrialise and develop the southern African economic base, globalisation will exacerbate existing poverty and inequality.

### **Scenario Three: Renaissance**

The driver for this scenario is visionary leadership. In this scenario, the region is relatively prosperous and politically stable. Most of its countries are multiparty democracies; in some, civil society groupings are involved in public decision-making.

The region has used the revenue derived from mineral exports to create a competitive industrial base. Economic growth rates have improved, and a larger proportion of the region's economically active people have jobs in the formal sector. Despite the effects of HIV/AIDS, levels of social security have also improved.

Regional co-operation has also developed significantly; a regional parliament has been formed which oversees the activities of regional planning and co-ordination directorates. Development, economic and social co-operation is managed via a regional reconstruction and development programme, regional policy directorates, and joint industry councils.

Political leaders share a common vision of mutually beneficial development. The people of the region share a sense of a regional citizenship, and are actively involved in the processes of regional co-operation and integration.

### **Policy implications**

While the potential for improving the region's fortunes exists, strong and visionary leadership is needed to exploit these factors in a concerted way and reverse the current trend of economic decline and growing poverty. These leaders should have a common vision of social democracy and economic justice, as well as a strong regional orientation.

Strong economic growth is central to improving the region's fortunes. To attain this, leaders need to ensure that economies are soundly managed, domestic investment increased, and the region's human resources efficiently developed.

### **Scenario Four: The Slow Slide**

This scenario is driven by socio-political decay. The 'slow slide' scenario depicts a region in the grip of authoritarian rule. Nominally, most of the countries of the region are still democracies; however, these are generally facades behind which corrupt elites compete for wealth and power. Civil liberties have been subverted; attempts to challenge the ruling order are repressed on the grounds that they threaten state security. A few countries are ruled by military cabals.

The economies of the region are based on mining and oil production, with little value added. Economic growth is poor, and many people eke out an existence in the informal sector. Countries in the region are economically isolated from one another, which has undermined prospects for economic integration.

Societies are marked by fear, suspicion and insecurity, caused by high levels of crime. Most of the people in the region live in abject poverty. Environmental standards have weakened; the region is heavily polluted, and wildlife and other resources have been depleted.

The regional project is used by national elites to entrench their respective regimes. The region's stability against external forces is guaranteed via a system of agreements, based on the principle of non-interference in each others' internal affairs. Governments co-operate on security and other issues.

### **Policy implications**

The practice of neo-patrimonialism - using state resources for private gain, which is evident in many countries of the region - must be kept in check if this scenario is to be avoided.

Above all, it is vital for democratic institutions to be maintained. Governments and societies should nurture free media, freedom of expression, and all the other values that underpin healthy democracies. Young and fragile democracies must be properly consolidated.

### **Scenario Five: Darwin's Shield**

This scenario is driven by survival. In this scenario, the region is poor but relatively peaceful and stable. States have become weak or ineffective, and people are surviving via a broad range of informal activities organised at the community level. There is little conflict, mainly because of the strength of local-level organisations.

Given a range of pressures - including past conflicts, population growth, uncon-

trolled urbanisation, and the effects of drought and HIV/AIDS - formal governance in many areas has become weak or has broken down entirely. The level of participation in formal political institutions is very low; instead, people are active in an informal 'parallel society' outside the ambit of the state.

Countries have also failed to diversify their economies and place them on a sustained growth path. As a result, economic growth is poor and employment in the formal sector very limited. Therefore, most people have turned to the informal economic sector for survival, and are active in informal economic structures and in collectives at the local level. Most overseas development assistance flows directly to local communities and the informal sector.

A strong sense of self-help and self-reliance has manifested itself throughout the region. While people are very poor, they are surviving with dignity. Because communities act in their own interests and those of their neighbours, levels of conflict have been significantly reduced. Also, because of strong community-level organisation and awareness, crime levels have gradually stabilised.

Because states are so weak and so divided internally, regional integration is poor. Countries are managing to co-operate in certain functional areas, such as water and electricity. Some cross-border organisation takes place at the local level.

#### Policy implications

While the region is not as badly off as in some other scenarios, the absorptive capacity of the informal sector is not unlimited either; therefore, this is not a good long-term recipe.

This scenario shows that there is no real alternative to effective governance and formal economic development. It points to the imperative of economic growth and the importance of putting in place all the key elements needed to stimulate growth - including strong states capable of maintaining their authority and creating the necessary regulatory frameworks.

#### Conclusion

In developing these scenarios, the analysts wanted to emphasise the fact that there are numerous forces at work in the region which could lead to very different outcomes.

It is hoped they will make decision-makers, the regional policy community and its general public alive to the fact that the future is not predetermined, and that it cannot be assumed that the region will become stable and prosperous. It is also hoped that they will help decision-makers identify critical junctures where the paths towards the various scenarios diverge. ☉

*Garth le Pere is Executive Director of the Institute for Global Dialogue. The sponsors of the project have developed a 25 minute video based on the scenarios' research findings. For further information contact Garth le Pere at Tel. (011) 339 6585, Fax. (011) 339 6616, e-mail garth@igd.org.za.*

#### A DIFFERENT VIEW ...

# The problem with SADC scenarios

Dr Eddy Maloka, Executive Director of the Africa Institute of South Africa, describes some potential problems with the scenarios proposed by Garth le Pere.

The development of possible future scenarios for the SADC region by the Institute for Global Dialogue and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is an important contribution to our efforts to find African solutions to the continent's problems. I had the privilege to attend a presentation by the IGD on these scenarios. However, I wish to raise a number of methodological and conceptual weaknesses that I think affect the impact the project was intended to make.

The first methodological problem is that the team that put together the project was made up of a 'core' drawn from the IGD and the FES, with participation from scholars in other parts of the region reduced to a 'reference group'. It is partly because of this that the outcome of the exercise shows a strong bias towards South Africa and its political discourse and leaders. Secondly, besides 'writing speeches by imaginary figures likely to play key roles in the future, there is no indication that extensive, region-wide research work - including interviews with key government, SADC, business, civil society and donor agency role players - was ever undertaken. Consequently, the outcome of the project, and the five scenarios in particular, is somehow out of touch, and in many ways not in resonance with the thinking and the trends currently unfolding on the continent.

Conceptually, South Africa-centric as it is, the project fails when it comes to the issue of the relation-

ship between structure and agency because of the dominant and central role it accords to 'leadership' and the marginal and relatively insignificant place that the five future scenarios reserve for civil society. An impression is created, especially with regard to Scenario 3 which has 'visionary leadership' as a driver, that no structural problems can persist before good leaders who are determined to implement good policies. To be sure, Africa has had good leaders in the past, and of course dictators as well, but structural factors and external constraints have been such a dominant factor in the continent that they cannot be ignored. Similarly, the principal motive forces for change in the continent have been the 'masses', whether organised or unorganised. One has only to think of the decolonisation phase, the guerilla movements of the 1970s, or the mass protests and campaigns of the 1990s that brought an end to the reign of 'Fathers of the Nation', to realise that the masses of this continent cannot be relegated to passive victims of the policies of various brands of leadership. They will continue to play a central and determining role that no future scenario can ignore. What complicates matters even further is that the SADC scenarios in question are very androcentric, in that women feature only as victims, and not even as part of the 'visionary leadership' or any positive driving force.

Moreover, the base scenarios and

driving forces that are put forward in the project are ideologically loaded. For example, among the 'positive factors in the base scenarios' are 'privatisation' and a 'smart partnership between the state and the private sector'. What about the 'public', one may ask. In fact, the preferred future that we are presented with - Scenario 3 - is capitalism à la the 'end of history'. There is no provision made in the project that in the next twenty years could see humanity experimenting with other models of development that are aimed at addressing the negative effects of capitalism and its globalising dimension, especially as these affect Africa. More serious, however, is that the project assumes that the international context will remain constant for the next twenty years, despite the fact that the past forty years have demonstrated that Africa is very vulnerable to external factors; be they oil price hikes, the debt crisis, or the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. That it is assumed that the international context

will remain constant for the next twenty years is a product of the narrow definition of 'globalisation' that informs the project.

Finally, the project is arguably informed by a very strong sense of 'Afropessimism', a virus that so many, here in Africa and in the rest of the world, are still combating with determination. Of the five scenarios, only one (Scenario 3) forecasts a better future for the SADC region. Yet there is a trend right across the continent to close ranks and ensure that the 21st becomes Africa's century. There is greater hope than ever before that lasting African solutions will be found to wars currently taking place, whether in Burundi, Angola or the Sudan. The continent, through the OAU, is moving at full speed to implement the Abuja Treaty on the creation of an African Economic Community and the establishment of a continental parliament. In addition, the United Nations' increasing concern with the plight of our continent, the positive policy shifts in the USA and the European Community towards Africa as well as the rethinking of the Structural

Adjustment Programmes by the World Bank and the IMF, should inspire us to think optimistically about the future of our continent. More important, is the revitalisation and resurgence of civil society in the continent over the last decade - a factor that will continue to act as the engine of Africa's history.

In short, the scenario project is an important contribution, but it may have been even more significant had it tried to engage with and align itself to the six-phase process currently underway towards the establishment of an Africa Economic Community by 2025 within the framework of the Abuja Treaty. The project should have tried to locate itself within a Pan-African development agenda and platform that took the continent some forty years to build, and is one of the objectives of the Abuja Treaty: to increase economic self-reliance, and promote an endogenous and self-sustained development. This agenda and platform do not inform any of the scenarios, but especially not Scenario 3, driven by 'visionary leadership'.

### ... AND LE PERE REJOINS THE FRAY:

*Eddy Maloka's rejoinder has already provoked a strong response. Garth le Pere comments on what he saw as a distortion and misrepresentation of an empirically and conceptually sound study.*

As far as I am concerned, Dr Maloka's response is more of a polemical diatribe than a scholarly reflection. I would like to respond to some of his points as follows:

1. We feel the project was not South Africa-centric, as we included in the core team Dr Balefi Tsie (of Botswana) and Sehoai Santho (of Lesotho). A Zimbabwean trade economist withdrew early in the project but stayed on in the reference group. Scenarios methodology, experience and convenience dictate that the core group as a 'management team' be kept small and manageable, and we do not apologise for including a greater number of highly skilled South Africans of diverse backgrounds and professions than regional citizens.

2. The reference groups

(varying between 35-40 people) were an equally important source of information, debate and advice rather than a perfunctory tool. The reference group was multi-disciplinary in composition, and to the extent that resources allowed, broadly representative of the region. The groups met over three days four times during the two year period to incrementally assess progress and deliberate on research outcomes and processes. This obviated the need for interviews with other players.

3. Leadership and civil society as a component are key actors rather than 'marginal and relatively insignificant'. The pessimistic scenarios are a consequence, among other factors, of a weak and effete civil society and predatory, patrimonial states. Visionary leadership can only work if this civic sector is a key partner in region/nation building. Where the state abdicates responsibility, civil society steps into the breach, and scenario 5 is predicated on this outcome. Far

from being 'passive victims', that leadership essentially emerges from the masses - and women play a prominent role.

4. Rather than the autocratic and patriarchal bunch that is in power in SADC and much of the continent, it is precisely a new generation of visionary leadership of both genders who can confront the 'structural factors and external constraints', and thereby lift the region and the continent out of its present malaise and state of despair. This is cold reality, not Afropessimism. The idea of making this an African century is a noble one but must not be romanticised. All the forces which conspire to assist in making it so are to be welcomed. But it is the primary responsibility of African governments and their people to translate the idea into workable policies and programmes at different levels and geographic zones. If anything, our SADC scenarios present real portraits of what the policy obstacles and structural impediments

might be.

5. The base scenario is very sensitive to regional realities and trends, and rather than being 'ideologically loaded', paints a very accurate portrait of the current regional landscape. Normative and strategic choices are of course made about which factors and variables are important for the base scenarios (and these were richly informed by the diverse views of the reference group).

6. Scenario 3, I argue, demonstrates the pernicious effects of globalisation and its harmful impact if not properly managed, rather than being a cheerleader for 'capitalism à la the end of history'. The study, which was condensed for the article, talks about the fast changing and dynamic global environment which will further marginalise the continent if well-informed and prudent choices are not made.

*Dr Maloka stands by his comments. Alternative scenarios or further responses from readers are encouraged.*

*Inside Sudan: Political Islam, Conflict and Catastrophe, by Donald Petterson*

Donald Petterson, the last US ambassador to complete an assignment based in Sudan, provides unique insights into how he dealt with a hostile government, and how Sudan has become what it is today. Describing what happened to Americans in Sudan after Washington put the country on its list of state sponsors of terrorism, and what he saw during many trips into war-torn southern Sudan, Petterson argues that Khartoum has come into conflict with the USA not because of its religious orientation but because of its record of human rights abuses and support for terrorism.

The book focuses on US-Sudan relations during the past decade, providing rare insights into US policy-making. As Herman Cohen, a previous Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, sums up, 'When I finished this book I asked, 'Why Kosovo and not Sudan?' as far as US policy is concerned.'

*Globalization and the Dilemmas of the State in the South Edited by Francis Adams, Satya Dev Gupta and Kidane Mengisteab*

This volume examines the political implications of globalization for developing countries. Global economic integration poses a formidable dilemma for the Third World state. While there are compelling external pressures to liberalize domestic economies, market-oriented reforms threaten the economic well-being of various societal groups. Popular resistance to these reforms has been strong throughout the developing world.

This book examines the political strategies employed by Third World governments to maintain reform programmes in the face of domestic opposition. State

COMPILED BY ELIZABETH LE ROUX

# Bookshelf

The library of the Africa Institute of South Africa currently has over 75 000 books and periodicals on its shelves, covering every African country from 1960 to the present. The library is open to the public, and can be visited during office hours at the Africa Institute's offices in Pretoria. We look at some of the newest acquisitions.

elites have adopted various political strategies designed to defuse opposition. These strategies have typically involved some combination of coercion and compromise. The book includes chapters on detailed case studies from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

*Regional Integration and Trade Liberalization in sub-Saharan Africa (Volumes 1-4) Edited by Ademola Oyejide et al*

These volumes bring together leading economists in the area of trade policy and international economics from within and outside the Sub-Saharan African region to debate Africa's place in and impact on the world economy. The first volume sets out the framework, issues and methodological perspectives, while the second applies the theory to detailed country case studies of the Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The third volume examines schemes for regional integration, and the successes and

failures of each of these projects to examine the potential pitfalls facing co-operation and integration in Africa. In the last volume, an analysis of Africa's prospects for economic development, regional integration and its changing place in the world economy is presented. The project found that, after over thirty years of experimentation, Sub-Saharan Africa's romance with regional integration remains unabated, in spite of previous and existing efforts achieving little success. The project attempted to answer the following questions:

- What drives regional integration in Africa?
- How would recent changes in trade barriers and outward orientation affect such efforts?
- What are the links between regional integration and trade liberalization in the African context?
- How and to what extent would SAP-induced trade liberalization hinder or enhance regional integration in Africa? ☺

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO AFRICA INSIGHT FROM ACADEMICS AND OTHERS with specialist knowledge of African affairs are welcomed. Articles may be submitted in English or French, but will be published in English. Manuscripts can either be submitted in hard copy, with a diskette, or by email. All inquiries and submissions should be directed to:

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## **Chapter in an edited volume:**

- E Clay and E Benson, "Triangular transactions, local purchases and exchange agreements in food aid: A provisional review with special reference to sub-Saharan Africa", in E Clay and O Stokke, *Food aid reconsidered*, London: Frank Cass, 1991, p 147.

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- G Pirie, "Transport, food insecurity and food aid in sub-Saharan Africa", *Journal of Transport Geography*, vol 1, no 1, 1993, p 14.

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- *Africa Report* (New York), vol 23, no 1, January-February 1978, p 41.
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- M Jensen, 'Bridging the gaps in Internet development in Africa', <http://www.idrc.ca/acacia/studies/ir-gaps.htm>, 15 October 1999.

