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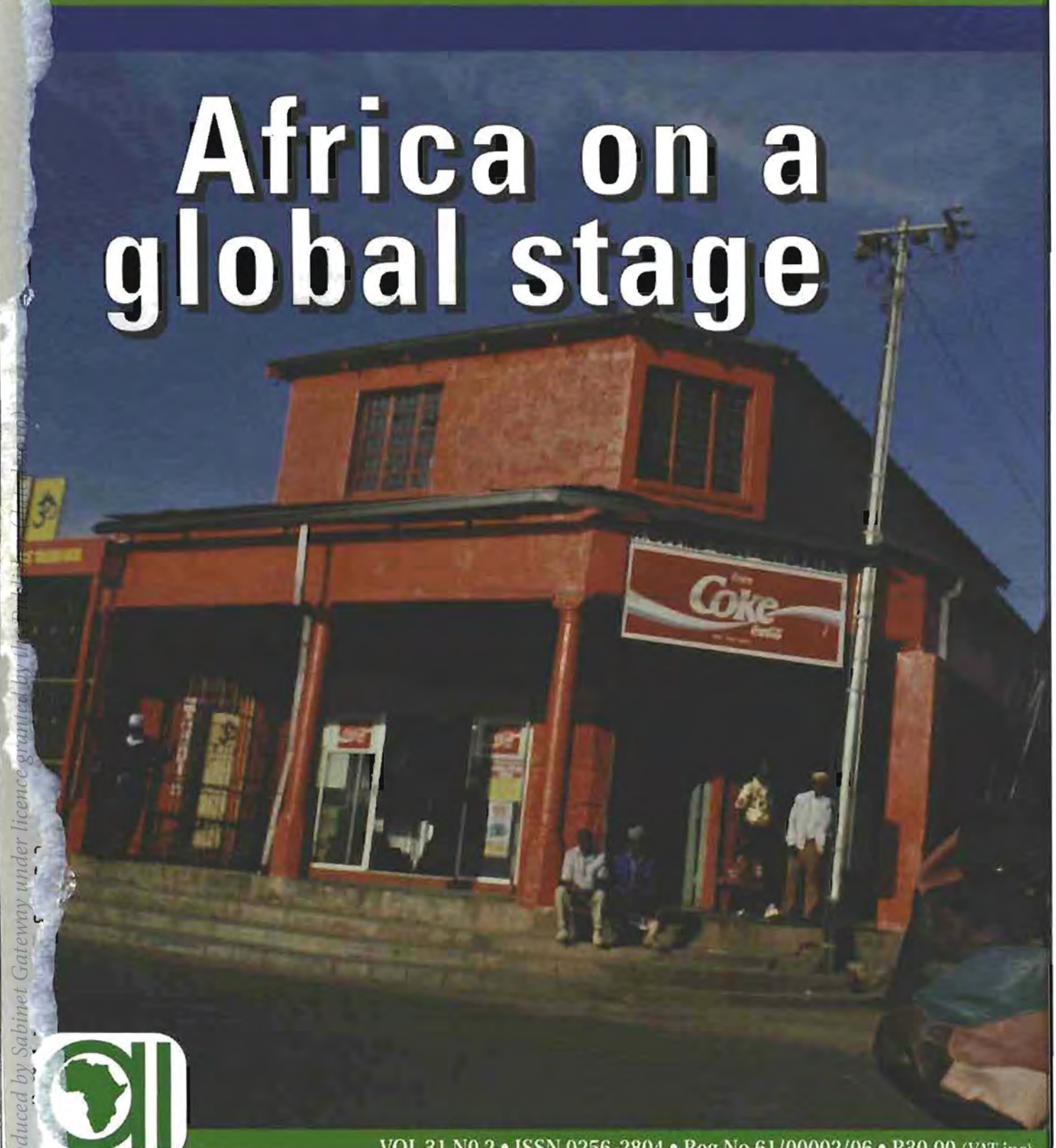

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Africa on a global stage

BY ELIZABETH LE ROUX

We are living through a very challenging and exciting time in the history of our continent. The African Union is busy coming into effect, thanks to the efforts of many people and the political commitment of the majority of our leaders. With ratifications gathering momentum (South Africa and Nigeria becoming the 35th and 36th countries, respectively, to ratify the treaty), moves are now afoot to implement the ambitious plan for African integration.

The hope is that this integration will better enable the continent to act as a player on the world stage, and that this will lead to a true African Renaissance. This is the culmination of many years of hard work and the persistence of a vision of unity and cohesion which dates back to Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Sekou Toure – a historic moment, indeed.

The true challenge, of course, only starts now. Regional integration has proved difficult to implement thus far, and the creation of new Pan-African bodies – such as the Pan-African parliament and African Bank – will require real commitment and resources, from both our own leaders and the international community. And the continent is still divided as to how implementation should progress.

On the one hand, for example, there is a group backing the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP), presented by South African President Thabo Mbeki at Davos last year, while a contending plan for the revival and renaissance of Africa has emerged with Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade's new Omega Plan. With these divisions and jostling for positions of power, Africa cannot move forward. We should attempt to work together in harmony if we are to create a vibrant, dynamic and effective African Union.

Of course, we cannot do this on our own either. One of the partnerships which is key to the successful integration of the continent is that of the developed countries, including the European Union, the United States, and China. For this reason, this issue of Africa Insight includes a timely look at the Chinese view of co-operation with African countries. China is likely to play an increasingly important role in world trade and political relations, so it is important that we understand how Africa can benefit from links with the Asian giant.

Another aspect which is of major importance in the formation of an African Union is the question of democratisation. The choice of a political system has not always been easy on this continent, partly because of the pluralistic nature of African countries and polities, and partly because of factors relating to the legacy of colonialism, lack of development and leadership.

While the leaders may have shown unusual will in ratifying the African Union treaty, there are significant issues which they will need to focus on in their own countries at the same time: poverty, AIDS and literacy being among the most pressing. Ultimately, their performance is more likely to be judged in these areas, at home, than on a larger scale. ✪

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Africa: living on the fringe?

GUY STUBBS

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It is often said that Africa is "marginalised". The phrase suggests that the continent – or at least most of it south of the Sahara, except perhaps South Africa – is "out" of the global system, or at best integrated into it only superficially. It also suggests that the poverty of the African people is precisely the result of their economies not being sufficiently integrated into the global system.
SAMIR AMIN challenges these views.

Let us consider first some facts which are hardly mentioned by the incense-bearers of globalisation. In 1990, the ratio of extra-regional trade to GDP for Africa was 45,6% while it was only 12,8% for Europe; 13,2% for North America; 23,7% for Latin America and 15,2% for Asia. These ratios were not significantly different throughout the 20th century. The average for the world was 14,9% in 1928 and 16,1% in 1990.[1]

How can we explain this curiosity that Africa is apparently even more integrated in the world system than any other developed or developing region? Of course the levels of development as measured by per capita GDP are highly unequally distributed, and, from that point of view, Africa is the poorest region in the modern world system, its GDP per capita amounting to only 21% of the world average and 6% of that of the developed centres. Therefore the high proportion of Africa's extra-regional trade with respect to its GDP would reflect the small size of the denominator of the ratio. At the same time, Africa's exports (as well as imports) represent only a minute proportion of the world's trade. And this is exactly the reason why Africa is considered "marginal" in the world system, i.e. having little importance (the attitude being that "the world could live easily without Africa").

The concept according to which a country or region is qualified as "marginalised" if its quantitative weight in the global economy is small, assumes implicitly that the logic of the expansion of the global capitalist economy pursues the maximisation of production (and therefore also of trade). This assumption is utterly wrong. In fact it matters little that Africa's exports have represented only a minute part of world trade in the past and today.

Capitalism is not a system which sets out to maximise production and productivity, but one which chooses the volumes and conditions of production which maximise the profit rate of capi-

Samir Amin is co-ordinator of the Third World Forum in Dakar, Senegal.

tal. The so-called marginalised countries are, in fact, the super-exploited in a brutal manner and therefore, impoverished countries, not countries located "at the margin" of the system.

The analysis therefore needs to be completed on other grounds. The relatively modest ratio for the developed areas – North America (USA and Canada) and Western-Central Europe (the European Union, Switzerland and Norway) – is associated not only with the highest levels of development but also with qualitative characteristics that ought to be spelled out: all developed countries have been built historically as auto-centred economies. I introduce here an essential concept which is ignored by conventional economics. Auto-centred is synonymous to "basically inward looking", not to "autarchic" ("closed"). That means that the process of capitalist accumulation in those countries which have become the centres of the world system has always been – and I submit continues and will continue to be so in the visible future – simultaneously inward looking and open, even in many cases aggressively open ("imperialist"). That means, therefore, that the global system has an asymmetric structure: the centres are inward-looking, auto-centred and simultaneously integrated in the global system in an active way (they shape the global structure); while the peripheries are not inward-looking (not auto-centred) and therefore integrated in the global system in a passive way (they "adjust" to the system, without playing any significant role in shaping it). That vision of the real world system is totally different from the one offered by conventional thought which superficially describes the world as a "pyramid" constructed of unequally wealthy countries ranking from the lowest levels of GDP per capita to the highest ones.

My conclusion from this conceptualisation is that all the regions of the world (including Africa) are equally integrated in the global system, but they are integrated into it in different ways. The concept of marginalisation is a false one which hides the real question, which is not "to which degree the various regions are integrated" but "in which way they are integrated".

In addition, the figures referred to above indicate that the degree of integration in the world system has not dramatically changed throughout the whole 20th century, as is being suggested by the dominant fashionable discourse on globalisation. There have been ups and downs, but the trend which reflects the progress of the degree of integration has been continuous and rather slow, not even accelerating throughout the last decades.

That does not exclude the fact that globalisation – which is an old story – has developed through successive phases that should be identified as qualitatively different, focusing on the specifics of each of them, in relation to the changes required by the evolution of the centres of the system, i.e. dominant global capital.

On the basis of the methodology suggested here, we can now look into the various phases of Africa's integration in the global system and identify the specific ways in which that integration operated for each of the successive phases analysed.

Phases of Africa's integration in the global system

Africa was integrated into the global system from the very start of the building of that system, in the mercantilist phase of early capitalism (the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries). The major periphery of that time was the colonial Americas where an outward-looking export economy was established, dominated by European Atlantic merchant capitalist interests. In its turn that export economy, focused on sugar and cotton, was based on slave labour. Therefore, through the slave trade, large parts of Africa south of the Sahara were integrated into the global system in a most destructive way. A good part of the later "backwardness" of the continent is due to that form of "integration" which led to a decrease in population to the extent that it is only now that Africa has recovered the proportion of the global population of the world it probably had around 1500 AD. It has led also to the dismantling of earlier larger state organisations which were replaced by small brutal military systems and permanent war between them.

In America itself, the mercantilist form of integration in the world system destroyed the potential for further development in many devastated regions. During that phase of early capitalism the highest rates of growth were achieved in areas such as the Caribbean, North-East of Brazil, and the southerly North American British colonies. An expert of the World Bank, if he had visited those areas at that time, would have written about their "miracle" (the value of Saint Domingue's exports of sugar was, at a time, larger than the total exports of England!) and concluded that New England, which was building an auto-centred economy, was on the wrong track. Today Saint Domingue is Haiti and New England has become part of the USA!

The second wave of integration of Africa in the global system was that of the colonial period, roughly from 1880 to 1960. Once conquered, it was necessary to "develop" the continent in question. At this juncture, both the reasonings of world capitalism – what natural resources do the various regions of the continent possess? – and those of the previous history of African societies come into play. It seems to me that in this context we should understand each of the three models of colonisation operating in Africa: the trading economy incorporating a small peasantry into the world tropical products market by subjecting it to the authority of a market of controlled oligopolies making it possible to reduce the rewards for peasant labour to the minimum and to wasteland; the economy of Southern Africa's reserves organised around mining, supplied with cheap labour by forced migration coming precisely from the inadequate "reserves" to enhance the perpetuation of traditional rural subsistence; and the economy of pillage which the concessionary companies embarked upon by taxing products from elsewhere, where the local social conditions did not permit the establishment of "trading", and nor did the the mineral resources justify the organisation of reserves intended to furnish abundant manpower. The Congo basin belonged to this third category in the main.

The results of this mode of insertion into world capitalism would also prove catastrophic for Africans. First it delayed – by a century – any commencement of an agricultural revolution. A surplus could be extracted from the labour of the peasants and from the wealth offered by nature without the investments of modernisation (no machines or fertiliser), without genuinely paying for the labour (reproducing itself in the framework of traditional self-sufficiency), and without even guaranteeing the maintenance of the natural conditions

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The Lomé Agreements, which have linked sub-Saharan Africa to the European Union, have relegated Africa to the production of raw materials at the very time when the Third World was elsewhere embarking on the industrial revolution.

Pic: Guy Stubbs

of reproduction of wealth (pillage of the agrarian soils and the forest). Simultaneously, this mode of development of natural resources tapped into the framework of the unequal international division of labour of the time, excluding the formation of any local middle class. On the contrary, each time that the latter started the process of its formation, the colonial authorities hastened to suppress it.

As a result today most so-called "less developed countries" are located in Africa. The countries which today make up this "fourth world" are, for the large part, countries destroyed by the intensity of their integration in an earlier phase of the global expansion of capitalism. Bangladesh, the successor state of Bengal which was the jewel of British colonisation in India, is a good example. Others have been – or still are – peripheries of peripheries.

For example, Burkina Faso has supplied most of its active labour force to Côte d'Ivoire. If one had taken into consideration the two countries as, in fact, constituting a single region of the capitalist system of the epoch, the characteristic rates of the "Ivory Coast miracle" would have had to be divided by two. Emigration impoverishes the regions which feed its flow and thus support the costs of bringing up youth who are lost the moment they become potentially active, as well as the costs of supporting the old after their return. These costs, much greater than the "money orders" sent to the families by the active emigrants, are almost always forgotten in the calculations of our economists. There are only a few countries which are "poor" and not integrated or or only weakly integrated into the global system. Perhaps, previously one could mention North Yemen or Afghanistan, but their integration is now underway, like that of others, producing nothing more than a "modernisation of poverty" – the shantytowns taking on the landless peasants.

The weaknesses of the national liberation movement and of the inheritor states of colonisation date back to this colonial fashioning. They are therefore not the products of the pristine pre-colonial Africa, which disappeared in the storm, as the ideology of global capitalism endeavours to derive its legitimacy from it, by holding forth its usual racist discourse. The "criticisms" of independent Africa, of its corrupt political middle classes, of the lack of economic direction, and of the tenacity of rural community structures forget that these features of contemporary Africa were forged between 1880 and 1960.

No wonder then that neo-colonialism has perpetuated these features. The form that this failure took is quite fully defined by the limits of the famous Lomé Agreements which have linked sub-Saharan Africa to the European Union. These agreements have indeed perpetuated the old division of labour – relegating independent Africa to the production of raw materials, at the very time when, during the Bandung period (from 1955 to 1975), the Third World was elsewhere embarking on the industrial revolution. They have made Africa lose about thirty years at a decisive moment of historic change. Undoubtedly, the African ruling classes were partly responsible for what would lead to the involution of the continent, particularly when they joined the neo-colonial camp against the aspirations of their own people, whose weaknesses they exploited. The collusion between the African ruling classes and the global strategies of imperialism is therefore the ultimate cause of the failure.

"Development" in Africa

Yet, having reconquered their political independence the peoples of Africa embarked as of 1960 on development projects, the main objectives of which were more or less identical to those pursued in Asia and Latin America despite the differences of ideological discourses which accompanied them here and there. This common denominator is easily understood, if we recall that in 1945 practically all Asian (excluding Japan), African (including South Africa) and – although with a few nuances – Latin American countries were still bereft of every industry worth this name (except mining here and there), largely rural by the composition of their population, governed by archaic regimes, whether land-owning oligarchies or colonial authorities.

Beyond their great diversity, all the national liberation movements had the same objectives of political independence, modernisation of the state, and industrialisation of the economy.

There is today a great temptation to read this history as that of a stage of the expansion of world capitalism, which

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was said to have performed certain functions attached to primitive national accumulation, thereby creating the conditions for the next stage, which we are now supposed to be entering, marked by opening up to the world market and competition in this field.

I will not suggest that we should yield to this temptation. The dominant forces in world capitalism have not "spontaneously" created the model(s) of development. This "development" was imposed on them. It was the product of the national liberation movement of the contemporary Third World. The reading which I propose therefore stresses the contradiction between the spontaneous and immediate trends of the capitalist system, which are always guided only by the short-term financial gain that characterises this mode of social management, and the longer-term visions which guide the rising political forces, in conflict for that very reason with the former. This conflict is certainly not always radical, as capitalism adjusts itself to it, even profitably. But it only adjusts to it, it does not generate its movement.

All liberation movements in Africa shared this modernist vision, which for that very reason I qualify as capitalist. Capitalist by its concept of modernisation, expected to produce the relationships of production and the social relationships basic and peculiar to capitalism: the wage relationship, business management, urbanisation, patterns of education, the concept of national citizenship. No doubt other values, characteristic of advanced capitalism, like that of political democracy, were woefully lacking, and this was justified by the exigencies of prior initial development.

All countries of the region – radicals and moderates – elected by the same formula the single party, farcical elections and leader/founder of the nation. Yet, in the absence of a middle-class of businessmen, the state – and its technocrats – was expected to substitute itself. But sometimes also, the emergence of the middle-class was held in suspicion on account of the priority that the latter would give to its immediate interests over the longer-term ones under construction. Suspicion became, in the radical wing of the national liberation movement, synonymous with exclusion. This radical wing then believed naturally that its project was that of the "building of socialism". It then took up the Soviet ideology.

If we adopt the criterion of the national liberation movements, that is "national construction", the results are on the whole arguable. The reason is that whereas the development of capitalism in earlier times supported national integration, the globalisation operating in the peripheries of the system, on the contrary, breaks up societies. However, the ideology of national liberation ignored this contradiction, having been enclosed in the bourgeois concept of "making up for historic backwardness", and conceiving this catching up by passive participation in the international division of labour (and not trying to modify it by delinking). No doubt, according to the specific character of pre-capitalist pre-colonial societies, this disintegration impact was more or less dramatic. In Africa, whose artificial colonial demarcation did not respect the previous history of its peoples, the disintegration wrought by capitalist peripherisation made it possible for ethnicism to survive, despite the efforts of the ruling class following national liberation to get rid of its manifestations. When crisis came, suddenly destroying the increase in the surplus which had enhanced the financing of the transethnic policies of the new state, the ruling class itself broke up into fragments which, having lost every legitimacy based on the achievements of "development", tried to create new bases for themselves often associated with ethnic retreat.

The destruction of the social fabric, growing poverty, and the regression of education and health cannot prepare a better future or help African producers to become 'more competitive' as expected.

While a number of countries in Asia and Latin America did embark during those "decades of development" of the second half of the 20th century on a process of industrialisation which turned out in some cases to be competitive on global markets, "successful development" (in fact growth without development) remained in Africa within the old division of labour, i.e. providing raw materials. The oil-producing countries are a good example of this, since other major mineral resources, such as copper, suffer a long structural demand crisis, but this can also be seen in some "tropical agricultural" societies, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Malawi. These were shown to be "brilliant successes".

In fact they have no future, as they belonged to the past from the very start of their prosperity. Therefore most of those experiences turned out to be unsuccessful even within the limits of the old division of labour. This is the case in most of sub-Saharan Africa. These difficulties were not necessarily the product of "bad policies", but of objective conditions. For instance, this type of development had already been achieved in colonial times and reached its ceiling by 1960. This is the case of Ghana: the Côte d'Ivoire miracle was just a matter of "catching up" with colonial West African coast achievements.

The end of a century

What followed the erosion of the national development projects of the 1960s and 1970s is well documented. The starting point was the brutal reversal in the balances of social forces, to the benefit of capital, which occurred in the 1980s. Dominant capital, as represented by the transnational companies (TNCs), moved into the offensive, operating in Africa through so-called "structural adjustment programmes" enforced throughout the continent since the mid-80s. I say so-called because those programmes are more conjunctural than structural, their real and exclusive target being the subordination of the economies of Africa to the constraint of servicing the high external debt, which in its turn, is to a large extent the very product of the stagnation which started appearing in the less developed countries along with the deepening crisis of the global system.

During the two last decades of the century average rates of growth of GDP have fallen to roughly half of what they had been in the previous two decades, for all regions of the world, Africa included, except Eastern Asia. It is dur-

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ing that period of structural crisis that the external debt of Third World countries (and Eastern Europe) started growing dangerously. The global crisis is indeed characterised by growing inequality in the distribution of income, high rates of profits, and therefore a growing surplus of capital which cannot find an outlet in the expansion of the productive systems.

Financial alternative outlets have to be created to avoid a devaluation of capital. The US deficit and external debt of Third World countries are responses to the system. The burden has now reached unsustainable levels. How could a poor African country earmark half or more of its exports simply to pay the interest on its debt, and simultaneously be requested to be "more efficient" and "adjust"? Let us remember that, after World War I, the payment of German's reparations represented only 7% of the exports of that industrialised powerful country. And yet most economists at that time considered the level too high and the "adjustment" of Germany to it impossible. It is interesting that Germany could not adjust to a loss of 7% of its export potential, but Tanzania is supposed to be able to adjust to a loss of 60% of it!

How could a poor African country earmark half or more of its exports simply to pay the interest on its debt, and simultaneously be requested to be "more efficient" and "adjust"?

Pic: Guy Stubbs

The devastating results of these policies are known: economic regression, social disaster, growing instability and sometimes even total disruption of whole societies (as in Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia and Sierra Leone). During the 1990s the growth rate of Africa's GDP per capita has been negative (-0,2%), Africa being alone in that case. As a result, Africa's share of global trade decreased. That fact is precisely what is being qualified as "marginalisation". Instead one should speak of a dramatic mal-integration in the global system. Conventional neo-liberal economists pretend this is only a "hard transition" towards a better future.

But how could it be? The destruction of the social fabric, growing poverty, and the regression of education and health cannot prepare a better future or help African producers to become "more competitive" as expected. Quite the opposite.

This neo-colonial plan for Africa is indeed the worst pattern of integration in the global system. It cannot but produce a further decline in the capacity of African societies to meet the challenges of the modern time. These challenges are to a certain extent new, relating to the long-term possible effects of the ongoing technological revolution (informatics) and through them, the organisation of labour, its productivity and new patterns of the international division of labour. What ought to be said in this respect is that all of these challenges are operating in the real world through conflicts of strategies.

For the time being the dominant segment of global capital – the TNCs – appears to dictate what is favourable to the progress of its particular strategies. African peoples and governments have not yet developed counter strategies of their own similar perhaps to what the East Asian countries are trying to push ahead. In that frame globalisation does not offer Africa solutions to any of its problems. Foreign direct private investments in Africa are negligible and exclusively concentrated on mineral and other natural resources.

In other words the strategy of TNCs does not help Africa moving beyond a pattern of international division of labour belonging to the remote past. The alternative, from an African point of view, needs to combine the building of auto-centred economies and societies and participating in the global system. This general law is valid for Africa today as it has been throughout modern history for all the regions of the world.

It is still too early to know if Africa is moving towards that goal. There is talk of an "African Renaissance". No doubt the victory in South Africa, i.e. the breakdown of the apartheid system, has created positive hopes not only in that country but throughout large parts of the continent. But there are not yet visible signals of these hopes crystallising into alternative strategies.

That would need dramatic changes at various national levels, going far beyond what is generally suggested under the labels of "good governance" and "political multiparty democracy", as well as at regional and global levels. Another pattern of globalisation would therefore gradually emerge from those changes making possible the correction of the mal-integration of Africa into the global system. ✪

Notes & references

1 S Cordelier, *La mondialisation au delà des mythes*, Paris: La Découverte, 1997, p 141. Figures from WTO 1995.

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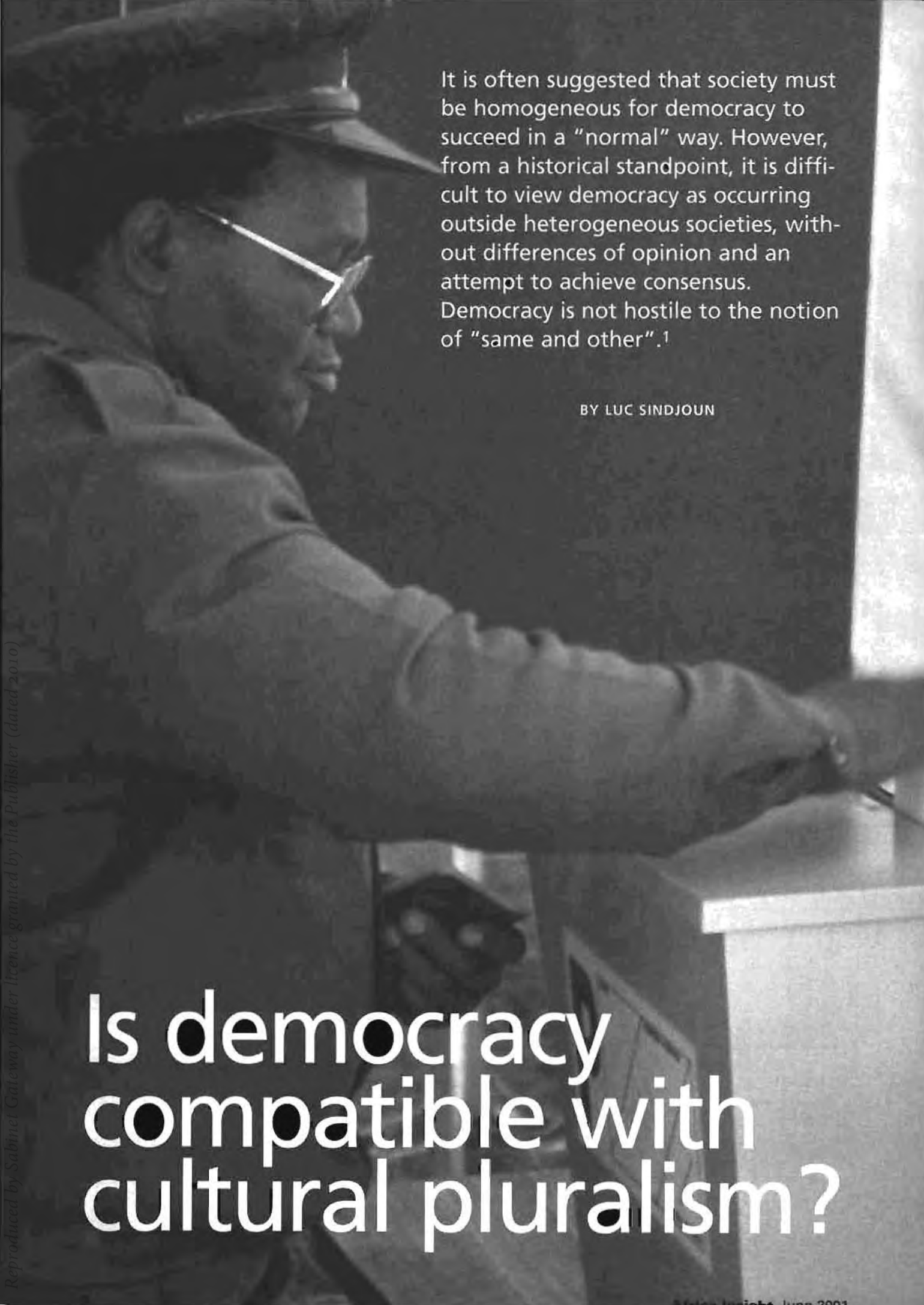

It is often suggested that society must be homogeneous for democracy to succeed in a "normal" way. However, from a historical standpoint, it is difficult to view democracy as occurring outside heterogeneous societies, without differences of opinion and an attempt to achieve consensus. Democracy is not hostile to the notion of "same and other".[1]

BY LUC SINDJOUN

Is democracy compatible with cultural pluralism?

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Is Democracy Compatible with Cultural Pluralism?

It is not easy to illustrate democracy as experienced by pluralistic societies, because "government by the majority" is considered the essence of democracy.[2] What is important is to detach democracy from pure theory and anchor it in the material world of pluralistic societies. Democracy is meaningless on its own, but its levels of meaning vary with individual societies, and its implementation is to a large extent characterised by plurality.[3] According to the relational approach, while democracy is one way of ordering society, it is in turn colonised by society. From that point on, democracy becomes comprehensible to social players, and the result is diversity.

In pluralistic societies, whose "members are divided into categories or groups on the basis of factors such as language, race, ethnic group, community of origin, specific social institutions and culture", democracy is generally presented in its consensual or consociational form.[4] But, according to Arend Lijphart

> in pluralistic societies, that is to say societies which are profoundly divided along religious, ideological, linguistic, cultural, ethnic or racial cleavages and which are virtually constituted of separate subsocieties each with its own political party, interest group and means of communication, the flexibility necessary for majority democracy is absent. In these conditions, the majority rule is not only anti-democratic, but also dangerous because the minorities to whom access to power is constantly denied will feel excluded, victims of discrimination, and will cease to express their allegiance to the system.[5]

Seen from this perspective, democracy in pluralistic societies may be interpreted both in terms of sociation and "communalisation".[6] But democracy in pluralistic societies is both sociative and communalising. The point is to protect and co-ordinate the interests of various segments in a political community being formed or protected. The contrast between majority democracy and consensual democracy is debatable. Lijphart shows that the majority system has become rare in modern democracies: coalition government, proportional representation, bicameralism and federalism, all characteristics of "consensual democracy", are common features of so-called majority democracies, characterised by consensus.[7] Furthermore, "consensual democracy" does not challenge the "one man, one vote" formula, which is the basis of genuine political equality and majority rule.[8] This formula is a feature of consensual democracy in that it provides for greater representation.

One should also avoid viewing the difference between pluralistic and homogeneous societies as absolute. Even so-called homogeneous societies, such as those of Western Europe, are home to patterns of cultural heterogeneity.[9] This is true, for example, of Italy as redrawn by the Lombardy League. So-called homogeneous societies are increasingly structured on the basis of group interests which help to form identities and cultures.[10]

These are societies where the dominant players have managed to conceal or reduce heterogeneity and to impose or induce acceptance of the ideology of universal dominance. In turn, pluralistic societies are not totally divided societies and also feature patterns of interdependence which create a certain degree of homogeneity, enabling them to hold together.

However, homogeneous societies may be considered societies where the face of the one conceals that of the many, where unity is adopted as a result of the action of the dominant players. Pluralistic societies are those in which the dialectic of the one and the many is unstable and equilibrium is precarious. This is why violence between groups is generally a variable in the analysis of pluralistic societies.[11]

The intense conflict between the one and many in pluralistic societies determines the manner in which democracy is expressed, it being understood that democracy does not evolve on the same level in pluralistic societies. Democracy is organised differently in the pluralistic societies of Lebanon, Canada, Belgium and Cameroon, for example. Generally speaking, democracy in pluralistic societies reflects a situation in which groups deem coexistence to be less costly than mutual destruction.

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GUY STUBBS

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It follows that democracy in pluralistic societies can be analysed without limiting the number of ways in which it can be expressed or organised. As democracy asserts itself as a technology for managing pluralistic societies, it promotes the legitimisation and consolidation of those societies. Pluralistic societies in consociational democracies are more visible than in any other form of democracy: the former are the precondition for the latter, and the latter reinforces the former and facilitates their expansion into the public arena and the political field. In general, the modern dynamics of democracy, through the growing legitimisation of rights and opportunities afforded communities and individuals, promotes the "communisation" of societies to a certain degree. Democracy in pluralistic societies raises two main problems from a political sociology standpoint: the formation of the political community and the implementation of democracy.

One can feel both Zulu and South African, for instance ... pluralistic societies are not merely places where identities collide, but where they also overlap and intermix

Formation of the Political Community

Why is the term "political community" mentioned in discussions of pluralistic societies? The notion of pluralistic societies generally triggers a flood of images reflecting "division", "cleavages" and "separation". The political community is defined in relation to unification and, in particular, in the form of the nation-state. According to Amitai Etzioni, the political community is a community structured on the basis of three types of integration:

- a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence;
- the existence of a decision-making centre capable of determining the allocation of resources and reward within the community;
- the existence of a transcendent point of identification for the majority of citizens.[12]

This definition of the political community is characterised to a large degree by the face of the one, or monopoly as an operative mode.[13] One wonders whether it is possible to read the political community by considering the tension between the one and the many, between monopoly and oligopoly. Historically, the state has never had a monopoly on violence; the idea of an oligopoly over violence is closer to reality. And the fact that citizens identify with the state does not mean that they do not also identify with various social groups, depending on opportunity and context. Identities are not necessarily superimposed in a hierarchical way; they are mobilised depending on circumstances.

A flexible approach to the political community makes it easier to consider pluralistic societies without celebrating or rejecting the political penetration of the periphery by the centre, or submitting to the cult of the nation-state. Jürgen Habermas has chosen to disregard national considerations in thinking about the political community in the perspective of European integration by speaking against the need for any "ethno-specific form of life", and observing the decay of sovereignty: here the political community is analysed as a republican community based on the assertion of the equality of rights and respect. Habermas admires Switzerland, a multicultural society where a liberal political culture no longer needs to rely on "common, ethnic, linguistic and cultural origin for all citizens". Thus pluralistic societies are not necessarily incompatible with the existence of a political community.[14]

How Analysis of the Political Community in Pluralistic Societies is Biased

Analysis of the political community in pluralistic societies is generally characterised by dichotomous thinking. "Nation – ethnic group" is a classic dichotomous pair. Broadly speaking, the political community is presented in the theory of modernisation and other ideologies as being stamped with the seal of the nation viewed as a culturally homogeneous framework, thus symbolising the osmosis between a specific form of organised power and the cultural community.[15] In the nation-building process, individuals lose their local and, in particular, ethnic identities when they identify with the nation.[16] The nation is the face of progress, the ethnic group that of backwardness. The ethnic group is thus presented as a barrier to nation-building.[17] Consequently, ethnic solidarities are factors in the relativisation of citizens' allegiance to the State.[18]

However, the idea of multipositionality or multiple allegiances can be seen in analysis of the political community in pluralistic societies: one can feel both Zulu and South African, for instance, or Beti and Cameroonian. Pluralistic societies are not merely places where identities collide, but where they also overlap and intermix.

Another reason why the interaction between ethnic identities and national identity must de considered is that, in certain African pluralistic societies, ethnic identity has no meaning apart from the state. In other words, the formation of the political community combines with the ethnic "communisation" of society.[19] Hence the idea of a dynamic "ethnic identities-national identity" continuum in this context. It may be understood that electoral democracy in pluralistic societies affirms the political community to a certain degree through the mobilisation of various segments of society to compete for the rewards made available by the state.[20] In pluralistic societies, multiple membership in a clan, ethnic group, region or race, state and nation indicates polarisation of the political community.

"Individuals – communities", another dichotomous pair, is a form of discrimination in pluralistic societies. In other words, the formation of a political community in pluralistic societies is relativised by the absence of a system of reference common to the various communities that would arise in opposition to individuals. But a pluralistic society is not only a society of communities, contrary to current discourse. The distinction between individuals and communities should be viewed in perspective, with individuals linked to each other through ties of mutual dependence which form the communities.[21] Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the existence of communities does not exclude individ-

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ual strategies. In this way ethnic groups are used by some political players in black Africa as a resource in the politics of affection or in mobilising community feeling.[22] Individuals and communities interact in pluralistic societies.[23] The fact that a number of communities exist in the same social space also means they must co-operate and negotiate, and the cleavage between individual and collective rights must be transcended.

"Communitarianism – libertarianism" is the sociological counterpart to the "consensual democracy – majority democracy" dichotomy. While it is true that "libertarian- communitarianist" reference points are confused, they may nevertheless be discerned by means of the extremes of the "continuum of responses" which they represent.[24] Communitarianists feel that membership in a community and affiliation with a culture are decisive factors. According to Will Kymlicka, communitarianism is based on three main arguments:

- the argument refuting the ability of individuals to cut themselves off or distance themselves from social relations as constructed for liberals;
- the argument that liberals are unaware of the social and cultural embeddedness of individuals' ability to choose;
- the acknowledgement of the persistent conflictual and instrumental relations caused by liberal emphasis on rights and justice, relations which would not exist outside a genuine community.[25]

Libertarians, on the other hand, emphasise individual freedom of choice and action.[26] But, while the individual's freedom of choice is exercised in and made possible by society, the community exists solely on the basis of individual actions.[27] The "communitarianism-libertarianism" dichotomy may be used to consider the political community in pluralistic societies. Based on the communitarian reading, individuals integrated in their communities would more easily assimilate the standards of citizenship. In particular, in the libertarian view, pluralistic societies are preferred contexts for individuals. The choices individuals make bring about changes in cultural communities.

Thus it is possible to consider the coexistence of individual rights and collective rights in pluralistic societies. The idea is less to assert that " the right of minorities is a trap for the rights of man"[28] than to recognise that the members of majority cultures can cope with inequalities which are the product of circumstances independent of their own choosing and of their ambitions, or that, considering the "respect for individuals' membership in cultural communities, protection of this affiliation is a fundamentally important proof of that respect".[29]

In the first case, it is important to proclaim collective rights so as to fight inequalities, while in the second, the proclamation of minority rights stems from the recognition of equality among persons and respect for individuals' membership communities. The Cameroonian constitution of January 1996, for example, is moving towards reconciling individual and collective rights.[30]

"Multiculturalism – integration" is an increasingly promoted dichotomous pair.[31] To the extent it involves the recognition and consolidation of cultural and community particularities and socio-diversity, multiculturalism is not necessarily the enemy of integration and democracy. Through ethnocentrism, "primordialist multiculturalism" calls into question the equality among communities and can provoke political crises in pluralistic societies such as Burundi and Rwanda.[32] However, according to Habermas, the multiplicity of subcultures and communities does not prevent a liberal political culture from forming in the "constitutional patriotism" mould.[33] From that point, republican multiculturalism is based on acceptance of others.

These dichotomous pairs demonstrate the tensions in the formation of the political community in pluralistic societies, indicating the complexity which increases when one considers the extranational aspect of the problem.

How "Pluralistic Societies" become a Paradigm

In an international context characterised by the shifting line between internal and external, it is important to avoid limiting the analysis of pluralistic societies to specific territories. The international environment of pluralistic societies is an important area for analysis. It is a consequence of the transformation of the "we-I equilibrium" expressed through the integration of national societies through international organisations such as the UN which exercise significant symbolic power and structural pressure on the states.[34] In other words, international organisations constantly intervene in the internal organisation of states. The institutionalisation of international relations has largely contributed to the gradual constitution of "pluralistic society" as a recognised model for society.

The United Nations has worked to promote pluralistic societies through a number of legal instruments; in 1996, Christine Inglis listed 27 such instruments concerning non-discrimination, minority rights and the rights of indigenous people.[35]

Whereas Article 1 of the UN Charter merely notes the importance of culture and the UNESCO constitution refers to the "fruitful diversity of cultures", Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises that every individual has indispensable cultural rights. Similarly, Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states; "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language." These articles aim to affirm and protect socio-cultural pluralism:

> Protection of these rights is designed to ensure the survival and the permanence of the cultural, religious and social identity of the minorities concerned, thus helping to enrich the social structure as a whole. The Committee accordingly observes that these rights must be protected as such and must not be confused with

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Routine democracies are established democracies which made an effort to eliminate excess historical baggage, giving them a natural appearance.

Pic: Guy Stubbs

> other individual rights... The State-Parties therefore have an obligation to ensure that these rights are fully guaranteed...[36]

The United Nations promotes the cause of pluralistic societies in various ways: for instance, by recognising the right of minorities to carry on their own activities in the field of education; proclaiming the cultural and religious rights of children or those belonging to minorities; developing the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities; and proclaiming 1996 the International Year of Tolerance and 1993 the International Year for the World's Indigenous People.

On the strength of its moral force, the United Nations legitimises the concepts of indigenous people, national, ethnic, religious, linguistic and racial minorities specific to pluralistic societies. The standards it sets shape societies into pluralistic societies, afford social players community mobilisation opportunities and promote respect for socio-cultural pluralism.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has now also adopted a declaration on the rights of national minorities. In 1992, the Council of Europe developed the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and, in 1994, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The existence of these instruments partly undermines the idea of "homogeneous societies".

So too, the discourse of international governmental and non-governmental organisations regarding decentralisation of environmental protection for the benefit of local communities is an indirect form of legitimising pluralistic societies. The "pluralistic society" as a framework for viewing and managing the social dynamic is, then, becoming a decisive characteristic of the "common constitutional heritage of political societies".[37] But how is democracy achieved in a multicultural society?

Assembling Democracy and Pluralistic Societies

Pluralistic societies pose a problem of governability: how does one govern a society in which cultural, ethnic, linguistic and racial cleavages determine ways of doing, being and feeling? When the question of governability is raised in connection with the form of a system, we are dealing with "a social war technique of domestication and control through submission to a government whose purpose is to make the parties still potentially (and actually) in conflict accept collective representation of the social system", it being understood that the context of pluralistic societies lends a new dimension to the ideological discourse of democracy on inclusion and compromise.[38] The issue is to avoid "social war" or "the war of the gods" through democracy, through a twofold movement:

- cultural or community pluralism is influenced by the democratic context, particularly where it enables equality to be sought through the distribution of portions of the national pie to each community;[39]
- democracy comes under the test of

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cultural pluralism; because not only do pluralistic societies shape the flexible reformulation of the democratic techniques of representation, recognition and protection of rights in particular, they also transform democracy into a "form of social regime and state".[40]

This twofold movement is central to the implementation of democracy in multicultural societies, which is not to suggest that democracy is exterior to or grafted on to society. The implementation of democracy in pluralistic societies can be analysed in two ways:

- as a process of democratisation or democratic transition.[41] This includes political systems that are in the process of democratising or in which democratisation has broken down. The moment when democratisation occurs is decisive in that it is a period of political struggle to reformulate the ground rules, assign rules and redefine the equilibrium of the political regime.[42]
- as a dynamic of routine or established democracies in pluralistic societies. Routine democracies are preferred subjects for observation because they are familiar with political procedures.

While both approaches take into consideration the work involved in building cultural identities, neither succumbs to the "identity illusion" argument.[43] One task is to adopt and reveal the principle of mystification and naturalisation of cultural identities, another to confine the constructed cultural identity to the stage of an illusion. In the democratic context of pluralistic societies and perhaps elsewhere, one may validly consider institutionalising cultural or community identities.

Cultural identities become objective realities because they are codified and external to individuals and because they become essential to them by structuring or guiding their actions. For example, the constitution of Mauritius entrenches four communities as objective realities: Hindus, Muslims, Sino-Mauritians and "the general population" (persons who do not belong to the other communities, in particular Creoles).[44]

Cultural identities are also objective realities because they are internalised in the conscience of members of pluralistic societies through their socialisation via family, group and school. In pluralistic societies, cultural identities have stable social significance; that is to say that membership in a community and in a culture has shared significance which permits political communication and action.

In the relative formalisation or codification of cultural identities, these identities acquire the status of convention because regular respect for cultural identities ensures that the convention's validity is guaranteed "externally by the possibility that anyone who deviates from it... lays himself open to censure".[45] Thus in Cameroon, for example, the practice of regional balance in government recruitment is a convention which strengthens the existence of ethno-regional groups.[46]

The Problem of the Politics of Affection in a Context of Political Liberation

It would be difficult for any analysis of the African wave of democratisation[47] to avoid the issue of cultural identities and pluralistic societies, not because, as one author curiously claims, pluralistic or fragmented societies are a specific characteristic of African societies,[48] but rather because the community or cultural relationship is a major determinant of the socio-political dynamic.[49]

Democratisation occurs in a context in a which cultural identities are politically mobilised in an increasingly routine way, in a socio-political field which is given structure by networks that provide community support or opposition and by community networks in which individuals are bound by affinities, vote-catching or kinship.[50] In view of the cultural pluralism of African societies, some have advanced a "theory of the refounding of the multinational or post national state"[51] and proposed a reconstruction of the African State in a federal form reflecting "the autonomy of ethnic organisations", "the participation of ethnic organisations" and "the exercise of executive power by ethnic groups on a rotating basis".[52]

Pluralistic societies pose a problem of governability: how does one govern a society in which cultural, ethnic, linguistic and racial cleavages determine ways of doing, being and feeling?

Democratisation is no easy matter in a situation where the politics of affection prevails.[53] Society's cultural pluralism and the rejection of its politicisation were long used to justify the absence of pluralistic democracy in African states, in particular Cameroon, Kenya, Gabon, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. African leaders expressed their fear of seeing spontaneous or domesticated cultural pluralism shift to an organised or mobilised form of cultural pluralism as a result of democracy.

In this way, Aumadou Ahidjo, Cameroon's Head of State from 1960 to 1982, stigmatised the multiparty system in the 1970s, likening it to tribalism in view of the ethno-regional basis of the political parties at the time. The single party was considered the ideal instrument for nation-building. Cultural pluralism was opposed because it implied "multicultural communities" and "secondary homelands".[54] The democratisation of pluralistic societies thus constitutes a change in political paradigm.

Democratisation and Crisis in Pluralistic Societies

It is a constant that "the political unit is possible in a multicultural society", but that society is not always democratised without disturbing "the balance of tensions".[55] The crisis of democratising pluralistic societies may be understood from the crisis of the state.

This is the case where the state comes under criticism because it is controlled by political players from the regions, which provided significant electoral support. The result is a crisis of universalist legitimisation of the state which helps to promote ethno-regional idiosyncrasies, operating on the principle of alliances and hegemonic roles.

In this way, the Congolese state was characterised under Lissouba's presidency as a "Nibolek" state of ethno-regional support groups, which is reminiscent of Kenya's "Kalenjin state". Here the

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disobjectification of the state does not consist solely in calling its universality into question, but also in challenging the degree to which it represents society. From the moment the state is represented by specific communities, it loses its legitimacy and meaning for the communities excluded from power.[56]

In African pluralistic societies, in particular those of Gabon, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, democratisation appears to interact with the demands made by groups of various identities, demands whose vehemence and expression can raise doubt as to the existence of the "meaning of the community". By sanctioning the weight of numbers, the electoral democratisation process contributes in part to the building of minority interests.

This was how, in Kenya, for example, the Majimbo ideology on the defence of minority interests would be reactivated in the 1990s. This ideology "appeared to parry democratic demands made at the time and supported the political rallying of so-called minority ethic groups from the coast, the eastern provinces and the Rift Valley to offset the demographic and political weight of other communities such as that of the Kikuyu".[57]

Democratisation generally affords a political opportunity for enhanced visibility for ethnic groups and communities with significant elites, the revival of community habits and thus the fragmentation of the political community. The crisis in pluralistic societies has been made possible in certain situations by democratisation and has also undermined that process. This does not mean that political liberalisation has brought about the return of the indigenous (ethnic) group and enabled real (multicultural) society to expand into the political field.[58]

From the moment the state is represented by specific communities, it loses its legitimacy and meaning for the communities excluded from power

What it has brought about is a new political situation conducive to the organisation and mobilisation of a form of cultural pluralism. It is therefore difficult to draw a distinction between "ethnic sphere" and "civic sphere". Those who engage in identity politics use both the "civic sphere" and the discursive categories of the civic sphere to legitimise their "ethnic" interests.

The mobilisation of cultural identities has been a factor in the dissolution of the "meaning of the community" in certain pluralistic societies. This is the case in particular of Rwanda and Burundi.[59]

In Burundi, although the unity charter which was to permit the coexistence of the Hutu and Tutsi was adopted on the strength of 89% of votes, "in the view of the Tutsi, democratisation was not without its risks because it raised the prospect that a (Hutu) ethnic majority might form a political majority".[60]

The victory of Melchior Ndadaye in the presidential election of 1993, with 65% of the vote, and of his party, Frodebu, in the legislative elections with 71% of the vote, was viewed as a victory for the Hutu (approximately 85% of the population) over the Tutsi who had hitherto led the country.

This change in the ethnic power base as a result of democratisation triggered a period of instability with the assassination of President Ndadaye later in 1993 by members of the predominantly Tutsi army. This exacerbated ethnic conflict and undermined the power of the new leader. In 1996, Pierre Buyoya, a Tutsi, seized power through a coup d'état.[61]

In Rwanda, although democratisation has not had a decisive effect on the coexistence of Hutu and Tutsi (in particular because armed conflict and Arusha negotiations between the government and the Rwanda Patriotic Front dominated political life), the attributes of democratisation were nevertheless used as resources for action.

"Freedom of expression" made it possible to establish a press and radio (Radio Télévision Libre des Milles Collines) to mobilise the Hutu majority, who held power, against the Tutsi. Thus the rhetoric of the majority was used. In Rwanda, because "majority rule, that of the majority people, was established", there was some difficulty in seeking a compromise. It should also be mentioned that, given the established position of the *Front Populaire Rwandais* as the main representative and military arm of the Tutsi community, it is not clear that it viewed democratisation as an opportunity for power.[62]

Democratisation and Reconfiguration of the Unit in Plural Societies

To view democratisation as an opportunity for assembling new heterogeneous compromises to enable communities to live together is not merely to espouse the argument that political science has two faces: order and disorder.[63] The democratisation of pluralistic societies is not merely disorder, it also involves redefining order.

The redefining of national unity and political integration was a feature of most African states in the 1990s. On the one hand, it is reflected in the codification of cultural pluralism to recognise minorities, indigenous people and ethnic diversity.[64] On the other hand, it resulted in a relaxing of the central authority's influence on the periphery through decentralisation or regionalisation, in particular in Mali and Cameroon, and ethnic federalism in Ethiopia, for example. What is now being considered is the multipolarisation of national unity. For example, South Africa's democratic constitution reflects the country's diversity by recognising eleven official languages, and ensuring respect for other spoken languages that do not have official status. This affords the various communities both visibility and recognition, hence the official promotion of South Africa as the "rainbow nation". The official sanctioning and legal or political protection of community diversity constitutes a paradigm shift in most African states and signals a crisis in the monolithic definition of the nation and thus the affirmation of the nation's pluralistic or multicultural collective imagination.[65]

The systematic formation of coalitions as a way of conducting politics is a feature of the new historical configuration. In fact, the coalition is a commonplace aspect of pluralistic electoral politics.[66] The existence of a community vote, which is both a condition and a result of the ethno-regional basis of political parties in Africa, undermines the universal nature of any form of polities that fails to reflect ethno-regional representation, the issue being recognition of the nation's multicultural nature

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Coalition politics in the form of power-sharing is illustrated in an original way by South Africa's transition to democracy.
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and thus the legitimisation of the state.[67]

In these circumstances, coalition polities can make it possible either to secure a stable parliamentary majority or to ensure the participation of various community segments, regardless of their electoral contribution.[68] These reasoned efforts to determine a majority and/or make an effective symbolic gesture are apparent in Cameroon. In 1992, while an alliance between the former single party and the *Mouvement pour la Défense de la Republique* made it possible to form a parliamentary majority, it also enabled the MDR's elites, which had been co-opted by the government, to facilitate identification of the "Kirdi" with the state to a certain degree. Similarly, the fact that an Anglophone has held the position of Prime Minister since 1992 is not a reflection of the group's electoral weight in the parliamentary majority, but appears to have been a symbolic gesture of national unity.

Coalition politics in the form of power-sharing is illustrated in an original way by South Africa's transition to democracy.[69] The interim constitution provided for the main political parties (African National Congress, National Party and Inkatha Freedom Party) to share power for a transitional period between 1994 and 1999. In the April 1994 elections, neither the National Party nor the IFP won the necessary votes (20%) to elect a vice-president. However, the ANC offered its support to the National Party's De Klerk, who was elected vice-president. In the spirit of the constitution, which enables political parties to participate in government in proportion to their parliamentary representation, a Government of National Unity was constituted in which the ANC held 18 departments, the National Party six departments, including Finance and Constitutional Affairs, and the IFP three departments, including Home Affairs.

From an analytical standpoint, it would appear that, where the electoral weight of the political parties roughly representing the communities is taken into consideration in their participation in government, that participation becomes a differential involvement which can be likened more to an association in power than power-sharing. The dynamics are determined in part, and yet decisively, by the pivotal party. The notion of power-sharing seems more appropriate in situations where there is a relative balance between political parties. This makes it possible to avoid accentuating the cleavages that would be caused by a "winner takes all" or zero-sum approach. Coalitions are organisations characterised by inequality and ranking based on political weight.

In the context of the democratisation of African societies, "communalisation" (the creation of a subjective feeling of belonging to the same community) increasingly appears to be achieved through compromises between various communities. It should be emphasised, however, that even authoritarian regimes have had a practice of co-ordinating community identities.[70] A new feature of democratisation is the appearance of community spokespersons, ethno-regional agents and the shift to cultural pluralism, either in its purest state or limited to an organised or mobilised form.[71] Coalition politics does not call democratisation into question, as a partial interpretation of the idea of "passive revolution", might suggest: to a certain degree it guarantees its social legitimisation. The "passive revolution", reflected in part through the compromise between the elites resulting from various compromises, does not preclude change or democratisation. Compromise occurs in a dynamic political context.[72]

The Consolidation of Sociative Democracies

Routine democracies are established democracies which have over time made an effort to eliminate excess historical baggage, giving them a natural appearance, so much so that they become a epistemological barrier to assessing the processes of democratisation, the "new democracies".[73] Routine democracies are considered in relation to their technologies and cultures for

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managing multicultural societies. Lijphart refers to them as "consociational democracies" and as representing a "consensual model of democracy".[74] Consociational democracy is defined by four characteristics:

- The grand coalition which breaks from the parliamentary tradition of forming governments on the basis of majority rule, rather entailing co-operation among the leaders of all "significant segments" of the pluralistic society, hence the "coalescent" leadership style.
- Mutual veto is an additional way of protecting vital minority interests and affords each segment a full guarantee of political protection.
- Proportionality, a principle that deviates from majority rule, determines appointments to public positions and the allocation of financial resources to the various segments and modulates representation of the "significant segments" in the decision-making bodies.
- Segment autonomy, which Lijphart considers in relation to federalism, enables each segment to govern its own affairs.[75]

Lijphart's model has become a classic in debates on democracy in pluralistic societies.[76] However, the rigorous nature of the model precludes any consideration of the extensive regulation of pluralistic societies in a democratic system. The four characteristic mentioned above appear to constitute necessary characteristics, but it is important to see how compromises are organised among segments and how the various community interests are co-ordinated. In other words, the idea is to see how, in pluralistic societies, democracies become "sociations", based on Weber's idea of political systems for seeking out and achieving compromises between segmentary interests. Furthermore, the Lijphart model is characterised by the illusion of all things governmental. The model almost exclusively envisages the political construction of coexistence among social groups in terms of participation in government. However, the democratic regulation of pluralistic societies is not limited to the exercise of power, it also concerns the organisation of the relationship between citizens and their government in terms of recognising and guaranteeing human rights, the rights of indigenous people and so on.

Western sociative democracies are characterised by a wealth of forms of political recognition of identity signs. For instance, the form of the state is a form of democratic regulation of pluralistic societies. In this context, the loosening of the centre's influence over the periphery appears to be the legitimate political form of organisation. The state may be federal as in Switzerland, where the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by the cantons, which approximately reflect linguistic areas, makes the idea of confederation seem plausible.[77] The "autonomic state", that is to say a state which defies classification as a "unitary state" or "federal state" and which is characterised by a high degree of regionalisation and autonomisation, has become established in Italy, Spain and Belgium.[78] In Spain, for example, the 1978 Constitution "recognises and guarantees the right of nationalities and regions to autonomy". Autonomous communities such as Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia in particular have their own political institutions and significant powers.[79] This arrangement makes sense only in view of the existence of the Catalonian, Basque and Galician nationalisms. In general, the main factor influencing the form of a state is the territorial limitation of the identities concerned. However, the territorial criterion may be of only relative importance. The Belgian federal state is not entirely territorially based: the Flemish and Walloon communities hold power in the bilingual region of the capital, Brussels.[80]

The democratic regulation of pluralistic societies is not limited to the exercise of power

Positive discrimination policies are also implemented in sociative democracies, to substitute compensatory inequality for strict equality and thus to offset the effects of exclusion on racist, religions and ethnic grounds.[81] This is particularly the case in the United States, where, starting in the late 1960s, a series of affirmative action measures were introduced to provide for the preferential treatment of previously disadvantaged groups (such as Blacks, women, Hispanics, the descendants of indigenous populations and Asians):

> the American nation is not of a single piece. It is a federation of peoples, a nation of many peoples, theoretically equal among themselves, but in fact, until recently, treated unequally by public authorities. The American dream of equality for all without regard to race or colour is only a distant ideal, scarcely attainable by American blacks and 'minorities', who are still the victims of discriminatory practices by their fellow citizens. It is therefore not unreasonable to use membership in an ethnic group to 'lend a hand' to less privileged students. ... the future of the nation depends on leaders well trained in the ideas and habits of students as diverse as the many people who form the nation...[82]

Recognition of a "sovereignty divided into ethnic segments" leads to practices designed to promote disadvantaged groups in the areas of employment, post-secondary education and government contracts. States such as Australia, Canada and Sweden have also designed multiculturalism policies to enhance the visibility of various ethic groups.[83]

The dynamics of sociative democracies result in the creation of a diverse range of means to regulate groups and individuals. These are democracies which simultaneously solve both the communitarian and individual equations. The search for compromise (through coalitions, protection for minorities and decentralisation) does not prevent sociative democracies from being arenas of permanent conflict: competition among political parties and between centripetal and centrifugal tendencies. In other words, sociative democracies do not mark the end of pluralistic societies' political trajectories. They are also "mortal". However, the notion that a sociative democracy is a place where identity cleavages become absolute and are consolidated must be qualified because the coexistence of various communicaties in the same socio-political area is both a cause and a consequence of interdependence which attenuates cleavages.

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In conclusion, the political destiny of identity in sociative democracies or democratising pluralistic societies would appear to be a consecration of the principle of difference, without irreparably sacrificing the principle of unity. It is not the only possible political form.

One can well imagine a rejection of identity markers along the lines of France's example: the Constitution of 1958 states that France is "an indivisible, secular, democratic and social republic which guarantees equality before the law for all citizens, regardless of origin", and does not recognise minorities such as the Corsican people, "a component of the French people". Sociative democracy is thus not absolutely successful.

The subject of this analysis is both a social system of democracy and constituted by cultural pluralism and a political system of cultural pluralism in the form of sociative democracy.

This is a context in which the state tradition of simplification and rationalisation of society establishes the communities as reference categories. Sociative democracies thus appear as systems for socio-political regulation.[84] The idea of socio-political regulation makes it possible to form a clearer picture of the search for cohesion in a context of fragmentation and disorder.[85]

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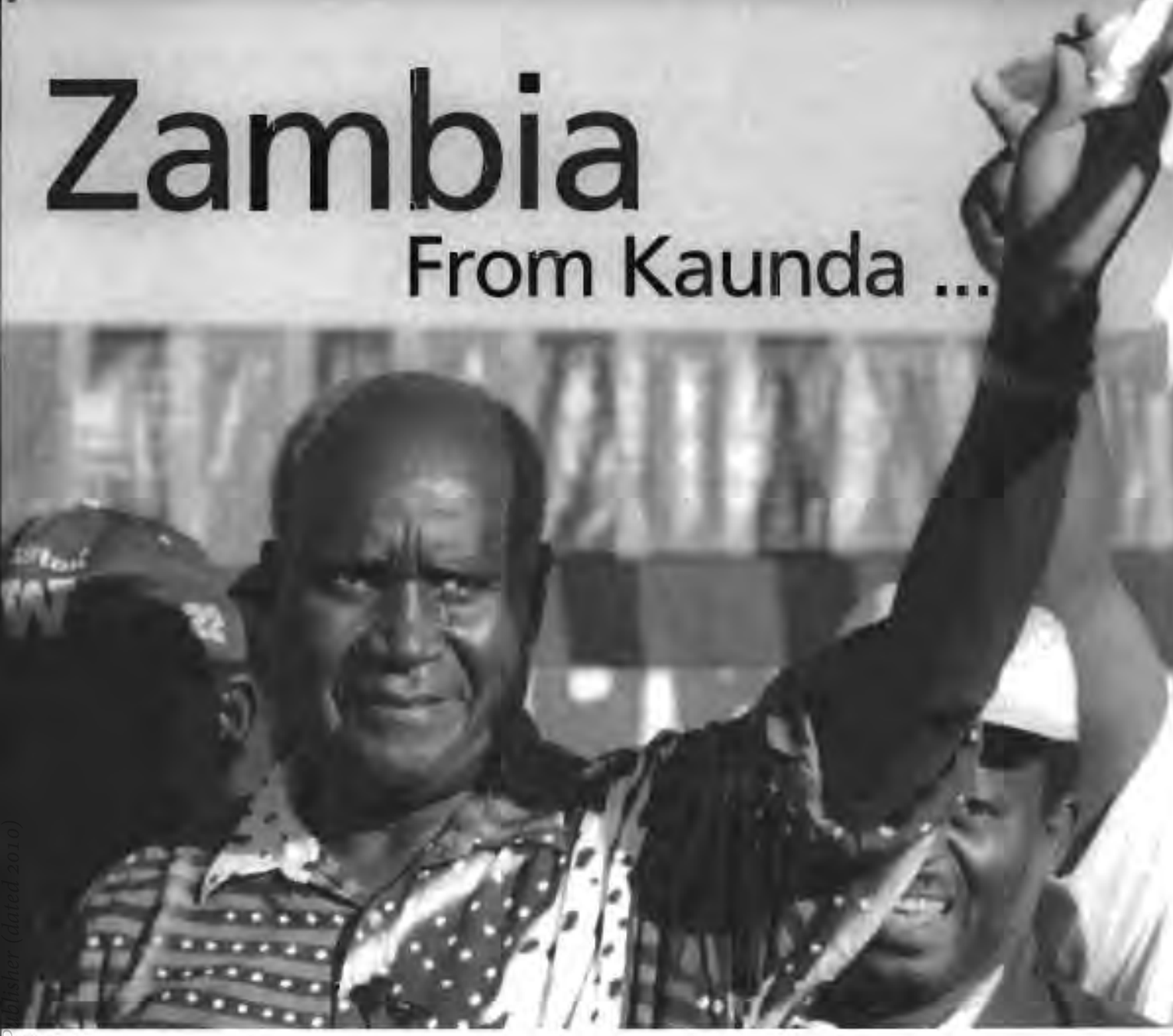
Zambia
From Kaunda ...



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Change and continuity in Zambia's Southern African policy

JOTHAM MOMBA of the University of Zambia examines the role played by internal factors in shaping the attitude of Kaunda's government towards the liberation movements, and of Chiluba's government towards the liberated governments of Southern Africa.

The Zambian government, under the successive presidents of Kenneth Kaunda and Frederick Chiluba, has varied its stand towards Southern African regional politics over the years. One common feature underlying the regimes of both Kaunda and Chiluba is that, for different reasons, Zambia has had an uneasy relationship with its Southern African neighbours.

Largely because of the Zambian government's role under Kaunda in supporting the liberation movements, Zambia was at one time surrounded by hostile colonial governments: the two Portuguese colonies, Mozambique and Angola, and the settler government of Southern Rhodesia, actively supported by South Africa. In spite of or perhaps because of this, Zambia gave support to the liberation movements in Southern Africa, many of which had bases in the country. Yet despite this support, the Zambian government, more than any other liberated African country, had a stormy rela-

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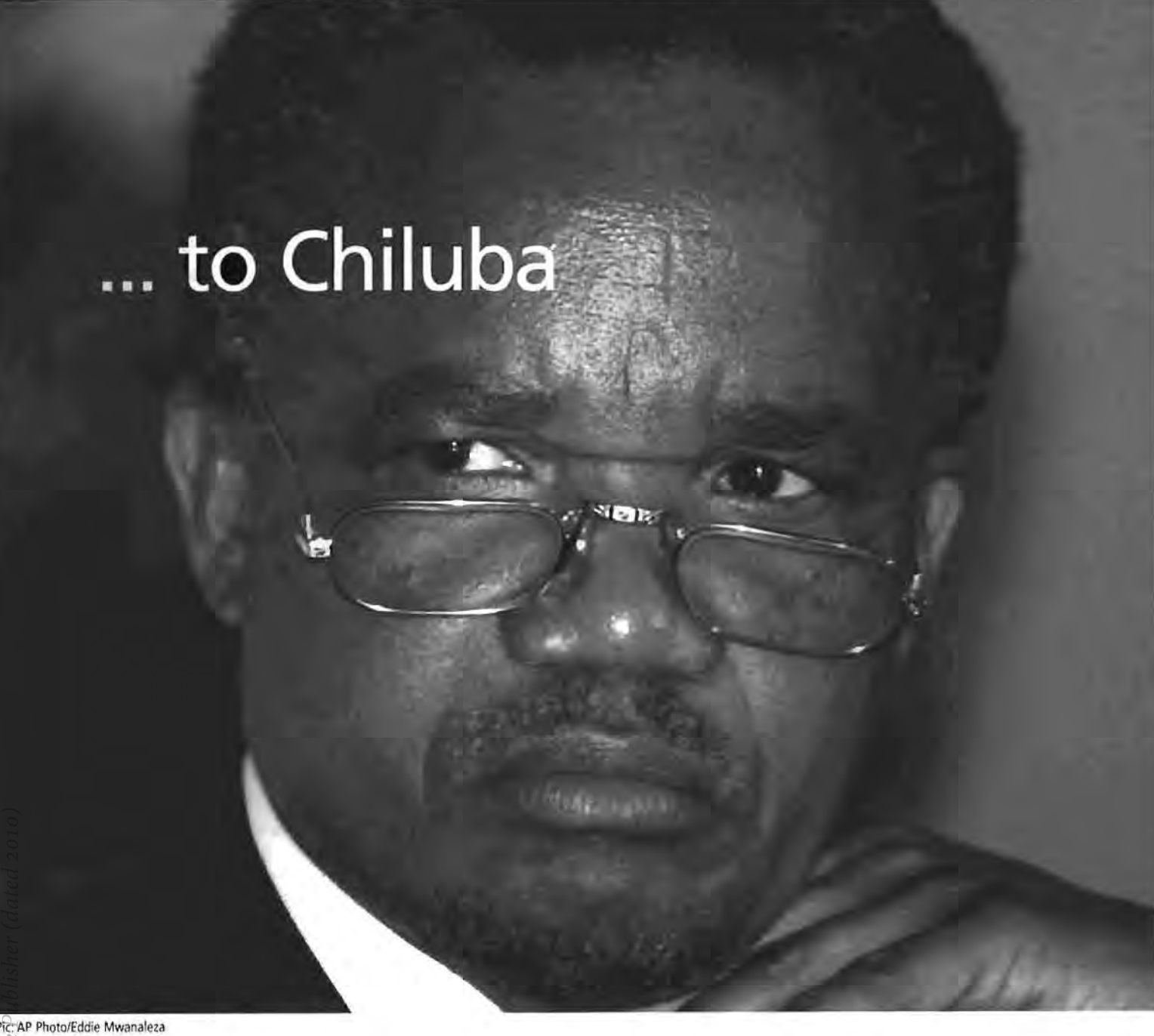
... to Chiluba



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tionship with the liberation movements – to a point where some leaders of the liberation movements began to doubt Zambia's commitment to the liberation struggle.[1]

Coming to office when the liberation struggles in the region were ending, Chiluba and his government adopted a different attitude towards Southern Africa. However, Chiluba has also experienced difficulties with Zambia's Southern African neighbours. Significantly, the most strained relationship has been with the governments in which the political parties that led the liberation struggles are now in power.

The Kaunda Government and the Liberation Movements[2]

Three features stand out strongly in Zambia's Southern African policy during the First and Second Zambian republics. The first is Zambia's strong commitment to the liberation struggle in the region, expressed through the active support of the country to the liberation movements that had committed themselves to the overthrow of settler regimes. Together with this support was an equal commitment to solving regional problems by peaceful means. Armed struggle was, therefore, seen as an alternative to peaceful measures. Thirdly, there was an emphasis by Zambian leaders on the need for unity among the liberation movements in each of the countries under white domination, irrespective of their ideological differences.

Together with Tanzania, Zambia bore the brunt of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. Largely because of its geographical position, Zambia functioned as the base of many liberation movements in exile. The *Movemento Popular de Libertaçao de Angola* (MPLA) had a base in Zambia from 1966 to 1974, while the *Frente de Libertaçao de Mozambique* (FRELIMO) and *Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique* (COREMO) also had bases in the country. The country also provided facilities for the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa and the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) throughout their period of armed struggle.

Besides such direct support to the liberation movements, the country also helped with the formation of important regional groups whose goal was to assist the decolonisation process on the subcontinent. Zambia played a key role in the formation of the Frontline States and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC).

The Frontline States spearheaded the liberation struggle in Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and Namibia, and provided basic collective action against the white regimes in these countries as well as giving diplomatic support to the liberation movements. Although not directly involved in the political liberation process, SADCC's major objective was to reduce the dependence of the region on South Africa.

Several factors may have played a role in determining why Zambia under Kaunda played such a critical role in the liberation struggle. The first, and perhaps the most important, is the influence of the ideology of Humanism. Writers such as Timothy Shaw and Benedict Mtshali argue that President Kaunda's philosophy of Humanism played a pivotal role in determining Zambia's position towards the white regimes and the armed struggle to end them.[3]

One important tenet of Humanism was the rejection of all forms of discrimination and exploitation, including racism. The philosophy was thus incompatible with the white regimes in the region, which dominated Africans and denied them their basic human rights. This ideology provided the Kaunda government with the moral grounds for supporting the liberation struggle, for, as Mtshali observes, it gave them a basis for evaluating and interpreting events in Africa and globally.[4]

This strong position against racial domination in the region should be seen in terms of Zambia's own experience as a British colony. Writing to Colin Morris in 1960, Kaunda complained of racism in the country: "I am a nationalist living in a society that the white men call multi-racial, but it rejects me and my claims. I am regarded in my country as a second class citizen".[5]

At the time, he was president of the nationalist movement fighting colonialism in Northern Rhodesia, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). The origins of the ideology of Humanism must be seen in terms of the frustrations of an African middle class who came to constitute the leadership of the African people.

The third factor was the influence of Pan-Africanism. This continental movement stressed the unity and liberation of the entire continent from colonialism and white domination. Kaunda was a strong believer in Pan-Africanism and adhered to all resolutions of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which called for unity among the liberation movements in the individual colonies. Hence the position of the Kaunda government towards the liberation struggle was also determined by the position taken by the OAU.

The fourth factor that may have determined Zambia's Southern African policy was its geo-political position. Prior to 1974, the country was surrounded by hostile countries, excepting Tanzania. Although Malawi was not a white-ruled country, the relationship between Zambia and Malawi had been uneasy from the time of independence, with Malawi's close relationship with South Africa and occasional claims to some parts of Zambia being a source of tension. According to Mtshali, Zambia's geo-political position was such that the country could not live permanently with its racist neighbours, and its decision to support the liberation movement provided hopes for a resolution to this situation.[6] Thus, Kaunda appreciated the fact that until South Africa, the citadel of white power in the region, was itself liberated, Zambia's own liberation would not be guaranteed.[7]

Kaunda saw the liberation struggle in Southern Africa essentially as a struggle to end white racism

These factors explain the reasons for Kaunda's strong support for the liberation struggle and, to a large extent, seem also to have been the basis for Kaunda's strong preference for resolving Southern African problems through peaceful means rather than the armed struggle, as well as his insistence on the unity of liberation movements. This was a position which at times brought Kaunda into conflict with the leaders of the liberation movements.

Kaunda saw the liberation struggle in Southern Africa essentially as a struggle to end white racism. The important issue at stake was the ending of white domination, and not the means to end it, although peaceful means were preferred. This meant that prolonged armed struggle with its attendant costs in terms of human lives and economic infrastructure was perceived negatively. Thus it can be argued that Kaunda may have seen elements of the armed struggle as mindless violence, and as necessary only if negotiations failed. In this regard, Zambia and Kaunda's position in the region was consistent. As early as 1963 Kaunda expressed a preference for resolving Southern African problems through peaceful means, offering to mediate in Southern Rhodesia, because of his absolute rejection of "violence in any form as a solution to our problems".[8] In 1969, again, he warned of the dangers of armed confrontation between black and white Africa.[9] At the height of the Zimbabwean and Angolan crises, Kaunda's foreign minister reiterated this position:

> Zambia has made it clear that we do not participate in acts of killing if peace can be attained without further bloodshed. Indeed there can be no more concrete demonstration of our commitment to the struggle for independence by peaceful means than for our decision to work with the South African Government in recent months to solve the crises in Southern Africa ... We have paid in financial and material terms and we have also paid in life and property of our people. So if peace is possible, we will work for it. If armed struggle is the only choice left for Zimbabwe and Namibia, we shall support it.[10]

It is for this reason that the Zambian leadership entered into negotiations with regional settler regimes whenever an opportunity presented itself. A classic example of this was in 1974, when Kaunda, through emissaries, undertook secret negotiations with the Smith regime in Rhodesia, which led to the release of Zimbabwean nationalist leaders such as Joshua Nkomo, Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe. A form of cease-fire was also negotiated but turned out to be unsuccessful, instead serving to deepen the divisions within ZANU and leading to the eventual splitting of rival supporters of Mugabe and Sithole.

Kaunda's preference for the peaceful option was also demonstrated by his repeated appeals to the Western countries to help bring about the downfall of

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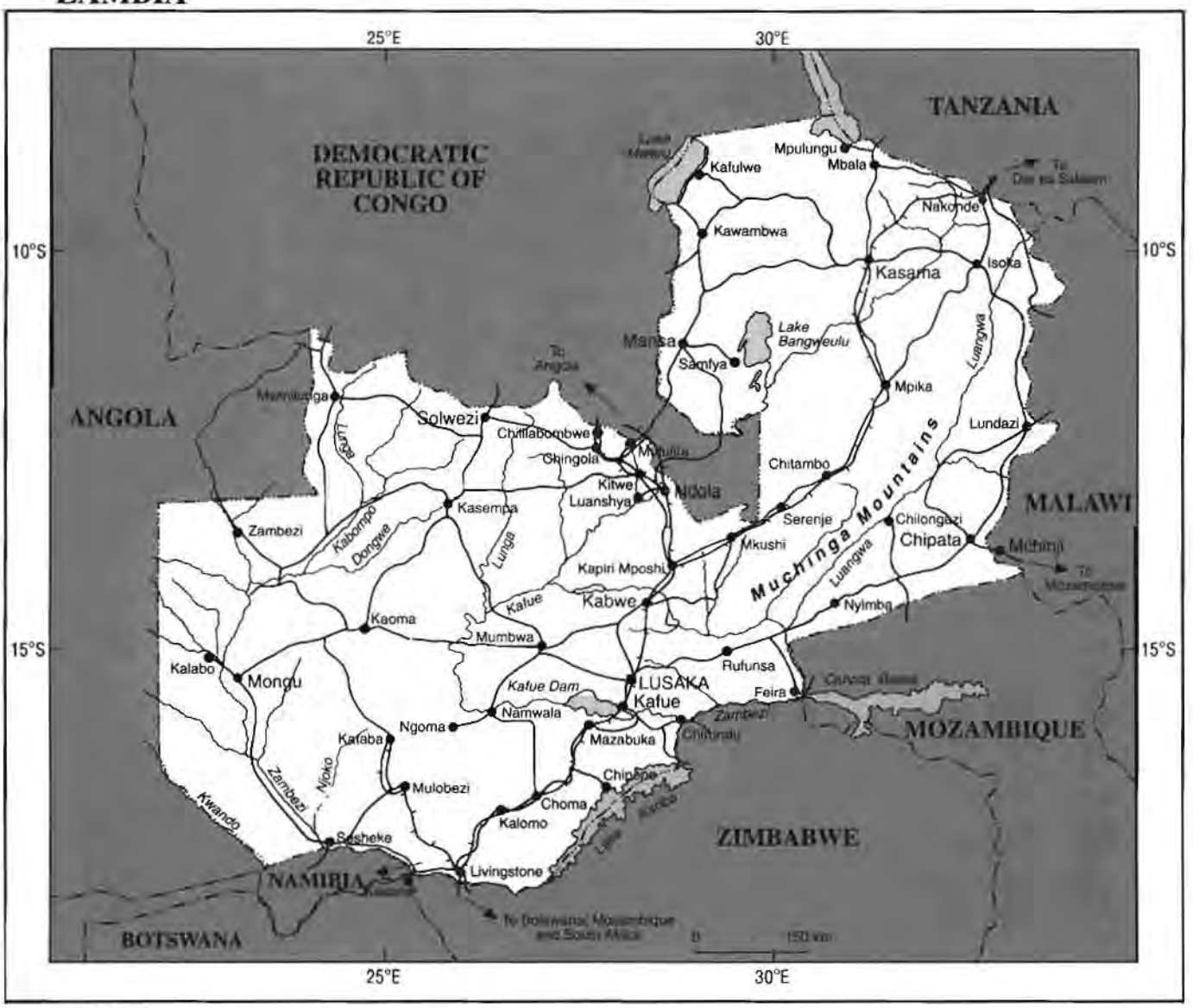
ZAMBIA



Map: Elize van As, AISA

racist regimes, despite the West's stance against the liberation struggle in the region. For this reason, Anglo-American efforts to resolve the Rhodesian crisis were greatly welcomed by the Zambian government. Similarly, the Zambian government was initially very supportive of the initiative of five Western countries – the USA, Britain, Germany, France and Canada – to try to resolve the Namibian impasse. The socialist countries were often used as a lever to persuade the West to respond positively to the problems of Southern Africa. Several times after 1975, for example, Kaunda threatened that he would call upon the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to assist in resolving problems in the region.[11]

Because Kaunda preferred peaceful means to resolving Southern Africa's problems, he also rejected the notion of the "Second War of Liberation" that the MPLA called for in its war against the FLNA and UNITA and their external allies. Expressing his frustration at what he considered MPLA "intransigence" over the Angolan crisis of 1975, he said:

> We take the view in the interests of national stability and smooth progress that the way to handle the opponents of the MPLA, namely FLNA and UNITA is not to brand them as enemies but rather to accommodate them immediately in the national framework, to make them constructive instead of destructive elements ... Indeed we also made certain decisions in other meetings ... which in Zambia's opinion were very wise and these were intended to bring unity and peace amongst the people of Angola.[12]

Zambia's then Foreign Affairs Minister expressed similar sentiments in relation to similar problems among Zimbabwe's nationalist movements. Addressing the Zambian National Assembly he stressed the importance of unity of the liberation movements and appealed to Zambians and the international community to "reject those who reject unity in Zimbabwe".[13]

However, Kaunda's view of the objectives and goals of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa was not shared by a number of leaders of the liberation movements in Southern Africa. This bred serious conflicts between him and these leaders.

In contrast to Kaunda's view, many argued that the struggle transcended the mere achievement of national independence, being revolutionary struggles aimed at creating new and socialist societies. This was the view in particular of the MPLA and FRELIMO.

Samora Machel articulated this alternative perception of the goals of the struggle:

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> Today our fight has reached a stage where national unity is no longer enough, because the fundamental question has become the triumph of the revolution and not just independence.[14]

The leaders of the liberation movements, therefore, saw the wars of liberation as playing a very positive role in the creation of new societies in their respective countries. Machel, for instance, declared that, "a people's war is necessary, as the instrument to mobilise and organise the invisible strength of the broad masses of the people"[15] while Robert Mugabe argued that, "ZANU has, by mobilising the people, lent the national struggle both its motive force and correct perspective".[16] Thus for most liberation movements negotiations were not seen as an alternative to the liberation struggles but only consequences of the advance of the armed struggle. Hence in Mozambique, FRELIMO leaders were willing to negotiate with the Portuguese government only after the collapse of the Caetano regime and its replacement by the military junta which accepted the principle of the right of self-determination by the Mozambican people.

The long years of waging an armed struggle led to significant politico-ideological developments, especially in the case of the MPLA in Angola and FRELIMO in Mozambique. For both the MPLA and FRELIMO these developments also led to a redefinition of the enemy of the liberation struggle, in the process influencing the way the question of unity was perceived. This was another source of difference between the liberation movements and the Zambian government. Both FRELIMO and the MPLA stressed that their struggles were not against Portuguese citizens, as "progressive" Portuguese citizens were involved in the same struggle. Moreover, black Angolans and Mozambicans who resented people of other races in the liberation movements were severely criticised as reactionary and anti-revolutionaries. Some of them were ejected from the liberation movements, as happened in FRELIMO between 1966 and 1970.[17] The liberation movements did not, therefore, see the struggle in their respective countries as primarily ending white racism. As early as 1968 MPLA President Agostinho Neto warned against racist tendencies:

> If there exists in some of the combatants the idea of a war against the white man, it is necessary that it be immediately substituted by the idea of a war against colonialism and against imperialism ... We must, therefore, look for a political line that will save us from racism and tribalism, and from the mistakes that were committed in those countries where independence came earlier and by other means.[18]

By defining the enemy in the way that the MPLA and FRELIMO did during these years, certain black people were included because they espoused the 'wrong' politico-ideological line. In such circumstances, unity was seen only in terms of accepted politico-ideological lines. In this context, then, FRELIMO, the MPLA and others were not particularly keen to accept unconditional unity with other liberation movements, even after victory had been won. The clearest exposition of this position on the question of unity was made by Samora Machel:

> the 1972 Central Committee meeting affirmed, first and foremost, the need for ideological unity. In other words, actual practice has shown that unity based on the negotiation of the enemy and on just the demand for independence was not enough. It was essential that unity be achieved on the basis of what we want to do, how we want to do it, and what kind of society we want to build.[19]

This position was shared by the MPLA leaders, for which they fought the FLNA and UNITA in the "Second War of Liberation". ZANU used the same arguments in rejecting "fusion" of their movement with ZAPU, ANC and FROLIZI in 1974.[20] In other words, during the period of the liberation struggles there were very divergent views about the ultimate goal and direction of the liberation struggle between Kaunda and his government, on the one hand, and the leaders of the liberation movement, on the other.

Zambia's geo-political factors also contributed to tensions between the two sides and may have influenced Kaunda's preference for peaceful methods for resolving Southern Africa's problems and his insistence on the unity of the liberation movements. Geo-political factors were important considerations in the Kaunda government's decision to support the liberation struggle, yet the factor placed serious limitations on how far Zambia could go in its support for the liberation struggle in the region. The fact that Zambia is landlocked, for instance, means that the country is dependent on its neighbours with access to the sea. Furthermore, because Zambia's economy and communications systems were tied to the South Africa-dominated Southern African economic system, access to the sea at the time of independence was through hostile regimes. The difficulty created by this geo-political position was that at times the Zambian leadership put conditions on the liberation movements that limited their sphere of activity. Mtshali suggests that support for the liberation movements was given on condition that their activities did not threaten the country's security.[21]

Kaunda's preference (was) for peaceful methods for resolving Southern Africa's problems and he insisted on the unity of liberation movements

Notwithstanding the differences between Kaunda and the leaders of the liberation movements, there was greater appreciation of Kaunda's role in the liberation process in Southern Africa after the leaders of these movements took over state power and were faced with internal contradictions of their own, such as the problems that led to the Inkomati Accord of 1984 between Mozambique and South Africa. As each country became free, it joined Tanzania, Zambia and Botswana in their collective efforts to resolve regional problems. Hence by the time South Africa was liberated some form of comradeship had developed between Kaunda and the former leaders of the liberation movements, who are now presidents of their respective countries.

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The 'Irritating' Neighbours and Chiluba's Dilemma

In contrast to Kaunda's eventually successful involvement in the region, on coming to power in 1991 Frederick Chiluba's government adopted a different attitude towards the white regime in South Africa, and to Southern Africa in general, based on the ideological orientation of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) leadership. This was marked by a remarkably lukewarm attitude towards Southern Africa and a certain detachment towards the ANC and other liberation movements. In the negotiations that led to South Africa's Government of National Unity, Zambia adopted an ostensibly neutral position. For example, the Zambian Foreign Minister in 1992 implicitly rebuked the ANC for suspending negotiations towards a new constitution because of the massacre in Boipatong. Commenting on the suspension of negotiations, he said that the suspension of talks would create a potentially dangerous situation, and called on the "warring parties" to resume negotiations.[22] Zambia's stance did not escape the attention of the South African white regime. The apartheid regime's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs praised the Zambian government for "its non-partisan stance on the political changes in the country".[23] This was too much even for the otherwise highly supportive government-owned *Times of Zambia*:

> While there are many fundamental advantages in developing closer, perhaps all round ties with South Africa there clearly are some practical and political pitfalls. Already Zambia's voice on the South African situation is muffled, yet the oppressed people who deserve our support are not yet free.[24]

The Kaunda government's Southern Africa policy was heavily criticised in the run up to and during the 1991 elections, but the opposition to these policies had roots in the historical positions and backgrounds of the people who came to constitute the leadership of the MMD. Opposition to the UNIP government's Southern African policies by these groups and individuals had been building up for years. The business community, who came to be the dominant group in the MMD both politically and ideologically, showed their opposition to the UNIP government's Southern African policy as early as the 1970s. They saw these policies as undermining its economic interests. The Zambian state also came under increasing pressure from the business community to reduce its commitment to the Southern African problem. According to Kren Eriksen, a number of Members of Parliament complained about what they considered the inactivity of the leaders of the liberation movement in 1973.[25] In 1976 several Members of Parliament representing this sector began to call for the reopening of the border with Southern Rhodesia. Eriksen quotes a Member of Parliament who called for the opening of the Southern routes instead of creating new routes for reasons "totally unrelated to the interests of the economy":

> There is no sense in buying goods like tractors made in South Africa through Malawi. Why can't we buy them direct from South Africa? I have been sent by my employers and masters, the masses, to ask the Government to reopen the border because there is too much suffering.[26]

The business community, together with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), eventually succeeded in pressuring the Zambian government to reopen the border with Southern Rhodesia in 1978. This was in spite of efforts by leaders of the Frontline States to persuade the Zambian government not to do so.[27]

According to various analysts, even the parliamentary representation of the business community had been growing. Bayles and Szeftel note that some 33% of those elected to parliament in 1973 were businessmen, while Chikulo puts this figure at 55% just five years later.[28] But it was not only the business community that opposed the UNIP government's stance on Southern Africa during the wars of liberation. The leadership of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) was also critical of the stance taken by the Zambian government, particularly over the issue of trade with South Africa and other white-ruled regimes in the region. The opposition became most pronounced when Frederick Chiluba became chairman-general of the ZCTU. In 1977, he called for a removal of "economic bottlenecks that prevented the country's entry in profitable areas", referring to the Kaunda government's decision not to open up trade with South Africa. Chiluba reiterated this position in 1978:

> The best political ally is not essentially a mere trading partner but trade must be seen to be carried out primarily for economic and financial benefits of the country. Political friends and good neighbourliness which followed should not be the basis of the Government instituting bilateral or multi-lateral trade links.[29]

Opposition to Kaunda's Southern African policy grew even stronger in the 1980s, crystallising in the formation of the MMD in 1990. As the labour leaders and businessmen came to dominate the MMD, it was inevitable that the new party was going to take a radically different position from that of the UNIP. Kaunda's position towards Southern Africa was, therefore, one of the major campaign issues against Kaunda and UNIP before and during the 1991 elections. The MMD saw the UNIP's policies towards Southern Africa as contributing to UNIP's mismanagement of the Zambian economy.

Immediately on coming to power, Chiluba announced that the MMD government would resume trading with South Africa. He brushed aside accusations of betrayal of the black people of South Africa, claiming that despite rhetoric, "statistics show that trade between Zambia and South Africa had never declined at any time in real terms since 1964".[30] Hence the Zambian government established a trade mission in March 1992 and South African President FW de Klerk was invited to open the country's agricultural show in Lusaka amid protests from the labour movement and the opposition parties.[31] The Chiluba government also attempted to persuade other African countries to

> ... trade must be seen to be carried out primarily for economic and financial benefits of the country

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change their stand toward South Africa and resume normal trading ties with the country. Addressing the 10th Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) Summit in February 1992 in Lusaka, Chiluba went so far as to urge other leaders to accept the white South African government as an observer:

> The issue of South Africa must be faced if we are to gain the benefits of South African membership and avoid dangers ... Already many African countries, some of whom are PTA members, have forged diplomatic ties with South Africa ... Their influence is real. Even during the bitterest days of apartheid many of our members have never been in a position to stop trading with South Africa ... there is no reason why the South African Government should not attend PTA meetings as observers. We cannot close our eyes to the facts. Increasing contact with South Africa is a fact of life.[32]

At this time, the ANC position was still unyielding on other countries establishing links with South Africa. Nelson Mandela stated that the ANC was against the lifting of sanctions against South Africa until a Government of National Unity had been established.[33]

Chiluba's government was not only at odds with several SADC governments over their attitude towards Southern African problems, but relationships grew strained over the treatment meted out to Kaunda after he lost the 1991 elections. The relationship between the SADC countries and Zambia reached their lowest ebb with the arrest of Kaunda and his detention at a maximum security prison after an abortive 1997 military coup. The year before, the MMD government had introduced constitutional amendments barring Kaunda from contesting the presidential elections. This soured relationship culminated in an open confrontation between Mandela and Chiluba at a SADC meeting in Blantyre in 1998, at which Mandela indirectly accused Zambia of gross violations of human rights. At this meeting Mandela told his colleagues that SADC will no longer "sit and watch the human rights of innocent citizens being abused". In turn Chiluba accused the South African president of interference in Zambia's affairs on account of "old friendships".[34]

The MMD leadership therefore experienced isolation in Southern Africa from the very beginning. Chiluba's response to this dilemma was to try to neutralise the influence of "Kaunda's friends" by agitating for the dissolution of SADC as an organisation by merging it with the PTA (later COMESA). Zambia's anti-SADC sentiment was first hinted at in a 1991 policy discussion paper, in which the MMD declared its intention to "reassess Zambia's position in the Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and the Eastern and Southern African Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA)".[35] The government's position towards SADC was made explicit at the 10th Summit of the PTA Authority in 1992 in Lusaka. At this summit, the Zambian government initiated a proposal that PTA and SADC operations be harmonised "under one roof". In his speech to the PTA Heads of State, Chiluba called for a merger of the two organisations:

> When we therefore turn to the next steps in laying the foundation for an economic community let us be brutally honest. Facts ignored are no less facts ... The first issue must be the merging of the PTA and SADCC. Most PTA members are also SADCC members. There was a time when two separate organisations could be justified. But times have changed. The world is no longer the same and we have to change with it.[36]

The relationship between SADC countries and Zambia reached their lowest ebb with the arrest of Kaunda and his detention

The justification offered for the proposal was that the main aim of SADCC, which was essentially the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, was no longer relevant. The proposal would have led to the elimination of the SADCC, an organisation Chiluba saw as composed of unfriendly countries. Fernando Goncalves supports this conclusion:

> Speculation is also rife that Chiluba has regarded SADCC as an extension of the group of the Frontline States, both of which he regards as former president Kenneth Kaunda's clubs.[37]

The merger would have meant that the members of this "club" would have lost their identity, as they would have become a minority in a wider PTA grouping. However, while Chiluba was urging his colleagues in the PTA to subsume SADCC, the other members of SADCC were moving in the opposite direction. Despite the PTA decision of January 1992 to merge the two regional groups, the SADCC meeting of August the same year moved a step further towards regional integration by transforming into the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Windhoek SADC Treaty also widened the spheres of co-operation to include "politics, international relations, peace and security".[38] Attempts by Chiluba in his capacity as the PTA chairman to stop the transformation of SADCC were unsuccessful. After "a considerable amount of behind the scenes tension and diplomatic relations concerning the relationship between PTA and SADCC/SADC", not only was the Windhoek SADC Treaty ratified, but a reluctant Zambia also signed the agreement.[39] The ANC-dominated Government of National Unity that came into power in South Africa after the 1994 elections for all practical purposes sealed the collapse of talk of mergers by declining to take up membership of the PTA, while Mozambique and Lesotho subsequently withdrew their membership from the PTA (which was later renamed the Common Market for Southern and Eastern Africa). The other members remained committed to retention of SADC as a separate regional organisation, with some lukewarm support for the renamed COMESA. The perception of most of the member states about the two regional organisations was epitomised by Mozambican President Joachim Chissano:

> I would be happy if I could be proved mistaken if I say that my country is only vaguely known by many of the PTA member countries which are not SADC members, and has very little if any economic, trade and cultural contacts with such countries.[40]

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With the merger proposals effectively killed, Chiluba's hopes of freedom from the Kaunda "club" were gone. Given this dilemma, one option for Chiluba and his government would be to leave the grouping. There are however two major interrelated factors that close this option for the Zambian leadership. The first is that historical, economic, communications and other related linkages would make it difficult for the country to opt out.

These close relationships bind the country to Southern Africa. In part because of this historical factor, and despite the strained relationship between Zambia and South Africa, Zambia is heavily dependent on South Africa. South Africa is Zambia's major trading partner, supplying the largest percentage of Zambia's imports. South Africa is also Zambia's second largest market for non-traditional goods (excluding copper and cobalt) next to the United Kingdom.

Chiluba finds himself an unwilling part of the Southern African political economy and part of SADC

In fact, SADC countries are the principal importers of Zambia's non-traditional exports.[41] Although exports of non-traditional products to South Africa dropped between 1998 and 1999, South Africa not only increased its contribution to 18,8%, but became the largest single market for these Zambian products.[42] In terms of investments, South Africa is also one of Zambia's major sources of foreign investment, with nearly half of all foreign money flowing from South Africa.[43] This means that the SADC countries, and particularly South Africa, are likely to continue to be the main sources of Zambian foreign investments. As in the case of Kaunda's government, Chiluba's area of manoeuvre has been severely limited by geo-political factors.

Uncomfortable as it may be for Chiluba, he finds himself an unwilling part of the Southern African political economy and part of SADC. He also finds his country a 'hostage' of the economic might of South Africa from which his government cannot escape.

The Zambian business community especially is likely to lobby for even closer links with South Africa and the rest of the SADC region, and this makes pulling out of SADC a closed option.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the fact that the governments of both Kaunda and Chiluba have experienced difficulties in their dealings with their Southern African neighbours.

Kaunda experienced problems with the leaders of the liberation movement, largely because of differing perceptions of the broad objectives of the liberation movements. On the other hand, the traditional opposition of MMD supporters to the Kaunda government's stance on trade relations with countries to the south and the MMD government's treatment of Kaunda, put the Chiluba government at odds with most Southern African countries.

Hence Chiluba's lack of enthusiasm for the SADC, and his lack of success in persuading his SADC counterparts to merge with COMESA. ✪

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Mozambiqu

United Nations Peacekeeping, Landmine Clearance and Post-War Reconstruction 1992 - 1994[1]

BY SELLO PATRICK RANKHUMISE

As we enter the new millennium, certain parts of the African continent are still experiencing conflict. Competition over the control of resources, ethnic rivalry, and struggles for political power are among the causes of conflict all over the world and in Africa in particular. In most of these instances, military equipment, especially cheap options such as guns and landmines,[2] are employed.

Armed confrontation often results in the loss of human lives among the military personnel of both parties in the conflict, as well as among the civilian population. Moreover, as a result of conflict, much economically productive land becomes inaccessible, as the opposing forces often use rural areas as battlefields. Large numbers of civilians in war-torn rural areas tend to flee to neighbouring urban centres and countries. The 'new arrivals' settle as refugees or migrants, and, because it is often difficult for them to find employment, some resort to crime. This includes, among other things, car theft, armed robbery and drug trafficking. Others, especially illegal immigrants, are employed as cheap labour by businesspersons of the host countries and urban centres.

The presence of displaced people thus places a burden on the policing of the hosts. In the host countries, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Safety and Security are faced with the difficulty of controlling the inflow of (illegal) migrants and refugees. The regulation of their movements and activities often requires heavy funding. In addition to such problems, those who flee to foreign countries often receive a hostile reception from the civilian population of the host country. Xenophobia abounds as the locals perceive the immigrants, whether legal or illegal, to be taking their jobs.[3]

Such effects of conflicts have caused concern within the international community. International, continental and regional organisations, national governments, non-governmental organisations and individuals have pledged themselves to eliminate conflicts. Led by the United Nations (UN), the international community has pledged to establish and participate in peacekeeping missions. These UN peacekeeping missions are often guided by the principles of safeguarding territorial integrity, political sovereignty and non - interference in internal affairs of states. In most, if not all cases, their interventions are carried out long after hostilities had started.

One of the UN's major post-conflict operations has been in Mozambique. This paper discusses the threats to socio-economic reconstruction brought about by landmines in post-civil war Mozambique, by focusing on the activities of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Mozambique, UNOMOZ.[4] To provide a backdrop, the laying of landmines during the Mozambican civil war (1974 - 1992) is discussed, and their effects on the socio-economic landscape in southern Africa are described. Thereafter, the UN-sponsored peacekeeping operation's attempts between 1992 and 1994 to resolve the carnage caused by landmines in Mozambique are discussed. The paper also draws on the UNOMOZ experience to recommend measures to be considered in resolving the landmine crisis in the future.

Landmines and the Mozambican Civil War, 1974 – 1992

On 16 June 1960 a peaceful march was held by black Mozambicans in Mueda, in Cabo Delgado Province, calling for independence. When the Portuguese

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Young children peer out of their classroom in a war-damaged building in the rural area of Chiboma, Mozambique.
Pic: Greg Marinovich, PictureNET Africa

authorities in Mozambique used gunfire to suppress the march, many died and hundreds were injured in the ensuing struggle. This led to the banning of African nationalist movements, including the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDENAMO), Mozambican Makonde Union (MANU) and the National African Union of Independent Mozambique (UNAMI).

At this time there was no unity among the three nationalist movements, which were divided along ethnic, religious and regional lines.[5] MANU drew its support from the Yao, Makonde and Lomwe ethnic groups situated in the northern part of the country. UDENAMO support came mainly from the Thonga, Chopi and Tonga groups who occupied most of the southern part of Mozambique, while UNAMI was backed by the Shona who occupied Tete province and some central parts of the country.

Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania, accommodated the nationalist movements in his country. Nyerere, together with Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, encouraged the three movements to form a patriotic front for the liberation of Mozambique. Taking their advice, on 25 June 1962 UDENEMO, UNAMI and MANU merged to form the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, FRELIMO.

Upon its establishment FRELIMO took a militant stand in its struggle for liberation. In January 1963 FRELIMO members were sent to Algeria for military training, and the FRELIMO armed struggle began on the night of 25 September 1964 with a raid on a Portuguese government post at Chai, in Cabo Delgado Province. On 29 September 1964 the movement began a strategy of guerrilla warfare against the Portuguese colonial authorities in Mueda, also in Cabo Delgado. In addition, FRELIMO made use of landmines in its anti-colonial struggle. As the liberation war was fought on the basis of hit-and-run tactics, most of the landmines laid by FRELIMO were neither mapped nor recorded.

In September 1974 the Portuguese government declared all Portuguese colonies independent. Mozambique received her independence on 7 September 1974, after the signing of the Lusaka Agreement between FRELIMO and the Portuguese.[6] Following the Lusaka Agreement, political power was unconditionally handed over to FRELIMO.[7] FRELIMO was then faced with the task of leading the country, which had been under a totalitarian Portuguese administration, to a democratic dispensation.

Various political movements emerged with independence, with the National Resistance Movement of Mozambique, RENAMO,[8] being the biggest potential threat to the ruling FRELIMO. RENAMO was formed by the Ian Smith-ruled Rhodesian intelligence in 1977 to serve as a counter-insurgence movement. Various sources thus claim that RENAMO was established by the Rhodesian government to serve as a 'fifth column' inside Mozambique.[9] Mozambicans, many of them FRELIMO dissidents, were recruited to occupy leadership positions in the movement – including Alfonso Dhlakama, who became the leader of the movement.

In 1980, after Rhodesia achieved her independence and became Zimbabwe, apartheid South Africa took over the support and expansion of RENAMO. RENAMO was thus an externally created and funded movement intended to maintain and defend white minority governments in southern Africa.

While this was happening, the FRELIMO-led transitional government was responsible for preparing the country for its first democratic general elections. However, the movement - like its colonial predecessor - elected to follow the totalitarian route instead. Between October 1974 and February 1975, FRELIMO began to use repression and brutal acts against its political opponents. At a post-civil war convention held at Vila da Machuba, the movement outlined its intention to govern the country along Marxist lines.[10] On 25 June 1975 Mozambique was officially declared independent,[11] but all opposition parties were declared illegal. This marked the end of the transitional government.

RENAMO, under the leadership of Alfonso Dhlakama, had no option but to

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go underground and operate as a guerrilla movement. Through its Total Strategy policy, South Africa's apartheid government provided RENAMO with economic and military assistance. The South African military assistance to RENAMO included the provision of landmine technology. Sources openly acknowledged apartheid South Africa's military support to RENAMO, asserting that "RENAMO has waged an armed campaign with the considerable backing of the South African Defence Force (SADF)".[12] With this support, RENAMO started sabotage acts against the FRELIMO government.

Landmines became the most commonly used weapon by both sides fighting for the political control of Mozambique. The presence of uncleared and unidentified landmines quickly affected - and still affects - the social, political, economic, psychological and medical well-being of Mozambique, to the extent that the effects of the civil war caught the attention of the international community. After a while, even members of FRELIMO and RENAMO grew tired of war, and began to speak of peace.

Peacekeeping Operations in Mozambique

From its inception the FRELIMO government under Samora Machel ruled as the sole party. Machel also showed unwillingness to negotiate a peaceful settlement with RENAMO.

The FRELIMO attitude of non-tolerance of opposition coupled with RENAMO's ambition to participate in the country's administration led to militarised confrontation between the two parties. Such confrontation led to 30 years of civil war which destroyed the country's social and economic fabric. The country's post-war recovery thus depended mainly on international interference.[13]

Amid the collapse of the country's socio-economic fabric Machel's government was reluctant to negotiate with RENAMO. In October 1986 Machel died in a plane crash in South Africa. Joachim Alberto Chissano, a long serving Foreign Affairs Minister, succeeded him. Unlike his predecessor, Chissano was prepared to negotiate a peaceful political settlement with RENAMO.

RENAMO too showed its willingness to participate in the peaceful negotiated settlement. A series of preliminary talks were held between the two parties and led to the signing of the General Peace Accord (GPA) in Rome on 4 October 1992 by President Joaquim Chissano and RENAMO's Dhlakama. The Italian government chaired the Accord.[14]

The African delegation at the signing of GPA included Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe; Ketumile Masire, President of Botswana; George Saitoti, Vice-President of Kenya; Pik Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa; John Tembo, Minister in Malawi's Office of the President; and Ahmed Haggag, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity.

FRELIMO's delegation was headed by Armando Guebuza, Minister of Transport and Communication, while the RENAMO delegation included Raul Domingos, Chief of the Organisation Department. The UN mediation delegation included Mario Raffaelli, a representative of the Italian government, and mediators Jaime Gonclaves, Archbishop of Beira Andrea Riccardi and Matteo Zuppi representing the Community of San-Egidio.[15]

Also in attendance were Dr James Jonah, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the UN; Herman Cohen, Under-Secretary of State for the US government; Phillippe Cuvillier for the French government; Jose Manuel Durao Barroso, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Portugal; and Sir Patrick Fairweather of the UK.

> Landmines had a drastic effect on Mozambique's socio-economic fabric, since they continued to explode long after the armed conflicts had ceased

Following the GPA, Mozambique's first democratic general elections were held in 1994. FRELIMO won the elections and RENAMO became the official opposition party. Joachim Chissano became the first Head of State of the democratic Mozambique. Mozambique abandoned socialist policies and became a unitary republic based on Portuguese/Roman law. A 250 member National Legislature (Assembleia Nacional) was also elected by universal, adult suffrage.

However, while Mozambique's political situation was now more stable, the after-effects of the war were still being felt. In particular, landmines had a drastic effect on Mozambique's socio-economic fabric, since they continued to explode long after the armed conflicts had ceased.

Landmines were laid on farms, around key government institutions on roads and many other places of economic importance.[16] Unexploded and unidentified landmines thus continued to maim and kill innocent civilians and animals. The rural communities were particularly highly affected by the landmine activities. Unexploded landmines thus posed threats to post-war demilitarisation.

The elimination of landmines became a difficult if not impossible practice. Many of them remained hidden under the soil. Thus dismantling them posed:

> undoubtedly the single most significant and defining step in any peace support operation. The subject of intense negotiation and scrutiny, demilitarisation represents the clearest expression of opposing parties' desire to resolve their dispute through peaceful means. As such, and given the history of mutual antipathy engendered in any long standing conflict, demilitarisation is a process fraught with obstacles of a political, military and humanitarian nature. The demilitarisation programme in Mozambique, a country ravaged by seventeen years of external intervention and civil war, was conducted by the United Nations under circumstances which highlighted the inter-dependency of these features as well as the complexities involved in fielding a multi-lateral response to a delicate operation of this kind.[17]

As part of GPA recommendations, the UN, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) set up UNOMOZ on 16 December 1992.[18] UNOMOZ was established as a multifunctional peacekeeping operation, headed by Aldo Ajello, a former Italian parliamentarian who had

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Map: Elize van As, AISA

also served the UN as Assistant Secretary-General. At the time of his appointment, Ajello was serving as Director of the UN Bureau of External Relations.[19]

UNOMOZ comprised a peacekeeping force, humanitarian agencies, mediators and demining troops. According to estimates, UNOMOZ consisted of 6 625 troops and military personnel, 354 military observers, 1 144 civilian police, 355 international staff and 506 local staff. The international and the local staff were responsible for the production of a ceasefire agreement. While the local politicians negotiated, the international staff served as mediators. In addition UNOMOZ also had 900 international observers who participated in the 1994 democratic elections.[20] The European Union and US played a major role in funding the activities of UNOMOZ.[21]

The first task of the peacekeeping operation was to facilitate negotiations between the FRELIMO government and RENAMO. The UN planned a formula for negotiations. Synge sums these up: "peace was consolidated in Mozambique by the Mozambicans themselves, and by a collaborative and active commitment from a wide range of foreign interests, with the United Nations playing an unusually flexible political role."[22]

In order to assess the success and weaknesses of the UN's operations in Mozambique after the civil war, the demining component of UNOMOZ needs to be examined more carefully. The main mission of UNOMOZ was to facilitate a good spirit of negotiation between RENAMO and FRELIMO in an attempt to bring about a peaceful political settlement and post-civil war socio-economic reconstruction. Synge notes that Mozambique's two parties wished to stop fighting and adjusted their objectives from seeking victory to accepting compromise, which supports the validity of UNOMOZ mission.[23] Its other responsibilities included the provision of a peacekeeping force, provision of humanitarian aid to the victims of the civil war, and the creation of a favourable environment for holding democratic elections.

UNOMOZ also had NGOs contracted to it, including Halo Trust from Britain and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). Halo Trust was responsible for identifying the level of the national landmine problem. In its effort to fulfil its task, Halo Trust established a landmine database to record all landmine related issues. That included recording information about mined areas and landmine explosions.[24] However, the information provided by Halo Trust became unreliable. NPA, on the other hand, was responsible for conducting mine-clearance training. It also spearheaded the demining process. The German Agency for Technical Coordination (GTZ), also contracted to UNOMOZ, took part in the demining process as well.[25] These NGOs contributed positively to mine clearance, but the minimal involvement of local Mozambicans dwarfed the pace of the mine-clearance progress.

ICRC offered landmine awareness education to the landmine-affected communities in Mozambique. This was hampered by the fact that most Mozambicans were illiterate in foreign (especially European) languages. Only a few could understand the languages used by the ICRC. Fear of explosions of mines laid on roads also hindered the activities of the mine-awareness teams. As a result, the mine-awareness campaign achieved little, if any success.

Many civilians, mainly women and children[26] continued to fall victim to explosions even during the period when the demining process under UNOMOZ was underway in the country. Moreover, mined commercial roads and railways continued to be obstacles to the provision of relief goods. The most highly mined roads included the road linking Napula city to Lumbo, Nametil and Angoche Districts and the one joining Napula city with Cabo Delgado province via Maniapa (all situated in Napula province).[27] In Sofala Province, the roads from Inchope intersection to Goonda,

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the Goonda - Trinde - Magunde road, and Panja Road were mined.[28] In Zambezia Province the mined roads included Mochuba and Namanjaravira, linking Quelimane to Morrumbala. In Manica Province, roads from Goonda to Gombe, from Chimoio to Macossa to Buzua, linking Sofala Province are littered with landmines.[29] The roads from Manjacaze to Maqueze to Dindiza and Chibutu, and from Maputo to Moamba and from Maputo to Ressano Garcia were also among those mined.[30] This shows the extent of landmines, in effect criss-crossing the entire country.

Mine-clearance operations managed to clear all the mines in the mentioned roads. This "revived the economic activities among Mozambican cities, districts and provinces. The First Secretary of the High Commission of the Republic of Mozambique, Mr Tamele, in his discussion with me stated that road demining has proven to be one of the successful sides of the peacekeeping in Mozambique."[31]

It can thus be concluded that the activities of UNOMOZ contributed to a slight improvement in the Mozambican GNP. It is estimated that between 1991 and 1994 the GNP of Mozambique grew from 2 million to 9 million dollars, as seen in the table.

During the civil war period mine explosions on farmers and herders disturbed economic production. In fear of explosions many farmers left their land and moved to cities and neighbouring countries. The peace talks between FRELIMO and RENAMO which started in 1990 managed to restore stability. Farming was restored and from 1990 that contributed to a rise in GNP.

However, while it may be true that many major roads have been demined, many more remain infested, especially in the rural areas, with a large number of unidentified and unexploded landmines. Civilians still remain vulnerable to the explosion of such mines. Handicap International estimates that

> 20 people step on landmines every day in Mozambique. Sixty percent of them die because they lack access to health services. There are still an estimated 3 million (unexploded and unidentified) landmines in Mozambique.[32]

TABLE 1: MOZAMBICAN ECONOMIC STRUCTURE 1991 - 1994

Economic indicators	1991	1992	1993	1994
GNP at Market prices bn	2,056.3	3,125.8	5,843.4	8,652.1
Real GDP growth %	4.9	-0.8	19.3	4.8
Consumer price inflation %	50.1	58.8	49.8	52.2
Population m	14.4	14.8	15.6	16.6
Exports fob $ m	162	139	132	150
Imports cif $ m	899	855	955	1,019
Current account $ m	-738	-739	-825	-870
Total external debt $ m	4,486	4,934	5,012	5,491
External debt-service ratio %	17.6	17.9	27.2	23.0
Cashew nut production '000 tons	31	54	24	29
Raw cotton production '000 tons	40	50	47	49
Prawn production '000 tons	7.7	6.8	7.3	6.6

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit,EIC Country Report: Mozambique Malawi, 3rd quarter 1996.

Recommendations for future UN peacekeeping operations

The proliferation and unlawful use of small arms (which include landmines) is one of the most serious humanitarian challenges for the next millennium. Governments have begun to address the small arms issue at local, national, regional and international levels. However, NGOs are concerned that governments are taking a piecemeal approach - not least because many are significant suppliers of small arms. The international NGO community believes, therefore, that a coordinated independent effort is essential to push forward the boundaries of international action.

International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) [33]

For the past five decades the UN has set up various peacekeeping operations to resolve conflicts around the globe. To a certain extent, these operations have succeeded in their mission - maintaining international peace and security. Paradoxically, some states where such operations were set up are again witnessing conflict situations.

To cite a few examples, the civil war in Angola is ongoing, and in Mozambique, following 1999's second democratic general elections, RENAMO refused to accept the official results, which nearly led to a renewal of conflict.

In these renewed conflicts, national, regional, continental and even international peace and security is threatened. The socio-economic development of these nations is also at stake. The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs supports this view by asserting that

> After almost thirty years of war, Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in Africa. Grain (and other basic commodities) must be imported and the economy depends heavily on foreign aid. ... Most of its farmable land is unusable because of landmines.[34]

The carnage caused by these landmines caught the attention of the international community, and the use of landmines has now been condemned at various international conventions. National states have pledged to stop the sale, production, export and stockpiling of mines.

The Mozambican government, on 26 February 1997, announced its support for the total ban of landmines, and at the same time appealed for demining assistance from the international community. This announcement was made during the fourth conference of NGOs on landmines held in Maputo.

The international anti-landmine attitude and conventions on mines led to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Treaty or 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.[35] To date 137 countries have signed the Mine Ban Treaty.[36]

International personalities have also pledged their support in an attempt to eliminate the scourge of landmines in Mozambique. Among such personali-

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Japan Alliance for Humanitarian Demining Support (JAHDS) member Tetsuya Kanazawa demonstrates 'Mine Eye', a new landmine detector that can produce three-dimensional images and identify the constituent materials and depth of landmines on a monitor screen attached to the detector. JAHDS is a non-profit organisation that provides technical and material assistance to demining operations. Pic: Tsugufumi Matsumoto/AP Photo

ties, one of the most notable was Diana, the Princess of Wales. Before her untimely death in a car accident, Princess Diana paid visits and provided emotional support to landmine victims, while creating awareness about their plight.

Following her death a Princess Diana Trust Fund was established to raise funds for mine clearance and victims' support activities. It received a boost from the collection of tax revenues from Elton John's tribute song, 'Candle in the Wind' in memory of the late Princess of Wales.[37]

To a certain extent, then, attempts to eliminate the landmine crisis have been successful, but there is still the danger of continuing explosions, which cast some doubt on the success of landmine clearance.

This paper will recommend some measures that could be incorporated in an attempt to bring about a 'total solution' to the landmine carnage.

Recommendations to eliminate landmines

If mine-affected states, like Mozambique and Angola, have to develop life-long programmes for the elimination of the landmine problem, there is a need to intensify both landmine awareness and demining training programmes. Such programmes should mainly focus on the youth as they are the future of the country. Such programmes could be implemented by:

- introducing a landmine awareness curriculum in schools;
- using indigenous languages when conducting mine and demining awareness lessons;
- conducting field trips (for learners) to centres hosting mine victims;
- given the high illiteracy rate in most mine-affected countries, plays, radio dramas and television series on the mine activities should be produced. Such productions should focus on, among other areas, measures to be taken in the event of an explosion;
- establishing mobile landmine awareness centres on a national scale. This will assist in making landmine awareness information accessible to even the most remote parts of the country;
- training the victims of mine explosions to be educators and managers of the broader mine awareness campaign;
- recruiting and training large numbers of local civilians to become deminers.

The adoption of these recommendations will involve local solutions to the landmine problem, and further reinforce the locals' understanding of the crisis. The employment of local staff in mine awareness programmes will also assist in creating job opportunities, thus serving as a poverty relief measure, which would contribute positively towards post-war economic recovery.

The establishment of a Mozambican non-partisan organisation is recommended. It would be responsible for, among others:

- ongoing research and debates on landmine-related issues;
- raising funds for demining and victim support programmes; and
- furthering mine awareness through campaigns among the local and international civil society.

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The membership of the proposed structure should include:

- Mozambicans inside Mozambique (mainly mine victims and students);
- Mozambicans (especially academics and ambassadors) living abroad;
- International humanitarian organisations;
- Interested NGOs;
- Donor states and companies;
- Academics from both local and international institutions.

Funds for mine clearance and victims' support could be obtained by:

- Holding 'Clear the Mines' tournaments using popular sporting codes. This could be done using local teams or the national sides;
- Using the name of a popular Mozambican figure, such as Samora Machel, to open a landmine victims and demining Trust Fund;
- Requesting local and international business persons and companies to contribute towards the mine victims and Trust Fund; and
- Requesting local and international artist to compose a CD based on landmines. The money made from the sales of such CD should be directed to the Mine and Demining Trust Fund.

Conclusion

Landmines have been used in many national and international conflicts around the world. Their technology is very affordable and accessible, even to insurgent movements without adequate financial support.

Their users continue to ignore peace and ceasefire agreements as they maim and kill innocent civilians and livestock, even long after hostilities have ended. As a result, the presence of landmines impacts negatively on the socio-economic fabrics of nations trying to recover following long periods of warfare.

During its decolonisation struggle FRELIMO employed the cheap solution of landmine warfare against the colonial authorities. After independence was handed to Mozambique, FRELIMO imposed totalitarianism, and RENAMO started guerrilla warfare against the FRELIMO government. That marked the beginning of a civil war that was to last for three decades. During this war landmines became widely used by both parties.

Landmine users ignore ceasefires as they continue to maim and kill innocent civilians and livestock

If one looks at the responsibility of the UNOMOZ mission as the facilitator of the election process in Mozambique, then the UN-sponsored body managed to administer the negotiations, which led to the signing of 1992 General Peace Accord and ultimately the 1994 elections.

However, if it was the responsibility of UNOMOZ to implant democracy and long-term peace and security, then the mission failed. Recently, elections were held in Mozambique that according to official results were won by FRELIMO. The opposing party refused to accept the results, and threatened to withdraw its members from parliament. Is this the correct reflection of a country, which attained democracy through a negotiated settlement?

Even today, mines continue to maim and kill civilians. This leaves the question as to whether UNOMOZ has done its homework regarding a solution to the landmine carnage in Mozambique.

Solutions to mine carnage have in most cases been initiated by the United Nations and the international community, often from the background of a realist perspective. Such solutions have often been arbitrarily imposed on affected societies. In many cases, such solutions, although inherently good, lacked local input and thus become impossible to apply.

If a workable solution to mine carnage is to be attained the affected communities should spearhead programmes aimed at bringing about solutions to the crisis. In so doing solutions will be formulated according to a clearer understanding of the local situation.

Notes & references

1 This paper was developed during an internship at the Africa Institute of South Africa between 5 January and 25 March 2000.
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15 Hoile 1994, p 4.
16 In many cases the two opposing forces in the context of the Cold War laid the mines.
17 www-jha.sps.cam.ac.uk/a/a003.htm; 4 July 1997.
18 C Clapman, 'The United Nations and peacekeeping in Africa', Paper presented at a symposium on 'International Peace and Security: The African experience,' Saldanha, 21-23 September 1998, p 6. See also 'Security Council Resolution Establishing UNOMOZ' in R Synge, *Mozambique: UN Peacekeeping in Action 1992 - 94*, Washington, 1997, p 195.
19 *Ibid*, p 28.
20 Neethling 1998, p 6.
21 *Ibid*, p 10.
22 *Ibid*, p 145.
23 *Ibid*, p 9.
24 Information about the mined areas was often recorded from local civilians and ex-servicemen from FRELIMO and RENAMO. In many cases civilians reported objects mistaken for landmines, while some ex-servicemen lost records about mined areas. Others who had knowledge about mined areas died during combat.
25 *Development and Co-operation*, no 4, p 33.
26 In many cases, children fall victim to mines as they mistake them for toys. A high level of fatalities among women has also been recorded, possibly because Mozambican women, especially in rural areas, are largely responsible for agriculture and other domestic chores.
27 Text issued by the 'Office of the President' in Gongorosa on 28th October, in *Summary of World Broadcast*, ME/1525, B/5, 05 October 1992.
28 *Ibid.*
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30 *Ibid.*
31 T Tamele, personal discussion, Pretoria, 14 January 2000.
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33 International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), www.iansa.org/.
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35 Human Rights Watch Fact Sheet, www.icbl.org/ratification/ratjan6.html, 6 January 2000, p 1.
36 *Ibid*, p 1 B 4.
37 Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, 'Destroy a Minefield Initiative', Media Release for Princess Diana Trust Fund, FA129,12 October 1998.

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Across the wall

Sino-African Political Co-operation Towards the 21st Century

ZHANG HONGMING, professor at the Institute of West Asian and African Studies, CASS, focuses on four aspects: changes in international structures after the Cold War; international environmental challenges faced by China and Africa; how to respond to these challenges; and the bases and prospects for Sino-African political co-operation.

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Post-Cold War International Structure: changes, status quo and tendencies

The most obvious change in international structure after the Cold War is the dying away of the bipolar superpower structure. At present, the international structure remains a transition from the old one to the new, while tending towards a multipolar balance of power, which has strictly speaking not yet come into being. So a structure of single hegemonic superpower and many great powers still dominates.

As far as all the nations' plans and expectations of the international structure's tendencies are concerned, they can be summarised into three categories. The United States is trying to play the role of world leader, or at least maintaining the status quo. France, Germany and Japan, among others, take the view of setting up a West-led multipolar world. The vast majority of the developing countries, including China, advocate the establishment of a relatively balanced multipolar world, in which nations of different social systems can co-exist. The latter is supposed to be more in keeping with their interests.

There is an interaction between the international structure and international relations. On the one hand, the structural changes in the international system are bound to influence its members' foreign relations; on the other hand, the finalisation of the international structure depends on the growth and decline of various forces within it. The prospects of China and Africa rest with the extent their co-ordination can attain during the course of the formation of the new international structure.

The international environment: challenges faced by China and Africa

The transition from the old international structure to the new offers China and Africa more access to international affairs, while bringing them several challenges. At the political level, the international environment challenges faced by China and Africa mainly come from the West: hegemony and power politics on the one hand, and certain unreasonable "international rules of the game" on the other.

It should be clear in mind that the prerequisite for competition and co-operation, or of compromise and struggle, is actual strength. Along with the Cold War ending, the fresh permutations and combinations of international political forces evidently make the balance of power more favourable to the West.

According to this, some Western powers pursue power politics more unscrupulously. In addition to bringing Chinese and African pressure to bear by means of economic strength, the Western countries have strengthened, by applying "cultural influence", the dynamics of controlling and influencing world affairs, especially the internal development process in the developing countries. Some seemingly purely cultural questions are far from simple under careful consideration. For example, in a cultural system with different understandings of human rights, the case will be a political one with political characteristics. Just having a look at the behaviour of the West after the Cold War, one easily finds that while stubbornly clinging to the Cold War thinking, the Western countries led by the US have strengthened their ideological attacks on non-Western countries. Such theories include Francis Fukuyama's "end of history", Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilisations" and human rights being seen as superior to sovereignty or the new interventionism.

> China and Africa ... should advocate that every country has the right to choose its political regime and development road

All aim at accentuating the "universal principles" in the Western ideas. The intention of the West is obvious, that is to peddle its ideologies and values to the developing countries to channel them into the Western system and realise "the whole world under the West".

Besides, the Western countries take advantage of favourable positions in the international regimes to maintain their various rights to the maximum extent. With the progress of economic regionalisation and globalisation, China and African countries are increasingly involved in world affairs. This means they have to act according to the existing international practices and rules of the game, which have many unreasonable contents because, for a long time, a small number of Western powers have been both makers and players of these practices and rules. In such international regimes, China and African countries will be in a dilemma: if they act according to the fixed practices and rules, they will be under other's control; if not, they will be at risk of being punished or marginalised.

How to respond to challenges from the West

How to respond to the challenge of hegemonism and establish a fair right international political and economic order is a question unavoidable to the developing countries, including China and the African countries. It also should be given serious consideration. In view of the current international structure and of China and Africa's real strength and their unfavourable situations, China and Africa's scope for abilities depends on continuous promotion of respective overall national strength and full development and effective utilisation of various international resources. Following are my personal views on Sino-African political co-operation.

First, in order to maintain and fight for their own benefits during this dynamic transition of the international structure, China and Africa must have a clear-cut stand on the tendency of international structures and other issues. They should maintain the establishment of a relatively balanced multi-polar world, irreplaceability of the UN's role, and non-interference in internal affairs of a sovereign state even under the pretext of democracy and human rights.

They should adhere to the principle of world diversity and advocate that every country has the right to choose its political regime and development road according to their national conditions.

Second, China and the African countries must co-ordinate their activities in order to improve their living space in this international regime, in which the weak are the prey of the strong.

It should be recognised that it is impossible for China or the African countries to resist hegemonism and power politics or to change the "international rules of the game" and make the international regime more

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favourable to them single-handed. After the Cold War, although the Western countries hold a powerful position, the developing countries have numerical superiority and are bound to scope for their abilities if they make a common effort from the standpoint of their mutual interests.

Third, China and the African countries should give full play to their respective strong points and participate in world affairs with a more active posture on the principle of equality and mutual benefit. It leaves no seat vacant in the world, which can only be strived for on one's own.

As a standing member of the Security Council of the United Nations, China ought to speak out for African countries from a sense of justice and protect their interests, while African countries should make full use of their numerical superiority. China and Africa should expand their international space through close bilateral co-operation to increase their initiatives and power to make their own decisions in world affairs to the maximum extent.

Four, China and Africa should make full use of the contradictions among the Western countries and grasp the opportunity to uphold their own interests. The West is not a monolithic bloc; after the Cold War, frictions of interest among the Western powerful nations are becoming increasingly clear.

Take Western-African relations for example: although the general strategy of the Western policy towards Africa is unanimous, not all their interests in Africa are the same. Since the middle and late 90s, with the renaissance of the African economy, the Western powers, in view of the competition for comprehensive national strength in the 21st century, have intensified their struggles for African domination, in order to get the lion's share in "relocating" African resources and markets.

Consequently, it is hard for the Western countries to avoid trying to do each other down. China and Africa should take full advantage of Western countries' competitions and frictions in Africa and various opportunities offered by international relations in transition, for creating a favourable balance of power.

Bases for Sino-African Political Co-operation

Although not all interests between China and Africa are the same and Sino-African political co-operation is faced with certain difficulties, there are many favourable conditions. First, China and African countries all belong to the developing nations of the world. There are no conflicts left by history nor direct conflicts of interests at the present stage in Sino-African relations.

Second, China and Africa need each other's help in world affairs. Since there are many similar points in international situations faced by both sides and in their respective foreign policies, China and Africa have mutual bases of interests and much room for co-operation.

Third, over the past 40 years, China and Africa have carried out many effective co-operative activities in the field of multilateral diplomacy and international affairs, thus paving the way for the advancement of this relationship in the new century.

Four, which is also the most important, the Chinese government attaches great importance to Africa. China has strengthened its working relationship with Africa since the 1990s. President Jiang Zemin's visit to Africa in 1996 served as a link between past and future. The five principles for developing Sino-African relations put forward by President Jiang not only summarised China's policy towards Africa, but also revealed the characteristics of Sino-African relations and foretold the direction of Sino-African co-operation geared towards the 21st century.

China's African policy is not isolated, but an organic part of China's foreign policy. After the Cold War, the role that Africa plays in the strategy of geopolitics is on the decline, but Africa's position and role in China's foreign strategy remains unchanged.

China's presence in Africa, or developing ties with African countries, not merely stems from an economic consideration but from the needs of politics and diplomacy. Poor and weak as the African continent is, it has many countries similar in basic state conditions and standpoints. In multilateral diplomacy, particularly in "one country, one vote" international organisations, the feeling of African people really makes a difference. Africa remains the main arena for China's diplomacy.

Lastly, I want to emphasise the fact that China, from its own experiences of development, holds an optimistic attitude towards Africa's future. ✪

Lasting Sino-African friendship

BY LIU LIDE

The Beijing 2000 Sino-African Co-operation Forum was held in October 2000. This was a major event with historical significance in the Sino-African friendship. The successful organisation of the meeting was intended to result in a critical influence towards the promotion of far-reaching co-operation between China and Africa, consolidation and development of the Sino-African relationship. It is helpful to study the status quo of the Sino-African relationship, to point a way forward and intensify relations.

The friendship between China and Africa dates back a very long time. China and Africa are both the originating places of human civilisation, communications between the two areas date back two centuries BC. The Sino-African relationship entered the historical stage of full bloom by the 1950s and 1960s, following the birth of the New China and the independence of many African nations after going through an arduous anti-colonial struggle. Older generation of Chinese leadership joined hands with the forerunners of the African national liberation movements to turn a new leaf in Sino-African co-operation.

For about half a century, then, China and Africa have launched true and sincere co-operation that is equal and mutually beneficial and full with effectiveness. Both parties have established sympathetic, mutual respect and an inter-supportive type of new international relationship. Despite the ever-changing nature of international affairs, the Sino-African friendship has gone through the test of time, winning many a heart of the people.

Both China and Africa belong to the developing world. Both have been invaded and suppressed by imperialism in the past; today they are both faced with the identical mission of safeguarding peace and striving for progress. China and Africa do not share any dis-

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pute in history; the two countries are closely tied together by mutual benefits. The Chinese government has always paid attention to friendly connections with African nations, taking the reinforcement of solidarity and co-operation with African nations as the basic foothold in foreign policies.

The African policies of the Chinese government may be summarised in the following main themes: respecting the people of the various African countries to freely choose the political system and path of development according to their own national conditions; there shall be no interference in the internal affairs of African countries, and there shall be no great-nation chauvinism; supporting the just struggle of African countries in the safeguarding of independence of the nations, their sovereignty and territorial integrity and foreign intervention; to safeguard and promote solidarity among the African nations, advocating that African countries peacefully solve contradictions and disputes among each other; paying attention to co-operation with African regional organisations, supporting the efforts in the peaceful solution of regional conflicts to promote integrated African economies, and to maintain excellent relationships with them by holding dialogues and consultation; to advocate and uphold justice in international affairs to safeguard the rights of African nations; to provide various types of unconditional aids to African countries within the reach of its capacity, while developing various types of trade and economic co-operation under the principles of equality for mutual benefits.

China and Africa are closely tied politically, with profound progress in bilateral relationships. Since the 1960s, leaders from both regions have frequently communicated with each other.

According to unofficial statistics, more than 160 heads of state from 50 African nations have visited China, with more than 50 visits from government leaders from more than 20 countries. Many African leaders visited China on many occasions, fostering friendships with the Chinese leaders, becoming old friends of the Chinese people.

In over two decades since the 1980s, three chairmen and two premiers from China have visited Africa on seven occasions, touring more than 25 countries.

This type of frequent exchange of visits between the leaders of the Sino-African countries reflects the high concern and powerful wishes from both parties towards comprehensive promotion of friendly Sino-African co-operation. Direct contact and sincere dialogue between national leaders helps to foster understanding, trust and friendship between each other, while continuously injecting new stamina into Sino-African co-operation.

China's African aids programmes began in 1956. By 1999, China had already provided economic aid to 52 African nations, committed in the aiding of 806 construction projects.

Pic: Adil Bradlow, PictureNET Africa

Over the last 50 years, Sino-African economic co-operation has seen abundant results. China's African aids programmes began in 1956. By the year 1999, China had already provided economic aid to 52 African nations and committed to aiding 806 construction projects. Among them, 618 projects have been completed, including the Tanzanian Railroad, Mauritanian "Friendship harbour" and other large-scale projects that the Western countries had not believed could be achieved. Areas of co-operation between China and Africa include agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishing, textiles and garments, energy, broadcasting and communications, water conservation and electricity, mechanical construction, culture, education and public health.

China has invested in the region of US $3.68 billion in Africa, setting up 381 enterprises, and taking up 58.14% of China's total $6 billion investments in the world. In recent years, Sino-African trade has increased sharply, growing annually from an average value of US $1 billion in the 1980s to US $6.48 billion in the 1990s. China's mutual beneficial co-operation towards African nations has been developing quickly. By the end of 1998, Chinese corporations have undertaken a total of 8 586 contractual projects and labour contracts, totalling US $12.26 billion. A total of 43 800 labour workers in Africa have fulfilled contractual amounts totalling US $7.285 billion by the end of 1997.

Sino-African co-operation in culture, education and public health has been rather extensive. Up till now, China has signed inter-government co-operation agreements with 42 African nations and plans to work together with 65 cultural exchange bodies. About 5 000 scholarships were provided for 51 African nations; there are now more than 800 African students studying in China.

Ten Chinese universities established "twinning" programmes with 20 universities in 16 African countries, while dispatching more than 400 teachers to 19 African countries to set up academic laboratories. In the past 37 years, China has built 19 hospitals in African countries with about 20 000 hospital beds, and has sent around 15 000 medical personnel to 42 African countries, who have carried out more than 200 million treatments for African people.

Superior medical technology and the exemplary conduct of these doctors have become well known throughout the African continent.

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In international affairs, China has always been sympathetic and supportive of African nations in the mutual safeguarding of just rights of developing nations. We share the same or a similar stance towards many major international issues: we are all against hegemonism and power politics; opposing anybody using human rights issues as a pretext for intervening in domestic affairs of other countries, advocating the set-up of a fair and just international political and new economic order; and promoting peace, co-operation and development.

Both are also positive forces in the promotion of the multipolarisation process. African nations have supported China strongly over many major issues over the years. Way back in the 1960s and 1970s, many African nations already held up the notion of allowing justice to prevail, holding up the powerful pressure from the West.

They have unremittingly adhered to support for China's struggle in striving for the resumption of its legal status in the United Nations, achieving a decisive victory. Most of the African nations now insist on the recognition of the "one China" policy and are not to be moved or tempted by the "money politics" of the Taiwanese authorities. At the annual conference of the UN Human Rights Commission, China received understanding and support from an extensive range of developing countries, setting back nine years in a row Western anti-Chinese proposals backed by the USA, and defeating their ulterior motives of making use of human rights issues to meddle in the domestic affairs of China.

Most African nations now insist on the recognition of the 'one China' policy

With their clear-cut stand, African nations stand by their principle and dare to struggle. This has played a vital role. The Chinese government and the people will never forget the powerful support offered by the African nations and their people at a critical moment in history. The Sino-African friendship has thus become a model of South-South co-operation.

At the turn of the century, the African situation has stabilised with low-speed economic growth, but it is still faced with serious challenges, from conflicts to marginalised economies. Most African nations are reviewing and summarising their experiences and lessons to probe into the paths of development conforming to their own national conditions, striving for unity to support themselves and rid themselves of dilemmas. The future of Africa is bright, and any pessimistic view of African progress is uncalled for.

The Chinese government and its people have always paid attention to Africa, treating Africa as a strategic alliance partner.

Consolidating and developing friendly co-operation with African nations has always been the major component part of independent autonomy and peaceful foreign policies of China. China's Africa policies are sustainable and unswerving. Premier Jiang Zemin during his African visit in 1996 proposed five principles in the development of long-term stability and comprehensive co-operation in national relationships with various African nations towards the 21st century.

These are: truly friendly, inter-dependent "all-weather friends"; treating each other in equality, respecting each other's sovereignty and not intervening in each other's domestic affairs; mutual benefit and reciprocity for mutual progress; reinforcing consultation, co-operating closely in international affairs; and facing the future and creating a better world together. These are the guidelines for China to intensify its friendly co-operative relationship with African nations for a long time to come. Chairman Jiang Zemin recently indicated once again his concern for the African situation in an address at the leadership meeting of the UN Security Council.

He pointed out that "Africa has achieved national independence and must not become a forgotten corner". He urged the Security Council to pay more attention to African issues, such as enlarging the input of Africa. He asked that, "while dealing with African issues, we must fully respect the sovereignty of various African nations, carefully listening to the view of African nations and African regional organisations, adopting practical and effective measures to help the African nations eradicate poverty and wipe out chaotic sources of war to enable the African people to follow the road to rejuvenation in peace and development".

We must adhere to the spirit of Chairman Jiang's speech, standing at a strategic height to practically pay attention to Africa, positively tapping and be practical at work, while jointly working together to bring about a Sino-African relationship that contains long-term stability, comprehensive co-operation and more stamina for going into the 21st century.

In order to do this, we must intensify our efforts in the following tasks:

- Close high-level exchange, in particular exchanges of visits between Sino-African leaders, which would be beneficial to the reinforcement of mutual understanding and foster the Sino-African friendship, and consolidate the foundation for continued co-operation. A consultative system must be set up to carry out frequent consultations towards major international issues and bilateral relationships to strive for a common view and to jointly face various types of challenges. In international affairs, we must have a clear-cut stand to uphold justice and safeguard the rightful benefits of African nations to win their trust and confidence in us.
- Following the changes in situations, the economic factor is playing a more important role in the Sino-African relationship. Beneficial economic and trade co-operation towards Africa is significant in many ways. After more than 50 years of effort, Sino-African economic co-operation has achieved results that have attracted world attention. In order to cope with the new situation of African economic reform and adjustment, the Chinese government has carried out reforms in its foreign aid policy. We must now continue to search for new paths and trade methods in the development of Sino-African economic and trade co-operation, exerting great effort in the launching of various types of co-operation that are mutually beneficial; adopting effective measures to expand Sino-African trade, reducing African trade deficits in the import-export trades; and, where possible,

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increasing the share of African aid. By means of intensified co-operation in economy and trade, further development in the political relationship may be driven. This conforms to the fundamental benefits of both sides.

- Continue to promote friendly exchanges in various areas such as Sino-African political parties, councils, working, youth, women, culture and education, public health, news, sports and academia, to enable Sino-African friendships to be deeply rooted within the people from all walks of life. Make full use of the media and Internet and other modernised means of communications to publicise the status of Sino-African culture, history and development, and the stance and viewpoint taken by both regions over international issues, so as to promote mutual understanding and eliminate misunderstandings created by distorted Western reports. At the moment, we only have a superficial knowledge of the basic situation of African societies, and we do not have sufficient scholars interested in studying the continent. Exchanges in Sino-African academia are virtually at a standstill. We should thus adopt effective measures to change the status quo.
- Africa is the venue for Taiwan's authorities to launch their "money politics". At the moment, Taiwan has established a diplomatic relationship with eight African nations. When the new Taiwanese leadership assumed power, new tactics were deployed in an attempt to make use of the human rights issue and unofficial foreign policy to continue to tempt other African nations. We must not allow Taiwan's "money politics" to continue to interfere with the conventional Sino-African friendship.

The Sino-African friendship is based on a sturdy foundation, conforming to the fundamental benefits of the peoples of China and Africa. We are full of confidence that by means of bilateral efforts from both countries, new developments will be achieved for Sino-African friendship; co-operation and exchange between China and Africa will be even closer. ✪

China's national interest - and its relationship with Africa

National interest is invariably the fundamental basis and starting point for any country in formulating its foreign strategy and policy. The same is true of China. For the past half a century, China's Africa strategy and policy has been governed by its national interest. Since China's national interest had different emphasis in different periods, its foreign strategy and policy also underwent readjustments and changes. As reflected in its relations with Africa, they can be divided into four stages, says XU JIMING of the Institute of West Asian and African Studies, CASS.

First stage: the early 1950s

Priority was given to the national security interest. In the early years following the founding of the People's Republic of China, under the international set-up of two rival camps confronting each other, the imperialists headed by the USA evolved a posture of encirclement against the new China, imposing economic blockades and embargoes upon it in an attempt to strangle the newborn republic in the cradle.

Under such circumstances, China naturally gave first priority to the safeguarding of its security, pursuing the foreign policy of "siding without reservation" with the Societ Union and the socialist camp, and going in for the war of resisting the USA and aiding Korea as well as the war of assisting Vietnam against France, with the aim of constructing a safe environment. During this period, conditions both subjective and objective did not allow China to develop a relationship with Africa, apart from a few non-governmental exchanges.

Mid-1950s to late 1970s

Political interest was put in the first

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place during this period. There were mainly two aspects of national political interest which China pursued. One was to seek the status of a major power, in terms of territorial space and size of population. China is unquestionably a major power as well as a civilised ancient country.

Up until the mid-19th century, China had maintained its status as a world power, a powerful country with its own economic might and comprehensive national strength. However, after the Opium War of 1840, China waned in power and became a semi-colony which could not but allow itself to be trampled upon. The founding of the new China indicates that "the Chinese people accounting for one quarter of the human population have from now on stood up" and that "China should make greater contributions to mankind".[1]

The other is that as the elimination of exploitation and private ownership and the replacement of capitalism by socialism being the basic principles of Marxism, they are also the ultimate objective of the Chinese revolution. Therefore, within quite a long period of time China took the interest of the international communist movement as its own national interest. Reflected in China's international struggles in the 1950s-1970s, this was embodied in its opposition to imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism.

It is true that with the change of international situation, the emphasis also changed in different periods. But throughout the entire period, China consistently regarded the countries and people of Asia, Africa and Latin America, or the Third World, as the fundamental forces in opposing imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism, and as forces to be united with and relied upon in China's international struggle.

It is because the anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist struggles of Asia, Africa and Latin America and their victories had weakened the imperialist camp, destroyed and disintegrated the imperialist colonial system, dispersed the enemy forces, reduced pressure on China and indeed increased China's influence, thus constituting a support to our cause. Therefore, China has consistently supported the African countries in their efforts in opposing hegemonism and power politics, in defending their state sovereignty and developing their national economy.

It was against this general background that Premier Zhou Enlai, while visiting Africa in late 1963 and early 1964, announced on behalf of the Chinese government the Five Principles guiding China's relationship with African and Arab countries as well as the Eight Principles for China's foreign assistance. The Five principles are as follows:

- China supports the African and Arab peoples in their struggle to oppose imperialism and old and new colonialism and to win and safeguard national independence;
- It supports the pursuance of a policy of peace, neutrality and non-alignment by the governments of the African and Arab countries;
- It supports the desire of the African and Arab peoples to achieve unity and solidarity in the manner of their own choice;
- It supports the African and Arab countries in their efforts to settle their disputes through peaceful consultation;
- It holds that the sovereignty of the African and Arab countries should be respected by all other countries and that encroachment and interference from any quarter should be opposed.

In providing economic and technical aid to other countries, the Chinese government attempts to abide by the following Eight Principles:

- The Chinese government always bases itself on the principle of equality and mutual benefit in providing aid to other countries. It never regards such aid as a kind of unilateral alms but as something mutual.
- In providing aid to other countries, the Chinese government respects the sovereignty of the recipient countries, and never attaches any conditions or asks for any privileges.
- China provides economic aid in the form of interest-free or low-interest loans and extends the time limit for the repayment when necessary to lighten the burden of the recipient countries as far as possible.
- The purpose of the Chinese government is not to make the recipient countries dependent on China but to help them embark step by step on the road to self-reliance and independent economic development.
- The Chinese government tries its best to help the recipient countries build projects which require less investment while yielding quicker results, so that the recipient governments may increase their income and accumulate capital.
- The Chinese government provides the best quality equipment and material of its own manufacture at international market prices. If the material and equipment provided are not up to the agreed specifications and quality, the government undertakes to replace them.
- In giving any particular technical assistance, the Chinese government will see to it that the personnel of the recipient country fully master such techniques.
- The experts dispatched by China to help in construction will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities.

Based on these principles, China has provided sincere and selfless support and assistance in political, economic and even military fields to the African countries and people in their national liberation struggles and economic reconstruction. The primary consideration of China when rendering its economic, technical and military assistance at the time was on their political significance, without taking into account any economic returns. For example, China helped to build the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (Tazara) mainly out of political consideration, i.e. to support the African people in their struggle against the South African apartheid regime and to support

China has consistently supported African countries in their efforts to ... defend their sovereignty and develop their national economy

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Zambia in its efforts to bring about economic independence.

China has been substantially rewarded for its support and assistance to the African countries. The political prestige enjoyed by China in the 1960s was itself a very important political interest; it was by relying on this political prestige that China won the support of African countries and shattered the imperialist strategy of isolating China. Africa's political support played a major role in China's returning to the United Nations in 1971.

Objectively speaking, there occurred some deviations during this period while implementing China's Africa policy of putting its national political interest in the first place. For instance, in economic aid projects, there was a bit too much construction of monument-like architectures such as stadiums, gymnasiums and conference houses.

The development of the relationship with the African countries bore a thick ideological flavour. In the 1970s, there was a tendency to draw a dividing line according to one's attitude towards the Soviet Union, thus adversely affecting the development of relations between China and Angola, Ethiopia and other countries. The ultra-leftist thinking which emerged during the Great Cultural Revolution in China also had an adverse impact on China's relations with some African countries.

The 1980s: Putting economic interests first

The year 1978 saw China shifting its work focus (from political struggle) to economic construction. Since then, while continuing to stress the policy of "maintaining independence, keeping the initiative and practising self-reliance", China was to adopt a policy of reform and opening up to outside construction.

To seek the national economic interest became the first objective for China's foreign relations in the 1980s. China started to import large amounts of foreign capital and advanced technology and management experts from the Western countries. There was great expansion in China's relations with Europe, the USA, Oceania, Japan and other developed regions and countries in political, economic, science, technological and other fields.

New circumstances then took place with regard to the relationship between China and the African countries. Africa has largely completed its historical task of national liberation and had ushered in a new phase of striving for economic independence and consolidating political independence. In carrying forward large-scale construction of modernisation, China found itself in lack of capital and unable to provide African countries with as much economic assistance, including free aid, as before.

China's Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen shakes hands with then-South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo after the ceremony which established full diplomatic relations between the two countries on December 30, 1997.
Pic: Adil Bradlow, PictureNET Africa

Instead, as China turned to practise the socialist market economic system, it must operate in accordance with the law of market economy, make cost accounting and lay stress on economic results. Thus, in dealing with relations between China and the African countries, political factors became diluted while economic factors were on the rise.

It was under these circumstances that Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang made a tour of eleven African countries from 20 December 1982 to 17 January 1983. During the tour, he discussed with the leaders of African countries new forms and new channels of economic and technological co-operation under the new situation, and put forward four new principles guiding China's economic and technological co-operation with African countries: equality and mutual benefit; stress on practical results; diversified forms; and development side by side. Zhao Ziyang said:

> China is now adjusting its economy and it has its own difficulties... We must not be forced to do what is beyond our mutual strength... It is necessary to go in for active exploration, accumulate experiences and advance steadily... We should pay attention to efficiency, quality and economic results, and must ensure that they bring benefits to our friends and help ourselves forward as well.

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Similarly, Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian pointed out that, "as to those countries in serious economic difficulties, it remains necessary for us to give them some assistance within the scope of our ability, but the focus of our work should be changed from providing assistance alone to developing economic and technological co-operation on the basis of mutual benefits".

Thus, in economic relations between China and the African countries in the 1980s, apart from the old mode of assistance, i.e. giving loans, China started to engage in various new forms of co-operation such as contracting projects, labour co-operation, joint ventures, co-operative production and development, and technological services. Such co-operation must be built on the basis of the four new principles, which developed from the Eight Principles for China's foreign assistance formulated in the 1960s. They were instrumental in opening up new fields for Sino-African economic and technological co-operation, and producing good experiences for South-South co-operation.

Since the 1990s

In international affairs, China has emphasised both safeguarding the national political interest and seeking national economic benefits. Following the political disturbances in China in the Spring of 1989, a Summit Conference of seven Western countries held in Paris in July the same year resolved to impose political and economic sanctions on China. These were followed by drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The bipolar pattern came to an end. China became the chief target of vision and westernisation of the Western countries headed by the USA. Since the mid-1990s, the USA has looked upon China as its principal competitor. Facing the great changes of internal and international situations. China has persisted in the basic line of concentrating on economic construction and carrying on reform and opening up. In foreign relations, China has upheld its national political interest, has always taken "our own national interest as the supreme criterion" when dealing with international affairs, and "will never allow any other country to interfere in our own domestic affairs".[2]

At the same time, China has also paid great attention to pursuing its economic interest and has continued to implement the policy of reform and opening up, including the expansion of relations with the developed countries in Europe and North America, to serve the national economic construction.

When China was in difficulties, African countries rendered tremendous support. Just when the western countries headed by the USA were applying sanctions against China, the first foreign leader to visit China was an African leader.

In the 1990s, the UN Commissioner for Human Rights failed eight consecutive times to apply the anti-China proposal put forward by the western countries, and African countries played an important role in the UNHCR. Meanwhile, as the political democratisation wave pounded Africa in 1989 and the early 1990s, with the Western countries resorting to threats and lures, and blatantly interfering in the internal affairs of African countries in an attempt to impose the Western political model on these countries, Chinese President Yang Shangkun visited Africa in 1992, and in the course of his tour advanced six principles as a guideline for China to develop relations with African countries under the new international situation.

These six principles are based on China's support of the African nations in their efforts to safeguard state sovereignty and national independence, counter external interference and develop their economies, while respecting the choice of political systems and development paths made by the African nations in light of their respective national conditions.

China's principles for foreign assistance have been instrumental in opening up new fields for Sino-African economic and technological co-operation

Moreover, China supports African states in strengthening their solidarity and co-operation, seeking strength through collective efforts and resolving disputes through peaceful negotiations, with particular support for the OAU's efforts to seek peace, stability, development and economic integration on the African continent.

China supports the African states in their active involvement as equal members of the international community in international affairs and in their efforts for the establishment of a just and rational international political and economic order. Lastly, China is ready to develop friendly exchanges and economic co-operation in various forms with African countries on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence.

The 1990s saw tremendous development in Sino-African political and economic ties.

China's African policy

Thus it can be seen that China's foreign strategy and policy including its Africa policy have always laid stress on its national interest. Just as President Jiang Zeming said, "China would endeavour to promote the development of the world economy, but in any international economic operation, we must insist on the basic prerequisite of not sacrificing our national interest".[3]

However, China is after all a socialist country upholding proletarian internationalism, and concerning its relations with foreign countries, including the African countries, there are at least two aspects essentially different from the Western countries and former USSR.

Firstly, politically, China would not engage in great power chauvinism. In contacts with foreign countries, China would certainly safeguard and defend its state sovereignty, and pay attention to its national interest, but at the same time it would also respect the national interest of other nations, and it would neither practice hegemonism nor become the head of the Third World. It would also not try to force its views on others, and it would never demand subordination of the interests of other nations to its own.

The five principles of peaceful co-existence initiated by China include the very context as "respect for each other's territorial sovereignty" and "non-interference in each other's internal affairs". Zhou Enlai elaborates: "the right to national independence and self-decision

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of the people of every country must be respected. The people of all countries should have the right to choose their state system and way of life without being subject to interference by other countries". China has always stressed that countries, big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, should be treated as equals and should take part in international affairs as such, and has persisted in non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, including respecting the right of every country to choose its development path, political system and way of life.

When the Western countries linked economic aid with political democratisation amidst the democratisation wave of the early 1990s in an attempt to force African countries to adopt the Western-style democratic and political system, China remained manifestly different, supporting African countries in their efforts to protect their sovereignty and independence, free of external interference.

Secondly, in the economic field, China has never practiced national egotism. Unlike the imperialists and colonists, China has provided African countries with economic assistance and carried on various forms of economic co-operation, not so as to exploit or plunder them, but to help them develop their economies and bring about economic independence.

The Eight Principles for China's foreign aid put forward by Premier Zhou Enlai when he visited Africa in 1964 reflect this policy and principle. Later, when Premier Zhao Ziyang and President Yang Shangkun visited Africa in the 1980s and 1990s, they also stresses the need to develop multiple forms of economic co-operation with African countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefits. Although China's economic aid to African countries is necessarily limited, China has never pressed for payment of debts.

These two points demonstrate that China is in essence not only different from Western imperialism but also different from the former Soviet Union. In the period of the Soviet Union, Stalin practised great nation chauvinism, demanding that China and other socialist countries subordinate their interests to the interests of the Soviet Union, and that the communist parties of other countries subordinate themselves to the interests of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

An important cause of the rupture in the Sino-Soviet relationship in the 1960s can be found in the fact that Khrushchev wanted to extend political control over China. Meeting resistance from the latter, he threatened to withdraw experts and tear up co-operation agreements, and even went so far as to press China for the repayment of debts in the early 1960s when China's economy was in its most difficult period.

Africa's rich natural resources and potential market advantages are of great strategic importance for China's economic development

At this historical juncture of the turn of the century, China cherishes even more the friendly and co-operative relationship with African countries. We think highly of Africa's strategic position, both from a political and an economic perspective.

Politically, the United States sees China as its chief competitor in the 21st century. China has become one pole of the world politically, but its economic power and national strength cannot yet match that of the USA. Therefore, while accelerating the socialist modernisation drive and intermittently building up its comprehensive national strength, China must enhance its solidarity and co-operation with the developing countries. Only then will it be possible for it to find a favourable position in the multipolar world.

There is not a historical grudge between China and the African countries, nor is there any border dispute or any ethnic or religious conflict between them. Therefore, the African countries are China's most reliable allies in the international struggle.

The development of Sino-African relations is also a must for containing the elastic diplomacy of Taiwanese authority, opposing the "two China" or "one China and one Taiwan" movement, and for accomplishing the cause of reunification of the motherland.

Economically, to develop Sino-African relations is the requirement for China's economy to carry out sustainable development. Africa's rich natural resources and potential market advantages are of great strategic importance for China's economic development in the 21st century.

Thus, in May 1996, in his speech at the OAU Headquarters during his visit to Africa, President Jiang Zemin put forward the Five Point proposal on developing a long-term and stable relationship of all-round co-operation between China and Africa for the 21st century:

- To foster a sincere friendship and become each other's reliable "all-weather friend";
- To treat each other as equals, respect each other's sovereignty and refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs;
- To seek common development on the basis of mutual benefit;
- To increase consultation and co-operation in international affairs;
- To look into the future and create a more splendid world.

Looking into the 21st century, there is bound to be great expansion in the friendly and co-operative relationship between China and Africa. ✪

Notes & references

1 Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol 5, Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1977, pp 5, 312.
2 Deng Xiaoping, *Selections*, vol 3, Beijing: People's Publishing House, p 330.
3 Jiang Zeming, Speech at the welcome luncheon hosted by the Britain-China Trade Association, 20 October 1999. See *People's Daily*, 21 October 1999.

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Issues for a modern SA

- the poor
- urbanisation
- housing policy
- the environment

Urbanisation levels in South Africa are estimated at 53,7%, while in the Free State province the figure is estimated at 68,6%.[1] If current urbanisation trends continue in the Free State, it would mean that between 10 000 and 15 000 households will be added to the urban environment every year (excluding natural growth). In the urbanisation process, urban areas become the focal points for the consumption of resources and the generation of waste products, while the conditions resulting from increasing urbanisation have a serious effect on the quality of life, write LOCHNER MARAIS and HANNES BOTHA

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At the same time, the people moving to the towns are often poorer job-seekers with limited means to pay for the servicing or maintenance of their environment. To address the housing situation, one of the most liberal housing policies in the world has been introduced, providing subsidies to low-income households depending on their income (see Table 1).[2] Since the introduction of the housing policy a number of critical papers with regard to policy have appeared.[3] Although housing delivery has been fairly successful, one of the major concerns with regard to policy is its environmental, financial and social sustainability – an aspect which has not received a large degree of attention.[4]

Despite this effort on the side of government, questions with regard to the environmental consequences and impact may be raised. This lack of environmental concern with regard to the current housing policy and delivery is reflected in the following statement by the Department of Housing: "As a direct result of the National Housing programme, many low-cost houses are being built every week. Because of the financial constraints and the constant pressure to fast-track delivery, many of these are built with little consideration of environmentally sound principles. In effect we are missing excellent opportunities to get things right from the start in the housing sector in South Africa."[5]

To provide a large number of houses without taking the quality of the environment into consideration will be a grave error.[6] There is a political imperative for rapid improvement of the housing conditions of underdeveloped settlements, but this attitude threatens the systematic assessment of problems, and could hamper the formulation of well-considered policies of sustainable city development.

Although no minimum standards are mentioned in the White Paper on Housing, the Free State Provincial Government has decided that housing units in the Free State should comply with a minimum standard of 40m².[7] In reality this meant that in most of the housing developments in the Free State, the provision of infrastructure was neglected as the majority of the funds were channelled to the housing structure.[8] Against this background we would like to investigate the environmental sustainability of this approach in the Free State.

TABLE 1: SUBSIDY PER INCOME GROUP ACCORDING TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN HOUSING POLICY

Joint spouse monthly income (R)	Subsidy (R)
0-800	15 000
801-1500	12 500
1501-2500	9 500
2501-3500	5 000

• During 1998 the R0-R800 and R801-R1500 income brackets merged. At the same time, the housing subsidy was raised by R1 000 in each category in March 1999.

The Need for Sustainable Settlements

Housing policy in the Less Developed Countries has changed dramatically since World War II. Immediately after the war the emphasis was on state-constructed rental accommodation. In the early 1970s the emphasis shifted towards self-help housing programmes which included in situ upgrading and site-and-services schemes. However, the last decade has seen a major movement away from sectoral housing policies towards creating sustainable settlements of which housing is only a subsection.[9] The amount of research and publications on sustainable cities and settlements has also increased during the last decade.[10]

> We are missing excellent opportunities to get things right from the start in the housing sector in South Africa

In 1992, during the Earth Summit in Rio, a document called Agenda 21 was compiled which dealt with global environmental problems and proposed "sustainable development" as a "solution". Chapter 28 of this document states that many of the environmental problems world-wide have their roots in local activities, so local authorities have a key role in making sustainable development happen. One of the key objectives of Agenda 21 was that by 1996 local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their populations to achieve consensus on a "local Agenda 21" for their communities.[11] Some progress has been made by South African cities in this regard, notably Durban, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria.[12] Nevertheless, the environmental part of the planning process remains weak. It would seem that the majority of local authorities in the Free State province have not even started implementing the sustainable development policies advocated by the local Agenda 21 approach. Although most local authorities try to address pressing short-term economic and social issues (like housing delivery), long-term environmental concerns are not always taken into account.[13]

The question as to what sustainable settlements entail might well be asked.[14] Although it is not our intention to contribute to this debate, a few aspects need to be emphasised. In the first place, sustainability in the urban environment refers to the interaction between the built-up or physical environment, the social environment and the financial/economic environment. These three environments interact in a dynamic way with each other. Sustainability relates to this interaction between the different environments and how decisions are made taking into account the implications of each decision within the urban environment. This forms the background to analysis of the relationship between poor living conditions, the environment, health and the economy.

Poor Living Conditions, the Environment, Health and the Economy

Many low-income urban dwellers are not currently enjoying a healthy environment or a reasonable quality of life. Low environmental quality generates nega-

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The collection of fuel, most often wood, has a major impact on existing flora in and around low-income urban settlements.

tive attitudes towards health, education and social welfare, and cannot be allowed if a sustainable urban habitat is to be achieved. Urban planners perceive poverty in Third World cities as a priority, and although improvement of environmental quality would result in a better quality of living, it is usually ignored in favour of short-term poverty-relief structures.[15] The measurement of poor living conditions extends beyond the availability of water and sanitation: it also includes factors such as overcrowding, dampness, inadequate insulation, pests, noise, dust, inadequate drainage and insufficient ventilation.[16] In an attempt to understand the nature of the housing problem, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) has attempted to provide a framework for the concept of homelessness.[17] The framework distinguishes between houselessness (without a house) and substandard housing (poor quality of housing). All over the world the degree of houselessness is fairly insignificant. However, the number of people residing in substandard housing is extremely high. At the same time substandard housing has various dimensions.[18] Substandard housing ranges from inadequate shelter to the lack of water, the lack of sanitation or refuse removal, to mention a few. The lack of these facilities impacts negatively on the environment, people's health and the economy.

One of the main negative aspects of poor living conditions in South Africa is the lack of adequate access to water and sanitation services.[19] The majority of the urban poor do not have a home-connected water supply. The World Bank argues that water-borne bacteria are often the most serious cause of disease in developing countries.[20] Water-borne pollutants, bacteria, and viruses often enter into the urban runoff, which usually accumulate in stagnant open water near, or sometimes even in, informal and low-cost housing settlements.[21] Proximity to open water might induce the urban poor to forego paying for safe tap water, thus risking infection by making use of polluted water sources. It has also been found that access to water inside a house as opposed to outside taps might lead up to a 21% decrease in child mortality rates.[22] Although the provision of water also has negative environmental impacts (for example, the construction of dams), it should be measured against the health and environmental advantages of water provision.

A lack of sanitation facilities creates a potentially major environmental hazard. Poorly constructed and badly placed pit latrines pose a threat of bacteriological pollution of the groundwater. Limnological studies (in upgraded informal and low-cost housing settlements) have indicated that the quality of water in sources adjacent to these settlements is among the lowest in South Africa, because of a lack of proper sewer systems.[23] Furthermore, rapidly expanding urban centres have resulted in an increase in storm-water run-off. This could have a serious effect on the spread of water-borne pollutants if not managed properly. Major water bodies used as a source of drinking water could also be polluted. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that this form of sanitation is probably the cheapest.

Indoor pollution, mainly from the use of traditional fuels for cooking and heating, is also a major problem. Outdoor air pollution is exacerbated by the use of coal, anthracite and wood-burning stoves and heating equipment. The collection of fuel, for example wood, also has a major impact on existing flora in and around low-income urban settlements, as well as on the time spent by women in particular in collecting fuel.[24]

Lack of refuse removal in urban areas leads to the establishment of an 'informal' solid waste stream, which includes litter pollution and informal dumping sites. Solid wastes that remain uncollected in open spaces accumulate and cause serious health and environmental problems.

When it rains much of this waste is swept away and ends up in water bodies which contribute to water pollution. The health hazards are obvious: pests such as rats and mosquitoes are attracted by garbage and overflowing drainage systems clogged with undisposed waste. Flies and cockroaches feed on garbage and may also subsequently contaminate household food. Decomposed garbage left unattended may also

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TABLE 2: THE PHYSICAL NATURE OF HOUSING UNITS IN THE FREE STATE IN COMPARISON WITH SOUTH AFRICA, 1996

Type of house	Number of units	Free State (%)	SA (%)
House on separate stand	328 804	52,7	47,7
Traditional dwelling	63 982	10,3	18,2
Flat in block of flats	13 654	2,2	5,1
Town / cluster / semi-detached house	12 641	2,0	4,2
Unit in retirement village	1 935	0,3	0,5
House/flat/room in backyard	25 812	4,1	5,3
Informal dwelling/shack in backyard	50 705	8,1	4,5
Informal dwelling/shack elsewhere	112 167	17,9	11,6
Room flat let on shared property	7 755	1,2	1,5
Caravan / tent	798	0,1	0,2
None / homeless	167	0,001	0,03
Unspecified / other	7 099	1,1	1,2

Source: Statistics South Africa, Census data, Pretoria: SSA, 1999

TABLE 3: METHOD OF WATER SUPPLY PER HOUSEHOLD IN THE FREE STATE, 1996

Type of connection to main water supply per household	Free State	Free State (%)	South Africa (%)
Piped water in dwelling	251 055	40,2	43,9
Piped water on site or in yard	187 214	30,0	16,5
Public tap	149 488	23,8	19,5
Water carrier/tanker	4 768	0,8	1,2
Borehole/rain water tank/ well	20 536	3,3	4,9
Dam / river / stream / spring	5 479	0,9	12,3
Unspecified / other	6 471	1,0	1,7

Source: Department of Housing 1999

TABLE 4: HOUSEHOLD ACCESS TO SANITATION IN THE FREE STATE IN COMPARISON WITH SOUTH AFRICA, 1996

Type of sanitation facilities per household	Free State	Free State (%)	South Africa (%)
Flush or chemical toilet	282 116	45,1	50,3
Pit latrine	157 183	25,1	32,2
Bucket latrine	128 890	20,6	4,6
None	55 018	8,9	12,3
Unspecified / other	1 804	0,3	0,6

Source: Department of Housing 1999.

TABLE 5: ACCESS TO REFUSE REMOVAL IN THE FREE STATE IN COMPARISON WITH SOUTH AFRICA, 1996

Method of refuse removal per household	Free State	Free State (%)	South Africa (%)
Removed by Local Authority at least once a week	377 378	61,0	52,2
Removed by Local Authority less often	25 688	4,2	2,3
Communal refuse dump	26 745	4,3	3,2
Own refuse dump	153 419	24,8	32,7
No refuse dump	35 121	5,7	9,6

Source: Department of Housing 1999.

leach into the water table. The HABITAT report indicates that the poorest urban areas are generally the worst served by waste collection authorities, or not served at all.[25]

The lack of basic infrastructure also inhibits literacy and productivity and therefore has a negative impact on the economy. For example, the lack of electricity impacts negatively on opportunities to study and also has a negative impact on the quality of life of women, while it also inhibits the growth of Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises.[26] Cost and time spent by especially women collecting firewood and water are also consequences of the lack of infrastructure. The UNCHS argues that the costs of treating cholera (due to lack of water access) in Peru and the losses due in man-hours in terms of fisheries and farming, as well as the loss of potential tourists, exceed the cost to provide the capital for improved infrastructural standards.[27]

It seems clear that poor living conditions have a major impact on the environment, the health of inhabitants of these areas and the economy. It also seems that the major costs resulting from such inadequate provision are from the lack of proper sanitation, lack of access to water and electricity, as well as the lack of refuse removal. Although poor shelter is not without negative impacts, it seems that the major negative impacts on human health, the economy and the environment are precipitated by the lack of infrastructure. However, it should also be acknowledged that a higher level of infrastructure results in higher costs, which lower-income citizens cannot always afford.

Living Conditions in the Free State

Physical housing conditions

The health, economic and environmental costs of poor living conditions are reflected in the Free State province. Any assessment of housing conditions should extend beyond the physical nature of housing units, but this is a good starting point. Table 2 provides an overview of the types of housing units in the Free State.

According to this categorisation, the homeless are non-existent – although one needs to acknowledge from the way a census is structured that it is probably difficult to reach all homeless people. The actual number of people without a physical housing structure seems to be small – less than 0,1% of all households. Despite this, one also needs to recognise that there are certain housing problems. The relatively high percentage of households in the Free State residing in informal housing units is noteworthy. This is probably the dimension which reflects the housing problem in South Africa most tangibly. The Free State seems to have a higher percentage of households residing in informal hous-

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FIGURE 1:THE METHOD OF WATER PROVISION PER TYPE OF DWELLING UNIT IN THE FREE STATE, 1996 (%) SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING 1999

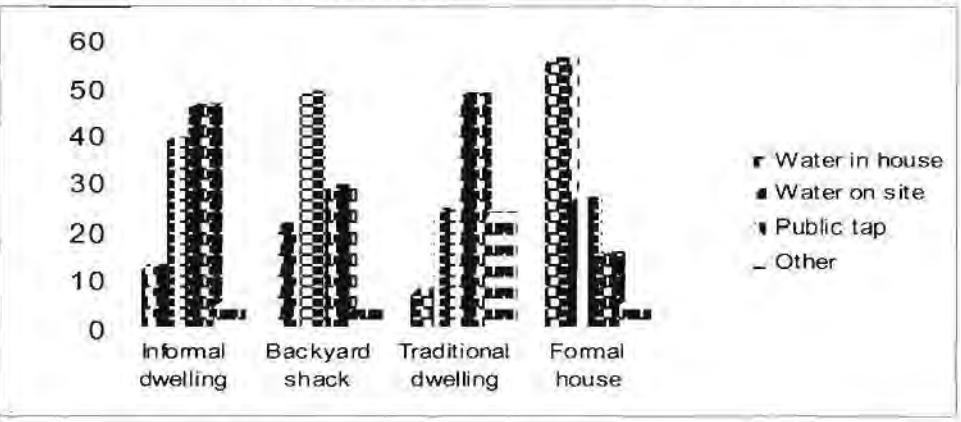
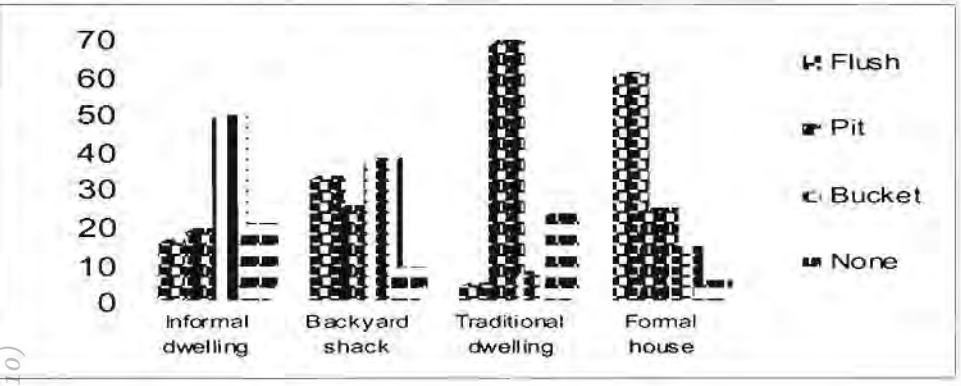


FIGURE 2: THE TYPE OF SANITATION (PERCENTAGE) FOR INFORMAL DWELLINGS, BACKYARD SHACKS, TRADITIONAL DWELLINGS AND FORMAL HOUSES IN THE FREE STATE, 1996 SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING 1999



ing units than the average for South Africa. Furthermore, it should also be noted that approximately 90% of households in informal housing units reside in urban areas and of the informal housing units approximately 45% are in major cities.[28] The number of households residing in informal backyard housing units is also more than the average number for South Africa; moreover, this number refers mainly to an urban phenomena.

This analysis of the situation in the Free State further reinforces the notion that using the physical features of a housing unit might only provide a limited basis from which to develop a framework for assessing the concept of a housing backlog. Secondly, if it is accepted that approximately 112 000 households (in informal settlements) are in need of housing assistance, then the need exceeds the availability of funds (approximately 35 000 subsidies for the period 1999/2000 – 2001/2002).[29]

At an estimated growth rate of 3% per annum in this type of housing, it would mean that at least 3 000 subsidies should be available to accommodate new inhabitants. Therefore, assuming that the problem is the type of housing unit does not necessarily reflect the worst settlement scenario nor is it likely to solve the housing problem.

Access to water

If the physical structure alone does not reflect the degree of the housing backlog, it could be asked what else should be taken into account. One such aspect is access to water. Table 3 reflects the type of housing unit in relation to the level of water services available.

It seems that approximately 70% of households in the Free State have water inside their house or on the stand while 23,9% or nearly 150 000 households are dependent on a communal tap for water. No indication is provided with regard to the distance to the communal tap.

The physical structure of a housing unit alone does not reflect the degree of the housing backlog

Although the Free State has a smaller percentage of households with piped water in the dwelling than the average for South Africa, the province also has a smaller percentage of households dependent on dams, rivers, streams and springs. These sources of water, as well as water carriers, tankers, boreholes, rain water from tanks and wells probably allude to rural areas. It is difficult to determine the quality of water provided in this manner. In terms of the first three categories in the table, the large number of people dependent on communal taps is the area which raises the most concern, especially in terms of health concerns. To gain a broader understanding of the situation, the method of water provision is linked with type of housing unit (see Figure 1).

Informal dwellings and traditional dwellings have the highest percentage of access to communal taps. The high percentage of traditional units with a communal tap may be related to the rural nature of most of these dwellings. It should also be recognised that approximately one third of people receiving water by means of a communal tap reside in a formal house.

From the literature it was already noted that access to water has more health benefits than access to a formal housing structure. So perhaps households residing in formal housing units, without access to water on the site, are more of a concern than households in informal housing units with access to water on the site.

Access to sanitation

Another aspect which impacts negatively on public health is the degree of access to sanitation, and it should thus be considered in terms of current housing conditions. In terms of access to flush and chemical toilets, Table 4 reveals that the Free State's percentage is approximately 5% less than the national average. If those households with no access to any form of sanitation are considered, the Free State also has a lower percentage than the national average. Only in terms of the percentage of households with access to bucket latrines is

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Better than no sanitation at all? A self-made pit latrine in an informal settlement near Bloemfontein.

the Free State proportionally higher than the South African average. Although pit latrines may have major environmental consequences and bucket systems may lead to certain health problems, the problem is less significant than in those households with no sanitation system at all, and it is significant to note that 18% of all households in informal housing units have no access to any form of sanitation.

The highest percentage of households with no sanitation is found in traditional housing units, followed by informal dwellings. Traditional dwellings also have a relatively high percentage of access to pit latrines and probably reflect the nature of rural sanitation. Does this mean that the problem is mainly a rural problem? To a large degree, the answer is yes. However, one needs to acknowledge that the environmental impact of a lack of sanitation in urban areas could potentially be more problematic due to higher concentrations of the population.[30]

Access to energy

Access to energy refers to access to and utilisation of different energy sources for lighting, heating and cooking. In terms of using electricity for lighting, the Free State average is the same as the national average (58%). However, the use of electricity for heating and cooking in the Free State is lower than the national level. It is also interesting to note that there has been a gradual decrease in the use of electricity from lighting to cooking to heating. This is probably due to the cost of electricity, and suggests that providing electricity will not necessarily reduce the amount of wood and coal used for heating and cooking: while at least 58% of households in the Free State have access to electricity, only 39% use the commodity for heating.

Refuse removal

A lack of refuse removal has a major effect on the settlement environment. Although it is possible for a household to manage its own refuse dump effectively, the reality is that effective management of an own refuse dump only takes place in limited cases.

As shown in Table 5, 61% of households in the Free State have their refuse removed at least once a week in comparison with 52,2% at a national level. This means that there is a higher percentage of households at national level with no refuse removal or with their own refuse dump. A combination of these is the major problem in terms of refuse removal.

Once again the highest percentage of lack of refuse removal is closely linked with traditional dwellings in rural areas where approximately 80% of all households have no access to refuse removal. Of the remaining housing types, informal dwelling units seem to have the biggest problems in terms of refuse removal. Again, the pollution resulting from informal settlements in urban areas is more concentrated, and the impact is greater.

This background shows that, as the literature indicates, the housing problem in the Free State is complex and multifaceted. Furthermore, not enough funds exist to address the problem. Consequently, priorities need to be set in terms of the type of housing and settlement investment. We would argue that the housing approach should include a balance between infrastructure and top

TABLE 6: THE MAIN ATTRIBUTES OF HOUSING DELIVERY IN THE FREE STATE AND SOUTH AFRICA, 1994 - 1998

Criteria	South Africa* (%)	Free State (%)
Houses bigger than 40m²	28,8	91
Projects with three or more roomed houses	46,8	94,3
Projects with internal water articulation	63,6	37,1
Projects with external water access	34,1	62,9
Projects with communal water access	2,3	0
Projects with conventional water-borne sewerage	79,6	67,5
Projects with bucket system	4,7	25
Projects with pit latrines	7,8	0
Projects with no form of sanitation	0	7,5

• Source: Settlement Dynamics, The Housing Monitor, Parklands: Settlement Dynamics, 1998.

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TABLE 7: HOUSE SIZES OF HOUSES DELIVERED PER PROVINCE, 1994 – 1998

Province/ House size	Houses smaller than 20m²		Houses: 20m² – 29,9m²		Houses: 30m² – 39m²		Houses: 40m²		Houses bigger than 40m²	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Free State	0	0	0	0,9	959	9	8 623	80,6	1 119	10,4
Eastern Cape	1 074	10,7	4 923	48,9	3 369	33,5	0	0	704	7
Gauteng	800	2,9	1 675	6,2	13 740	50,6	9 441	34,8	3 147	11,6
Kwazulu / Natal	1 507	15,6	5 495	60	1 783	18,5	203	2,1	658	6,8
Mpumalanga	0	0	4 566	50	3 693	40,5	0	0	871	9,5
Northern Cape	200	9	1 080	48,8	424	19,2	508	23	0	0
Northern Province	1 585	17,5	1 500	16,6	4 194	46,3	777	8,6	1 000	11,0
North West	2 308	30,6	3 196	42,3	0	0	2 050	27,1	0	0
Western Cape	930	5,6	13 185	78,7	1 029	6,2	243	1,5	1 339	8
TOTAL	**8 404**	**8,2**	**35 620**	**34,6**	**29 191**	**28,4**	**21 845**	**21,2**	**7 830**	**7,6**

Source: Settlement Dynamics, The Housing Monitor, Parklands: Settlement Dynamics, 1998.

structure provision. Furthermore, it seems that more low-income people find it difficult to pay for their services and taxes, with approximately 72% of households in the Free State earning less than R1 500 per month. What can be done to address the situation?

Low-Income Housing Delivery: Impact on Environmental Conditions

Against the background of the dilemmas of low-income people in urban settlements, as well as the above brief overview of the situation in the Free State, it is now possible to assess the sustainability of housing policy in terms of the environmental impact on households. Low-income, state-subsidised housing in the Free State has been dominated by policy guidelines prescribing a minimum house size of 40m². Although this has certainly contributed to larger homes for the beneficiaries, it has had negative consequences for the surrounding environmental conditions or at least has not improved these conditions.

It seems clear that despite the houses in general in the Free State being larger than the average at a national level (Table 6 and Table 7), access to water and higher levels of sanitation (which have a direct impact on the environment) were lower than the average national level. This has resulted from the emphasis on 40m² houses in the Free State. Where the other provinces have opted for greater access to services by means of housing subsidies and smaller houses, the Free State has opted for larger houses and not necessarily any emphasis on services.

This has meant that nearly 85% of all housing projects in the Free State have had to take place on existing sites.[31] To ensure a 40m² house, developers had to save on infrastructure, surveying, and town planning costs, with the following consequences:

- In the first place, such an approach does not help to accommodate the increasing number of people urbanising and settling in informal settlements, and the environmental problems associated with the process. Indeed, it only improves the conditions of existing urban households on planned stands.
- In areas where no infrastructure was available, housing development was limited. The reality was that one could not provide services and a 40m² house on the current subsidy of R16 000. In the Free State this happened mainly in the cities, and especially Bloemfontein, where large-scale urbanisation is taking place but no existing infrastructure exists to apply the subsidy scheme.[32]
- A large percentage of housing developments in the cities in the Free State (1994-1998) have been credit-linked (where an individual obtains a loan from a financial institution in addition to the subsidy). This meant that the majority of housing funding in the big cities during this period went to people who were not part of the poorer sections of the population. As previously noted, the lack of services in infrastructure in the cities is extremely problematic, especially against the background of the higher population densities than in rural areas.
- This process led to the double subsidisation of households, which is prohibited by the White Paper on Housing.[33] In reality, what happened was that in most cases the District Council provided funds for a certain level of internal services, with the housing subsidy used on top of the services provided. This has not helped the principle of equity in government subsidies. As a result, people on existing sites received a benefit from the state, while those in informal settlements with high environmental and health risks received only limited assistance.

A further consequence of the 40m² housing policy is that in order to ensure the construction of a house of this size, the highest subsidy levels of R16 000 should be reached.[34] This means that the majority of subsidies went to households in the income band below R1 500 per month. This tension between well-targeted subsidies and the ability of these well-targeted subsidies has also been noted at a national level.[35] However, we are of the opinion that in the Free State the emphasis on 40m² houses has increased the tension and has impacted more negatively on financial sustainability than in other provinces.

In terms of its policy approach, the Free State province had a fairly one-dimensional policy approach – looking primarily to improve the physical living space of end-users. In the process, access to infrastructure, such as water and sanitation, was neglected and we argue that it impacted negatively on the financial sustainability of settlements. This approach is also directly in contrast

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to what an analysis of the Free State housing situation would suggest.

Critical Questions, Reflection on Policy, and Development Tensions

There seems to be a conflict between living conditions, the financial capacity of individuals to contribute towards services delivered, and the possible environmental impact of lower levels of service provision. There are surely public health and environmental savings at higher levels of services. However, the reality is that these are not always affordable (as we have seen with the provision of electricity) while top-up mortgage finance is also not affordable.[36]

> A more holistic approach ... would ensure more viable economic, environmental and socially sustainable settlements

The logical consequence of this would be that households should be subsidised. Although there are good arguments for cross-subsidisation within urban areas, the current reality is that most local authorities in the Free State have no funds available for capital expenditure. Funds will have to be generated at provincial and national government level.

Furthermore, which services or what part of the top structure should be subsidised? The current Free State housing policy has concentrated on the top structure while the service levels of stands which have the biggest impact on the environment and public health have not received the same amount of attention. Bond and Tait argue that the subsidy should be larger so as to be able to provide a decent house.[37] At the same time, it should be acknowledged that this would immediately reduce the possible number of beneficiaries.[38] However, to address these environmental considerations, the levels of services should certainly be addressed within the available subsidy.

Against the background of limited funding to address the environmental problems and lack of services due to increasing urbanisation, there needs to be a set of priorities with regard to what type of investment is needed. Our assessment suggests that the top structure is not the only priority to be addressed and that water might be extremely high on the priority list. Another aspect which needs to be given attention is the size of water buckets in water-borne sewerage systems, as well as whether we can afford purified water for these sewerage systems. Lastly, if the principles of Agenda 21 are followed, will they have any meaning for low-income urban dwellers or is it possible to implement a local Agenda 21 'action plan' when sustainable development is seemingly financially unachievable to most local authorities in SA?

Conclusion

It seems that the housing policy in the Free State is in direct opposition to most analysts' suggestions for ensuring healthy urban environments. The Free State policy also neglects the different dimensions of housing and settlement problems.

In conclusion, it might be asked whether the time for phasing out sectoral housing and infrastructure investment policies has not come. Is it not possible to create a settlement development fund where it is possible to view the settlement problems and dynamics in a more holistic manner?

Using such an approach it might be possible to apply the principles of sustainable and holistic development and in so doing, ensure more viable economic, environmental and socially sustainable settlements. ✪

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Addressing the support needs of SMME manufacturers in South Africa

BY CM ROGERSON

The activities of the small, medium and micro-enterprise (SMME) economy are critical for addressing economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation in Africa. In particular, small-scale production has a potentially catalytic role in stimulating local economic development through the promotion of business linkages.[1] Small-scale manufacturers in South Africa confront a difficult structural environment in terms of improving their competitive market position. The share of both total employment and output that is contributed by SMMEs in South Africa is far lower than that of many other countries. Indeed, large South African firms are

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responsible for between 70-75% of total manufacturing as indexed by employment and 80% as measured by gross output indicators.[2] Recent research points to a need for policy specifically designed to enhance the successful growth and upgrading of small scale manufacturers through a recognition of their support needs.[3]

This article identifies the key support needs of SMME manufacturers in the Western Cape province, the third most significant manufacturing region in South Africa. Following the official definitions used in the National White Paper on Small Business, the term "established SMME" refers to an enterprise owned and managed by white entrepreneurs, while an "emerging SMME" is owned and managed by entrepreneurs from South Africa's historically disadvantaged communities.[4]

An examination of issues surrounding SMME competitiveness and support needs is particularly relevant in light of new challenges posed by a changed trade policy regime, marked by a shift away from protectionism to an open trading environment.[5]

Moreover, the issue of support measures for a more competitive SMME economy links to a re-assessment of policy in South Africa, including the shift from the provision of generic support packages to the design of more sectorally-targeted support systems, including the manufacturing sector.[6]

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Support needs of established SMME manufacturers

Research undertaken for the possible establishment of a "Regional Supply Office" in the Western Cape shows that there is a real need for a manufacturing support initiative. Existing support structures in the province focus mainly on micro-enterprise, and there is thus a gap in respect of support for small and medium enterprises. This need is heightened in light of the fact that "there is a dearth of small/medium businesses of any quality" in the Western Cape.[7]

In unpacking the support needs of established SMME manufacturers within the Western Cape, the article will narrow the focus to a case study of a specific manufacturing sector, the clothing industry.

The production of clothing represents the most important manufacturing sector of the Western Cape. Since 1989, however, the industry has experienced considerable pressure to restructure and the number of factories, employees and average size of firms have steadily decreased.[8]

Roughly 50% of small and medium-sized clothing manufacturers in the Western Cape function as subcontractors to larger manufacturers or design houses. The majority lack specialised machinery and technology.

Pic: Guy Stubbs

The reduced size of firms is also partly the result of downsizing and unbundling of manufacturing and design operations.[9] Declines in employment can be attributed to the informalisation of formal producers as well as a growth in import volume penetration, and general decreases in domestic competitiveness as a consequence of relaxed industrial protection measures.[10] Moreover, export expansion by Western Cape clothing manufacturers has failed to compensate for the displacement taking place in local markets.[11]

The structure of the Western Cape clothing sector comprises a range of firms and does not fit into an industrial district model.[12] At the apex of the industry are a group of large and medium-sized enterprises producing high quality garments, often for export.[13] These firms are vertically integrated and responsible for designing, purchasing inputs, selling, manufacturing and distribution.[14]

Below this group are a large number of small firms, which lead an often precarious existence with fierce levels of competition and corresponding high entrance and exit rates.[15] It is estimated that small and medium-sized manufacturers constitute 91% of the total num-

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ber of enterprises in Western Cape clothing.[16] Roughly 50% of these firms function as subcontractors to larger manufacturers or design houses. The majority lack specialised machinery and technology.[17]

Significantly, an increasing number of these manufacturers are operating as unregistered operations in the informal economy.[18] Indeed, it is thought that employment in the informal clothing economy of metropolitan Cape Town is at least equal to that of the formal economy.[19]

The problems and support needs of established SMME clothing producers in the Western Cape reflect the need to enhance the competitiveness and performance of the clothing industry as a whole.[20] Like their counterparts in the rest of the country, Western Cape clothing producers have been somewhat slow in responding to the need to implement best-practice process technologies, a distinguishing feature of successful clothing economies.[21]

As a consequence, another weakness of the clothing economy is a decrease in labour productivity and a concomitant increase in unit costs. Industry sources agree that a "concerted effort needs to be made with respect to improving productivity and increased investment in education and training for both management and labour in the clothing manufacturing industry in order to contain real increases in labour costs".[22] The volume of exporting by Western Cape SMEs is minimal; one estimate is that they contribute a meagre 2% of clothing exports, while "not one of the 381 small clothing manufacturing enterprises has any export programme of note".[23]

Indeed, Western Cape "SME clothing manufacturers do not actively pursue exporting for reasons of internal, as well as structural constraints".[24] Of significance, too, is the fact that penetration of African markets has been relatively small from Western Cape producers whereas "manufacturers in Durban and Johannesburg are actively pursuing opportunities in these markets and are often able to undercut Cape Town based firms".[25]

A number of reasons may account for the weak export performance of Western Cape clothing producers, such as a lack of understanding of international markets, a lack of managerial and technical know-how, and a lack of direction in terms of policy on accessing foreign markets.

Although the structural barriers to export improvement, such as distance from markets, must be acknowledged, perhaps the most compelling explanation for poor export performance is that these producers have traditionally geared their production towards local rather than export markets. For many SMEs "marketing strategies include exports merely as a means of clearing the surplus inventory often at prices below domestic levels during recessionary periods".[26]

Moreover, small and medium clothing manufacturers "are not generally structured for exports; they have neither the marketing nor the other administrative resources and expertise required".[27]

The need for marketing support, including export marketing, for Western Cape SMEs is underscored by a study showing that 44% of a small enterprise client base and 13% of a medium-sized client base indicated that access to markets was a major constraint.[28] A number of additional issues have been put forward as potential areas for manufacturing support initiatives. Altman stresses the importance of factory design and organisational issues as potential ways of improving productivity.[29] Other research draws attention to the need for improved strategic and business planning, including a management orientation to issues around globalisation and a general upgrading of technologies, especially computerised and automated manufacturing equipment.[30] Furthermore, the importance of promoting a culture of "learning enterprises" has been stressed.[31]

Access to markets is a core constraint ... emerging producers are 'denied' market opportunities

Finally, there are a number of constraints and potential support needs for clothing SMEs which relate to their size as opposed to issues confronting the sector as a whole. For example, supply purchasing is important, as smaller producers are "unable to purchase fabrics in bulk and are therefore compelled to purchase smaller quantities from either local textile manufacturers or fabric import agents".[32]

In addition, the bargaining power of small manufacturers is weak in relation to domestic textile manufacturers, not least because South African suppliers seldom sell fabric in bulk at less than 1 000 metres an order. Such support needs of established SMME producers point to the relevance of a regional manufacturing support initiative.

Support Needs of Emerging SMME Manufacturers

The support needs of emerging manufacturers are different in emphasis to those of established producers. In the Western Cape, there are growing numbers of emerging enterprises within the overall SMME economy. A study of the provincial economy notes that "the number of micro and small enterprises in the townships of the Cape Metropolitan Area and also in the larger rural towns has increased dramatically over the past few years".[33]

The growth of informal clothing producers operating as home industries, in particular, has been widely documented.[34] In a recent study on Cape Town, it was observed that an "important and growing trend in the clothing industry is the advent of small informal clothing manufacturers".[35]

Historically, a distinguishing feature of the Western Cape has been the relative absence of successful black SMME entrepreneurs, although this situation is undoubtedly changing in the wake of accelerating empowerment initiatives in Western Cape. On the whole, though, the support needs of these emerging SMME manufacturers, perhaps unsurprisingly, are essentially a mirror of national support needs.[36]

Access to Finance

The issue of access to finance is a major support need of emerging manufacturers in the Western Cape. In research conducted among black SMMEs, the major need identified was lack of capital.[37] Research conducted by Mashego and Sawaya also points to the importance of finance for the emerging SMME manufacturing economy and to the fact that most African entrepreneurs secured capital from their own savings or family sources rather than the formal

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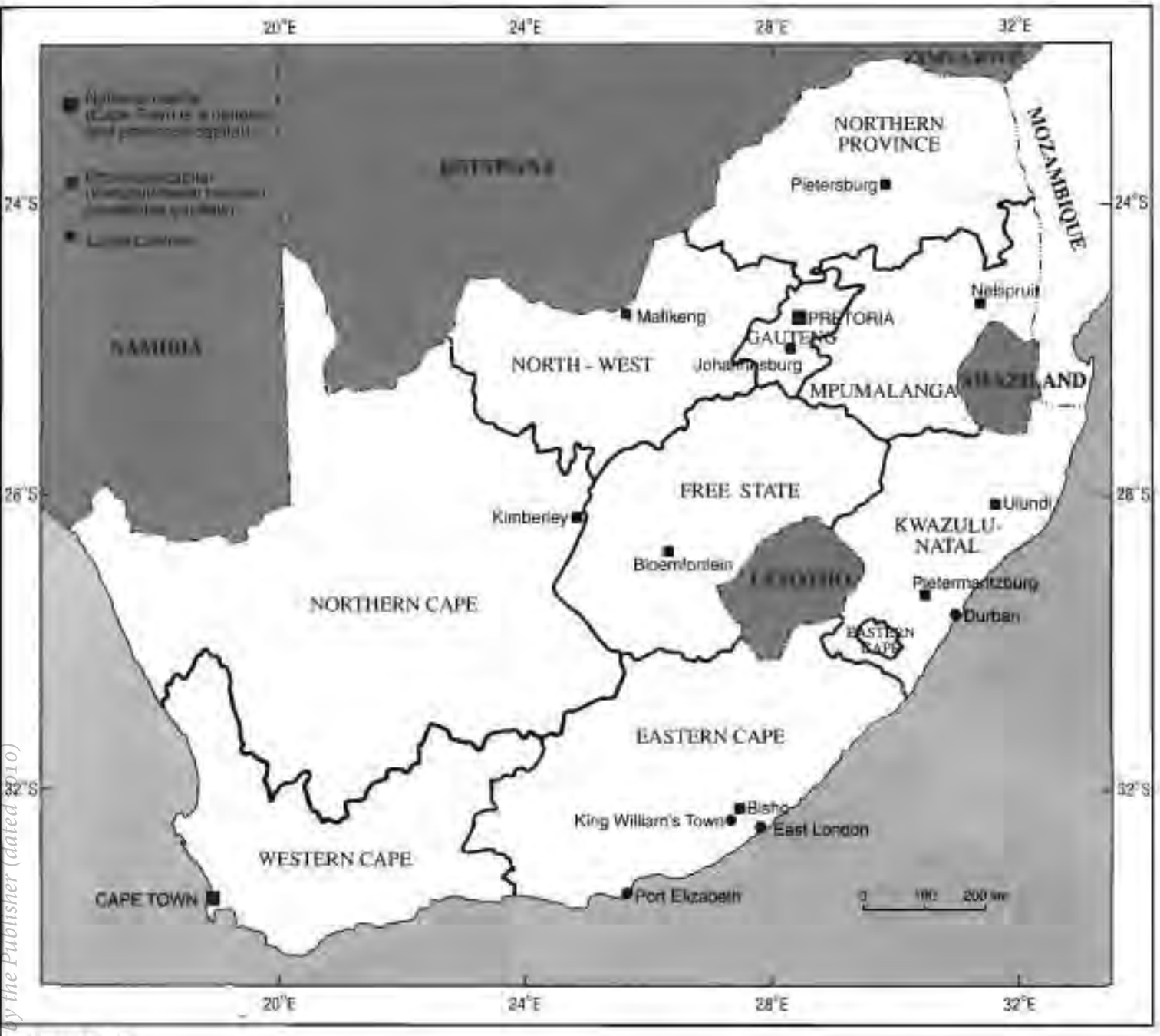

Map: Elize van As, ASA

financial institutions and support agencies.[39]

World Bank research conducted on small clothing producers in the early 1990s showed that lack of access to finance was not a core constraint on medium sized enterprises.[39] Nevertheless, for most informal and small clothing manufacturers the matter of financing, especially access to working capital, "is a constraint hindering their long term growth and development".[40]

The lack of funding to SMMEs to cover working capital needs is considered an important constraint on the success of initiatives to promote large enterprise-SMME linkage arrangements.[41] That said, it appears that the situation is showing promising signs of improvement even in the sphere of micro-enterprise financing.

Access to Markets

Access to markets is a second core constraint: the vertical integration of large retailing firms with their own established factories means that emerging producers are "denied" market opportunities.[42] This competition from established producers results in emerging SMME entrepreneurs being largely confined to a set of narrow economic spaces in which their growth potential is highly constrained, while it is uncommon for them to enter into different markets or to diversify into different product lines.[43] A further factor that constrains potential market opportunities is the limited extent of inter-enterprise co-operation among Western Cape small clothing producers.[44]

Given the critical nature of access to markets, few of even the success stories among emerging African manufacturers engage in exporting, although "nearly 80% said they would like to export if the opportunity arose". It has been argued that the key is to get access to external markets, but that there is "no evidence of any public or private export support organisations at the disposal of black manufacturing SMEs". Indeed, the absence of collective marketing support for black-owned SMMEs contributes in no small measure to their poor export performance, while "lack of appropriate information and advice on

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possible channels of exports is a major problem for aspirant SME exporters".[45]

A striking finding is the relative isolation of African informal clothing producers from the mainstream Western Cape clothing industry.[46] Research highlights the localised nature of markets targeted by informal township producers.[47] These informal clothing producers remain small, undistinguished and unspecialised with little contact with markets outside of township areas. Products are in uniform styles and quality with little diversity of production.[48]

Similar research discloses a divide between the mainly women-run clothing micro-enterprises that were independent producers and those that were subcontracted for production by larger garment producers.[49] The former group make garments for individual customers and are rarely or marginally integrated into the mainstream clothing economy; in contrast, the latter perform the role of dependent sub-contractors.[50]

Significantly, an essential pre-requisite for participation in the subcontracting economy is market information or networks.[51] Because these networks are most widespread in non-black communities, "African entrepreneurs tend not to have access to contracts from retailers or manufacturers".[52] Accordingly, in the Western Cape there are far fewer emerging African clothing manufacturers involved in subcontracting.[53]

In recent research, 23 informal clothing producers operating in Cape Town's African township areas were interviewed. The majority of these enterprises were operating at bare survival levels and nearly all were confined to producing goods for localised township markets.

In this study, however, it was noted that since the introduction in 1994 of compulsory schooling in South Africa certain lucrative opportunities have opened up in township areas for organised small manufacturing units to supply school wear and children's clothing. Notwithstanding this development, it was striking that not one of the interviewees "had been approached by larger, formal and sophisticated manufacturers to assess the likelihood of subcontracting and/or contract manufacturing".[54]

Inadequate Education and Training

It is evident that low education levels and minimal skills training are a constraint on the emerging manufacturing economy. In particular, the weakness of human capital constrains an entrepreneur's capacity to learn to compete in a globalising and increasingly competitive market environment. For the development of a successful SMME economy, the Western Cape will require a set of "smart entrepreneurs".

In particular, a lack of technical skills due to poor training and education hampers the progress of emerging producers in the townships of Western Cape.[55]

Typically, in the informal clothing economy, the majority of African producers had either taught themselves the necessary technical skills or were taught by relatives; formal skills training was sorely lacking.[56]

World Bank research shows that only a tiny fraction of African producers have the essential skills to compete in terms of the quality and timely delivery standards necessary to be subcontractors.[57] This means that it is very difficult for entrepreneurs to diversify their product ranges and break out of saturated markets into potentially more lucrative higher-value production chains.[58]

Moreover, no structured system exists to address the training needs of the informal sector in general and informal producers in particular. Moreover, whilst "the Department of Labour finances courses for the informal sector, aimed at equipping unemployed people with appropriate skills for informal sector employment or to operate as an independent entrepreneur, the outcomes are poor".[59]

There is also evidence that existing training programmes in the Western Cape "may be falling into the same traps that have troubled initiatives in other countries – curricula are supply-driven with strong a priori notions about the kinds of basic business and technical skills to be taught".[60] There is thus "an urgent need to address the training needs" of the informal clothing producers.[61]

Failure to do so will further marginalise the emerging African-owned clothing economy within the township areas of Langa, Khayelitsha or Gugulethu.

A lack of technical skills due to poor training and education hampers the progress of emerging producers in the townships

Weaknesses in the Policy Environment

A WESGRO study draws attention to the fact that the "heightened awareness about the role and significance of small, medium and micro-enterprises for regional and local growth and job creation unfortunately does not guarantee the design of effective support programmes at provincial or local level, let alone their implementation".[62] This lack of support infrastructure is a pressing issue.

Business linkages and subcontracting are recognised as a critical component in assisting the growth of the SMME economy, including for emerging manufacturers.[63] The most active initiative is by the Cape Town-based NGO, the Business Opportunities Network (BON), which was formed in 1994 with the aim of facilitating business linkages between the established business sector and SMMEs.

BON aims to empower SMMEs through the propagation of business linkages or outsourcing to predominantly black-owned small enterprises.[64] Nevertheless, it has been argued that whilst there are a few success stories of business linkage, "most SMMEs are not geared up to give the consistent quality of products and services that the corporates need".[65] In particular, this comment refers to the activities of emerging manufacturers in the Western Cape.

Although the majority of existing support services such as business development services are geared towards the micro-enterprise economy, they have so far failed to produce a critical mass of emerging manufacturers able to meet the essential quality standards and reliability that would be required to supply the needs of larger enterprises. That said, awareness about linkage programmes has increased and that the dissemination of training to SMMEs has improved, although many of the existing Local Business Service Centres may be "relatively ineffective in their handling of grassroots requests".[66] What is

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required is an improvement in existing business support services to enable all forms of SMMEs to supply larger businesses through linkage programmes. In addition, enhanced supplier databases are required for effective business linkage programmes to be implemented.[67]

Another tier of policy weakness can be found in local government support and broader local economic development initiatives which might facilitate a healthy environment for emerging SMME producers.[68] Given vast municipal budgets, there is a challenge to the larger local authorities to get an appropriate procurement strategy in place. The relative weakness of the present state of local economic development planning in the Western Cape is clear: "While considerable progress has been made with the spread of awareness among public-sector departments and local communities about the importance of bottom-up local economic development (LED) efforts, most municipalities and local communities are still uncertain about the 'how' and 'who' of LED".[69]

Finally, a vital area of weakness in the policy environment relates to provincial government initiatives for public procurement. While BON aims to expand opportunities for SMMEs in public sector as well as private sector enterprises, its effectiveness is constrained by the lack of implementation by the provincial authorities of the national Ten Point Procurement plan.

This has led to charges that the National Party-dominated Western Cape Cabinet "has become noticeably lukewarm" on SMME promotion and that it clearly does not see this as a major priority.[70]

The fact that the Western Cape is the only province not to implement the national Ten Point Procurement Plan suggests that the "provincial government has denied emerging businesses" access to certain potential levers for new business opportunities.[71] In addition, it places a question mark on whether the provincial government has a real commitment to the promotion of emerging SMMEs.

TABLE 1: PERIOD OF ESTABLISHMENT OF SMMES

No of years	No of established firms	No of emerging firms	Total
< 5	5	13	18
6-10	9	7	16
11-20	22	2	24
21-40	31	1	31
>40	14	0	14
No answer	1	0	1

Support Needs for Growth and Competitiveness

The absence of any primary research on the support needs of the manufacturing SMME economy in Western Cape prompted a survey to describe the recent growth trajectory, performance and support needs of established SMMEs and a small group of more established, albeit still "emerging", manufacturing SMMEs. The first and largest group of enterprises surveyed were 82 white-owned manufacturing enterprises classified as small or medium-sized enterprises, i.e. employing up to 200 workers. The second group of interviewees were 23 emerging manufacturing enterprises. In structuring the sample, a problem emerged in terms of the restructuring taking place in the Western Cape manufacturing economy. Many firms were either no longer in existence, no longer engaged in manufacturing operations or had been absorbed due to mergers or take-overs by larger operations.

> Most municipalities and local communities are still uncertain about the 'how' and 'who' of local economic development

Taking the sample of enterprises as a whole, the largest sectoral representation of enterprises were found in clothing, metal-working, furniture, printing and beverages; together these five sectors of production account for 76% of the sample. In terms of location, the majority of interviews were with firms operating within the Cape Town metropolitan area; the Philippi and Strand hives were the location for the largest number of interviewees among the group of emerging manufacturers.

Table 1 shows that the majority of SMME manufacturers are long-established features of the Western Cape manufacturing economy. The group of emerging SMME manufacturers is clearly of more recent origin, the majority having been in business for less than 10 years. In contrast to Gauteng, the Western Cape does not appear to have a group of mature black-owned manufacturers who have been operating their businesses for periods of 10 years or more.[72] In terms of ownership of SMME enterprises, there were parallels in the responses of the groups of white-owned established enterprises and the group of emerging black-owned SMME manufacturers. Among both groups of enterprises, the mass of SMME enterprises were in private ownership.

Strategy, Performance and Capabilities

The projected performance of the group of enterprises offers a relatively positive outlook on the state of the Western Cape SMME manufacturing economy. In terms of employment, signs of a sluggish employment performance are recorded by the Western Cape sample of SMME manufacturers (Table 2). Certain differences were observed between the two sample groups of enterprises with a more positive outlook in terms of employment trajectories amongst the emerging enterprises. But, when projected further, the overall picture is more positive. Of the respondents, 44% indicated that employment gains were anticipated, while only 8% predicted a likely decline in employment. Once again, emerging manufacturers were more optimistic in their employment outlook than the established enterprises.

Turning to questions of actual and projected sales performance, a positive situation is again suggested. Between 1994 and 1998 the sales performance indicators for the sampled SMMEs reveal a healthy performance: 68% of enterprises showed an expansion in sales with only 18% stating that sales performance declined in this period. The

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TABLE 2: EMPLOYMENT TRENDS OF SMMES

	1994-1998				1998-2000 (projected)			
	Increase	Decrease	Same	No Answer	Increase	Decrease	Same	No Answer
Established firms	34	31	17	0	21	6	37	18
Emerging Firms	8	3	5	7	17	1	4	1

TABLE 3: SALES PERFORMANCE OF SMMES

	1994-1998				1998-2000 (projected)			
	Increase	Decrease	Same	No Answer	Increase	Decrease	Same	No Answer
Established firms	53	17	12	0	54	4	14	10
Emerging Firms	14	1	1	7	18	0	4	1

TABLE 4: TRAINING IN THE LAST TWO YEARS

	Management			Employee		
	Established	Emerging	Total	Established	Emerging	Total
Yes	19	6	25	23	2	25
No	62	16	78	28	15	43
External	0	0	0	9	0	9
In-House	1	0	1	21	6	27

picture is still better for projected sales performance for the period through 2000. A vast majority of SMMEs were optimistic that enterprise sales performance would show signs of improvement. Optimism about the future was evident amongst both established and emerging manufacturers.

In terms of the major markets for the outputs of SMME manufacturers, a broad picture emerges of the Western Cape as the core market for the vast majority of enterprises. Outside of this province, other South African markets represent the largest share for additional production, and export markets are of only limited significance. Only three enterprises reported that export markets represented more than 50% of enterprise sales.

Certain variations in the geographical patterns of sales were in evidence between the groups of established and emerging manufacturers. Overall, a trend exists for the larger, more established SMMEs to enjoy a far wider geographical spread of market sales than the emerging SMMEs. For established manufacturers the Western Cape market is dominant for 70% of enterprises which have more than 50% of sales there; by contrast, for every emerging manufacturer the local market is the focus for at least 75% of sales.

As regards exports, only 17% of the sample were involved in any export activities, and in only seven cases did export operations represent more than 25% of total enterprise sales. Significantly, none of the emerging SMME manufacturers was involved in any form of export activities. In terms of destination for exports, the Western Cape has only a weak focus on African markets, apart from Namibia.

Subcontracting is clearly an element in the activities and workings of Western Cape SMME manufacturers. Overall, 29% of sample enterprises indicated that other enterprises regularly subcontracted production operations to them, while a similar proportion of enterprises were engaged in subcontracting or outsourcing work to other manufacturers.

Some interesting differences emerge: while 30% of established enterprises indicated that they were regular subcontractors for other enterprises, only 22% of emerging entrepreneurs could say the same, with similar splits for outsourcing.

Although these results are based on small sample sizes, they do point to the conclusion that networks of subcontracting are more significant for established than emerging SMME manufacturers in the Western Cape. Not surprisingly, these existing subcontracting webs are almost exclusively focused within the Western Cape manufacturing economy.

Aspects of the capability of SMME manufacturing enterprises are addressed in a set of issues relating to equipment, quality control and training. A wide variety of industrial equipment is in use, ranging from manually-operated tools and machinery through semi-automated machines to advanced computer-controlled equipment. A clear division exists between the asset base of established and emergent manufacturers.

For emergent enterprises most equipment consists of simple manually operated machines, such as sewing machines, which are normally purchased second-hand. Across the spectrum of established enterprises, however, the largest proportion of industrial equipment was manually operated machinery, which formed the basic capital goods for 62% of enterprises. Consistent information on the ageing of equipment was not readily available, but the picture that emerged was that new equipment is found in only 30% of enterprises. In nearly all cases, the mode of replacement for equipment is through bank finance or internal profits.

Information concerning quality control procedures functioning in SMME manufacturers was obtained, ranging from compliance with ISO 9000-9002 or South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) procedures to hands-on quality control by the individual entrepreneur.

Among the group of emerging entrepreneurs, the most common procedure is for the entrepreneur to do physical inspections of the manufactured products; in 74% of cases this was the standard procedure.

Not surprisingly, among the group of established enterprises there were more advanced quality procedures in place: 28% of enterprises claimed to have either a formalised department for qual-

Significantly, none of the emerging SMME manufacturers was involved in any form of export activities

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ity control or strict quality control procedures.

In terms of training, questions were asked concerning both the training of management and workers. Issues of management training produced similar sets of responses from emerging and established entrepreneurs. A striking finding was that the group of emerging entrepreneurs were no more likely to have attended management training workshops during the past two years than the group of established entrepreneurs. The leading kinds of courses attended were in business management, ISO prescribed courses and MBA programmes. Of note is the smaller proportion of Western Cape emerging entrepreneurs that have pursued training as compared to their counterparts in Gauteng.[73]

The picture as regards employee training revealed several different responses, ranging from no training, to a hybrid of different training methods. In the case of emerging enterprises, only a limited amount of skills training, if any, is carried out on-the-job or through in-house procedures. In only two cases was use made of external training facilities. In established enterprises, some form of training is offered by almost two-thirds of SMME manufacturers.

Of these enterprises, on-the-job and in-house training is of importance to over half of the responding enterprises which undertake training. In addition, a significant number of enterprises (37%) send their employees on external courses, which are often linked to industry Training Boards or particular associations. In two cases, enterprises sent their apprentices to Gauteng for such training.

Support Needs for Competitiveness

The above findings set the backdrop for investigating the support and competitiveness needs of the Western Cape SMME manufacturing economy. Enterprises were probed concerning their most significant needs across a wide spectrum of areas from plant layout, basic skills, computer applications to issues of environmental health and energy conservation.

The single most important issue was market development, including exporting, which was mentioned as a problem by 73% of the sample. Other important issues were access to finance, issues concerning supervisory skills, management and team building skills, and technical skills, including quality control.

There were minor differences between the groups of established and emerging manufacturers. Among established manufacturers the major needs were market development (72%) and supervisory skills (35%) with access to finance being mentioned by 27% of enterprises. In the group of emerging manufacturers, the core issue was also that of market development (78%), followed, however, by access to finance (61%). Beyond the key needs, a more specialised layer can be discerned, relating to issues which impact on competitiveness. These can be seen in Table 5.

In terms of these key needs and potential problem areas for their competitiveness, the manufacturing SMMEs were then asked whether they had received any form of assistance in the past two years and the source of such assistance. The core finding is that the majority of SMME sample enterprises received no form of assistance or business support.

Moreover, the survey reveals that for both established and emerging manufacturers, the private sector has been the major source of business assistance, followed by the public sector, which is disturbing considering the introduction since 1995 of a range of state programmes designed to assist emerging SMMEs in South Africa.[74]

The most common form of business assistance was access to finance and manufacturing process set-up, followed by technical skills training and market development, including exporting. The relatively small number of firms that received assistance in marketing (only

TABLE 5: SIGNIFICANT NEEDS OF WESTERN CAPE SMMES

Main needs identified	Established firms	Emerging firms	Total
Market development (and exports)	59	18	77
Access to finance	22	14	36
Technical skills	18	8	26
Supervisory skills and management	29	6	25
Plant layout, expansion planning	14	7	21
Manufacturing process, set-up, scrap	13	4	17
Production development/design	11	5	16
Basic skills	10	3	13
Computer applications	10	2	12
Quality assurance	10	1	11
Business systems	5	5	10
Energy costs, conservation	8	0	8
Material failure & material-related issues	3	0	3
Environmental, health and safety compliance	1	2	3

TABLE 6: POSSIBLE FUTURE ASSISTANCE FOR SMMES

Topics expressed	Established firms	Emerging firms	Total
Marketing	58	18	76
Human resource development	40	9	49
Internet for manufacturers	36	2	38
Finance, management	22	16	38
Other	30	7	37
Exporting	27	6	33
Just-in-Time inventory systems	15	3	18
Product development	12	5	17
Energy management	6	0	6
ISO standards	3	0	3
Materials joining	1	2	3
Safety and health	0	1	1
Pollution prevention	0	0	0

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13% of the sample) should be set against the expressed need for such support.

In terms of future assistance, entrepreneurs were asked whether they would be interested in receiving assistance to enhance the competitiveness of their businesses. The responses disclosed certain striking trends. Overwhelmingly, the most requested form of support relates to issues of marketing and niche marketing: 72% of the sample expressed an interest in receiving business support on this matter.

A second tier of interest and demand surrounds human resource development (47%), Internet for manufacturers (36%), finance/management (36%) and exporting and international business (31%). Issues that attracted little interest included energy management, ISO standards, and safety and health. It was remarkable that in a province which places considerable emphasis on environmental quality, not one interviewee expressed a concern for assistance regarding pollution prevention. In addition, a number of other suggestions for potential assistance were offered, including CAD/CAM design, labour motivation and productivity improvement, and basic skills for workers.

Policy Implications

The Western Cape investigation demonstrates the need for an institutional support framework to assist manufacturing SMMEs to meet the demands of new globalised competition. The initiation in South Africa since 1997 of the Manufacturing Advice Centres (MACs) programme was inspired by Denmark's highly successful experience. Overall, the planned network of MACs could serve the objective of promoting economic growth by strengthening the competitiveness of more established SMMEs.

Indeed, the MAC programme's mandate is to assist small to medium-sized firms to become more productive, competitive and profitable through a programme of assistance including advisory services, technical support, information support and assistance with quality standards.[75]

In assisting the SMME economy of the Western Cape the extension of some form of manufacturing advice or support system, such as the MACs, would be a positive step. For emerging manufacturers, this would need to be complemented by measures to enhance their access to finance, education and training, and through business linkage programmes to markets. For the established producers it is evident that a MAC could potentially assist in achieving a degree of production flexibility that derives from access to best practice technology, management expertise, and the capacity to identify and meet the needs of new markets.

The private sector has been the major source of business assistance ... the most common form of business assistance was access to finance and manufacturing process set-up, followed by technical skills training and market development, including exporting.

Pic: Guy Stubbs

The study of the SMME manufacturing economy of the Western Cape thus provides a wealth of information pointing to a number of areas of policy weakness and support needs that could be addressed through a manufacturing support initiative. Support for marketing and export marketing in particular, provision of information on best practice technologies and factory organisational layouts are some areas for intervention.

Conclusion

Over the past three decades, numerous industrialised countries have instituted business service or business retention programmes in support of small or medium-sized manufacturing enterprises.[76] Both private sector and public sector systems of intervention and support have been introduced.

In the developing world, South Africa is one of the few countries to seek to innovate such systems of manufacturing

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support. For this reason, South Africa's experiments in manufacturing support for SMMEs are of particular interest.

South African manufacturing as a whole confronts the important challenge of adjusting to a shifting international policy environment, particularly concerning the country's trade regime.[77] One of the challenges relates to the introduction of a set of policies and programmes targeted at upgrading the performance and competitiveness of South Africa's SMME economy. This paper highlights some of the key support areas for policy interventions which might be designed to grow and upgrade the manufacturing SMME economy to face new global competition.

The Western Cape offers one case study for manufacturing support intervention on a regional basis. Other similar initiatives for regional manufacturing advice centres are being investigated or implemented in other major industrial regions of developing countries. Monitoring the workings of these initiatives will be significant for a process of learning how manufacturing support initiatives can work in the context of developing countries.

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How to win customers and influence profits

Adding competitive intelligence to South Africa's knowledge management mix

Determining what is going to happen next in your environment and then taking advantage of it is critical to any company or government. Knowing what customers truly want and staying ahead of the competition is crucial to business success. This can best be achieved through competitive intelligence, write JONATHAN CALOF and WILMA VIVIERS

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Competitive Intelligence is becoming recognised as a significant business practice around the world. How a company – and a country – becomes more competitive is an area of increased focus globally as countries seek to enhance their standards of living. Organised programmes can be found in virtually every developed country and governments around the world are focusing more resources on this. Competitive Intelligence (CI) is increasingly being seen as a key tool for creating competitiveness.

Competitive Intelligence, and its sister field of Knowledge Management, are growing at impressive rates throughout North America, Europe and Asia. Membership in the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP) grew at an annual rate of 40% in the 1990s, reaching 7 000 members in 2000, and academic programmes have been developed throughout Europe, North America and recently in China.

But how is Africa, and more particularly, South Africa faring in the competitive intelligence race? How are companies in Africa preparing to be more competitive? This article outlines results from a survey of intelligence practices of South African firms, with a view to providing guidelines for enhancing the competitive intelligence infrastructure on the continent.

Defining Competitive Intelligence

At a simplistic level, competitive intelligence (CI) can be defined as information that makes a firm more competitive. One of the better definitions comes from the Business Intelligence Institute in the United States:

> Competitive/Business intelligence is the total knowledge a company possesses about the environment in which it competes. It is synthesised from the vast amount of bits and pieces of external information bombarding the firm every day. It paints a whole picture of the present and future competitive arena of management decisions.[1]

The fuller definition is:

> Competitive intelligence is the art and science of preparing companies for the future by way of a systematic knowledge management process. It is creating knowledge from openly available information by use of a systematic process involving planning, collection, analysis, communication and management, which results in decision-maker action.[2]

Whatever definition is chosen, all point towards creating knowledge from openly available information by use of a systematic process involving planning, collection, analysis, communication and management, which results in decision-maker action. The aim of CI is to understand customers, regulators, competitors, and so forth better, in an attempt to create new opportunities. In fact, the deeper objective is to forecast changes in any of these forces and better position the firm to take advantage of these changes.

The best way to put distance between you and the crowd is to do an outstanding job with information

When people talk about competitive intelligence there tends to be confusion between competitive intelligence, spying (espionage) and knowledge management. According to Patrick Bryant, the President of SCIP, "Espionage is the use of illegal means to gather information. On the other hand, CI is the process of gathering data using legal, ethical means and turning it into valuable intelligence through careful analysis".[3] Competitive intelligence therefore differs from spying in that it uses legal means and goes well beyond data collection.

Differentiating between competitive intelligence and knowledge management is more difficult as there are many different and broad definitions of knowledge management. Most authors in the field define knowledge management in terms of gathering and storing the collected knowledge of an organisation. For example, Phios Corporation defines KM in terms of "knowledge repositories", which can be used to organise documents, a "best practices" library, measurement and benchmarking data and links to relevant web sites.[4]

A definition from Simmons College in the United States provides a useful comparison:

> *Competitive Intelligence* tends to involve gathering information about the outside environment in order to plan for the future of your own company and products/services.
> *Knowledge Management* tends to focus on the identification and integration of existing knowledge within your own people and organisations as well as the outside world, and sharing and using that effectively to improve what you do.[5]

These definitions suggest that while competitive intelligence incorporates some of the processes of knowledge management, such as collecting and storing information, CI also has more to with the actual analysis of the data – a process that knowledge management definitions rarely mention. While there are various definitions, the easiest way to conceptualise the difference is to define knowledge management as the capturing, filing and categorisation of information and competitive intelligence as the focusing, analysing and use of the data. Without knowledge management, you cannot use competitive intelligence, as CI requires access to information. On the other hand, without CI, knowledge management becomes a fruitless exercise in filing and categorising information. It would perhaps be more useful to combine the two concepts, as Business Intelligence for Knowledge Management (BIKM).

How good are most firms at conducting these activities? Consider the comments of Lorry Hathaway, former President of Best Foods (a billion-dollar US food company):

> This does not mean we did not have any competitive data. We had a fair amount of competitive data around. It was bits and pieces of information that were interesting, but were isolated. They certainly weren't cohesive and they were coming from various areas of the company, nobody was pulling them together. They tended to be marketing and sales activities that our competitors had, but there was nothing about integrating them and trying to

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understand most importantly the why: why our competitors were doing these things, how it related to their strategy and more importantly, how does it relate to us. We were not spending any time even thinking about that so that was the issue. The final overall point on that was that we tended to, when we got competitive information, to react to it and the key seems to me to be proactive to try to do something before the fact, rather than when they do something, we react to them.[6]

Hathaway draws out several important principles:

- CI is proactive; the intent is to predict what is going to happen, not what has happened;
- the process involves analysing information to find out why competitors behave in a certain way;
- CI does not stop at data collection; it develops it through analysis (in fact, benchmarking studies indicate that no more than 25% of an organisation's intelligence time is spent in information collection);
- it is an integrated and focused programme using information already existing in the organisation;
- it is a focused process.

How important is competitive intelligence becoming? Consider the following quotes, one from Bill Gates, President of Microsoft, the worlds largest supplier of computer software and the other from John Pepper, Chairman of Procter and Gamble, a multibillion dollar US consumer products company:

> The most meaningful way to differentiate your company from your competition, the best way to put distance between you and the crowd, is to do an outstanding job with information. How you gather, manage, and use information will determine whether you win or lose.[7]

> I can't imagine a more appropriate time to be talking about competitive intelligence than right now, for I can't imagine a time in history when the competencies, the skills, and the knowledge of the men and women in, as I'll be calling it, business intelligence, are more needed and more relevant to a company being able to design a winning strategy and act on it.[8]

Intelligence Infrastructures

What does it take for intelligence to thrive? Typically it requires a business culture that understands competitive intelligence and values the process. Companies that feel that an employee "collects intelligence", or that intelligence is only about the competition do not truly understand the value of corporate intelligence.

Companies that do not value analysis or do not understand that an intelligence programme is focused and proactive, also fail the intelligence culture test. Furthermore, since competitive intelligence is about forecasting changes in the environment, companies must be outward focused. Given that the best information for intelligence purposes comes from within a human network (typically within the organisation), it also requires an organisation that values employees as a primary source of information. Competitive intelligence also requires awareness, appropriate systems, a supportive culture, proper collection and analysis methodologies and an appropriate focus.[9] Collect the right information, not all the information, is the war cry of competitive intelligence.

South African companies need knowledge of their competitive environment and skilled analysis capabilities

To develop the correct attitudes and awareness of what intelligence truly is, appropriate education about intelligence is required. Awareness is enhanced when the media, associations and other opinion leaders publicise both the definition and practice of intelligence. By responsibly reporting on what intelligence is and how it is being practised, the media helps to inform and influence the behaviours of executives. This has certainly been the case in Canada and the United States.

While the dominant source of information is internal, secondary archived information is also important. A mix of information vendors (e.g. Infomart), associations, and government agencies typically provide secondary information. Again, for the information to be appropriate each of these groups should be focused on providing the information required for the company's intelligence processes.

Assuming that an employee has the correct mindset for intelligence and has access to the right information, the next requirement for attaining world class levels of intelligence practice is access to skilled intelligence professionals and intelligence training programmes.

Given that most companies need assistance in developing their programmes, North American experience has shown that companies require access to trained intelligence consultants (these traditionally are a mixture of ex-intelligence officers and business consultants) to help them implement the programme. In cases where the company has an active intelligence programme, research has shown that they will then require access to qualified consultants to help in conducting intelligence projects.

An intelligence infrastructure therefore consists of companies committed to competitive intelligence; institutions providing training in intelligence; consultants offering qualified intelligence services; information vendors and government agencies offering appropriate support and the media responsibly reporting on it. It is this sort of infrastructure that has resulted in significant growth in intelligence activities in Canada and the United States, Japan, France, Korea and so forth. These activities are further enhanced by interaction with active intelligence societies such as the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP).

Competitive Intelligence in Africa: the Case of South Africa

In South Africa, competitive intelligence is still in its infancy. Consider the following quote from a CI consultant in South Africa:

> South African companies need knowledge of their competitive environment and skilled analysis capabilities. They require training and sensitising and, even more importantly, they need knowledge

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about new local and international competitors and their customer/-clients – glaring shortages of in-depth training... South African companies, in general, are too inward looking, making them vulnerable to unforeseen threats.[10]

Looking at the different intelligence infrastructure elements in South Africa provides support for this statement.

Association growth

There are two chapters of the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals in South Africa – one in Johannesburg and another in Cape Town. Collectively, however membership is as low as just 27 members. Furthermore, in 2000, the first two meetings of the Johannesburg chapter were cancelled due to lack of interest and the Cape Town chapter is no longer listed on the SCIP website. In June 2000, a new competitive intelligence association was launched, named the Competitive Business Intelligence Association of South Africa.

Education

South African universities and technikons have been slow to recognise intelligence as a discipline, and formal intelligence courses have thus not yet been developed. However, a few tertiary institutions (in particular Potchefstroom University and Pretoria Technikon) have offered a single Competitive Intelligence lecture, given by Prof Jonathan Calof, to their students and personnel. Potchefstroom University is also offering a course on competitive intelligence as part of its masters degree in international economics. Executive education through conference organisations does exist and appears to be growing. Intelligence seminars and conferences have been offered in the past year by International Communications for Management (South Africa) and the Institute for International Research, as well as International Business Information Systems (IBIS), a training and consultation company. Unfortunately, similar to other measures of the infrastructure, interest in these sessions is limited, and both frequency and attendance are still well below those seen in other countries. The majority of South African training has been provided by a few internationally recognised intelligence consultants on a very infrequent basis.[11]

TABLE 1: INFORMATION SOURCE IMPORTANCE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN EXPORTERS

Information Source	Average
Publications	2.3
Trade partners, customers, suppliers	2.2
Trade fairs and other events	2.0
Databases	2.0
Documentation service of your enterprise	1.9
Internal knowledge (staff)	1.8
Information specialists	1.7
Trade-related organisations in your country	1.7
Foreign trade reps in your country	1.6
International organisations	1.6
Trade promotion organisations abroad	1.5
Market research institutes	1.4
Trade representatives of your country abroad	1.4
Documentation centres (e.g. library) in your country	1.3

Company attention

Several of South Africa's largest companies have announced the formation of intelligence units. This has mainly been in semi-government or parastatal organisations (e.g. ISCOR, Post Office, Telkom, Spoornet and SASOL), banking and the telecommunications sector but activity levels are low in most other areas. According to Kuhn, general interest in CI in SA has, however, grown rapidly in the last year.[12]

Within South Africa, few articles have been written about competitive intelligence and most have focused on comparing it to spying

Government

The South African government has announced no formal intelligence initiatives. However, the Department of Trade and Industry has provided an intelligence course to personnel and engaged in semi-intelligence related process with the establishment of export councils in certain sectors. As yet, formal adoption of intelligence practices and/or development of products with a specific intelligence focus have not formally been announced. In addition, unlike the governments of Canada, France and Japan, no effort has been made to formally bring intelligence skills into the private sector.

Other elements of the infrastructure

Consultants and the Intelligence Services

Consistent with the model of Competitive Intelligence seen in other countries, ex-government intelligence personnel have been getting involved in corporate intelligence. However, this involvement has been somewhat minimal. Ex-South African Intelligence service personnel from the National Intelligence Service before 1994, and the South African Secret Service and National Intelligence Agency since 1994, could have a positive impact on the competitive intelligence practices of South African firms. Although the service has been the subject of ridicule inside the country, outside the country their expertise has been recognised. In recent years the service was given an award from a Washington-based consulting organisation, Open Source Solutions, for their use of open source information.

As for consultants, there has been an increase in the last two years in the number of consultants who specialise in competitive intelligence, e.g. IBIS Consultants, CBIA, Bain & Co, and Kaiser Associates, to name but a few. Clearly we are seeing the beginnings of an infrastructure for competitive intelligence, but it is in its infancy and suffers from limited demand.

Media

There has been very little media coverage of competitive intelligence in South Africa. In North America positive stories about Competitive Intelligence are becoming the norm in most major business publications. Within South Africa, few articles have been written about competitive intelligence and most have focused on comparing it to spying. Few media outlets have chosen to focus on the true meaning of competitive intelligence. One overview article has howev-

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er been published in *Finance Week* in June 2000.[13] At the time of writing, *Business Week* was preparing a feature on intelligence for small businesses.

There are other overall measures of the economy that one could look at that provide an indication of the infrastructure and role of competitive intelligence. For example, in looking at the World Competitiveness Report, South Africa fares poorly out of 47 countries.[14] What is most striking however is its position in Science and Technology (44), People (47) and Internationalisation (42). CI is generally positively related to R&D activity, so the low showing in People and Science and Technology could be interpreted as a lack of competitive intelligence success in these areas. The low internationalisation rating may be partially explained by research that has identified South African firms as having a generally "inward" focus – a psychological aversion to exporting. This is due to a number of barriers, both structural and psychological, to competing on international markets.[15] Whatever the reason for this inward-looking mentality, it certainly would be a hindrance to the concept of competitive intelligence, which is based on an outward-looking attitude.

As for the other needs for CI success not addressed here, further research will be needed to identify the extent to which these factors hinder or help South Africans achieve CI success. For example, for CI to thrive requires that the firm trust its employees and value them as a source of information – and to what extent do South African firms value all their employees in this way?

Activities of South African Companies – Empirical Studies

To better understand one component of intelligence activities – information collection and processing – it was thought useful to analyse the results of a study by the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council.[16]

A survey was sent out to their members in early 1999 asking questions relating to types of information required, present sources of information, difficulties accessing and using information, and preferred ways of receiving information. Of the firms approached for this study, 150 responded to the questionnaire and 114 indicated that they had some exporting experience. The responses from these firms form the basis for the analysis here.

Regarding the characteristics of the groups, they were very diversified. Respondent firms came from a mix of industries including manufacturing, agriculture, and services; high technology and low technology.

Responding firms had on average 154 employees with 88% having fewer than 100 employees. Total export turnover averaged R14 million in 1997, and the firms had on average 9,5 years of export experience.

TABLE 2: DIFFICULTIES IN ACCESSING AND USING INFORMATION

Difficulty	Average
The information is only available in a foreign language	2.6
The information is difficult to interpret	1.9
Unknown whether the information can be found	1.7
The information is expensive	1.7
Unknown whether the information exists at all	1.6
The modalities involved in obtaining the information are complicated	1.6
The information is outdated	1.6
The information is vague and non-pertinent	1.6
Insufficient importance is given to information	1.6
It takes too much time to obtain the information	1.5

Scale 1 = not a problem, 3 = a pressing problem

Information sources

Where do South African firms go to get international information? There are a variety of information sources available when it comes to getting diverse kinds of international information. Various government departments (such as the Departments of Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Foreign Affairs), Local Business Development Centres, and non-government organisations offer export counsel and assistance. Countless provincial agencies also have export assistance officers as do consulting firms, universities, banks, and so forth. The number of choices is truly overwhelming.

The difficulty is in identifying what information source is most appropriate for a specific situation. To better understand where exporters go to get their international information, respondents were presented with a list of 14 information sources and asked to indicate where they go for international information needs. The respondents were also asked to grade the information sources to identify the relative importance of each one. The responses for these questions are presented in Table 1.

The dominant source of information was publications, followed by trade partners, customers and suppliers. How do these results compare to "desirable" collection states? Intelligence experts point to the importance of what is called primary information or knowledge (experts), arguing that this should form upwards of 80% of information priority, yet in this case, the dominant source was secondary (publications and libraries).

However, the "personal" sources did come second. Intelligence books suggest that the next source for information should be embassies, as these individuals have access to local intelligence.[17] The embassy has local contacts, can gather distributor, customer, government, technology and other important intelligence needs. This source of information was near the bottom of the list.

South African companies, in general, are too inward looking, making them vulnerable to unforeseen threats

In short, the sources of information consulted by the firms in this study lean more towards documented sources (secondary sources) than primary sources (humans). Furthermore, the poor use of trade representatives (either locally based or foreign based) showed a lack of information management sophistication.

Difficulties in Accessing and Using Information

What problems do South African exporters encounter when it comes to accessing international information? To answer this question, companies were asked to assess ten different types of information barriers. The results are presented in Table 2. The dominant problem for virtually all respondents was that

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of language, especially when the information needed was only available in a foreign language. The second biggest problem was interpretation of the information accessed.

Again, the results suggest that South African firms are low on the development of international intelligence. Firstly, analysis is one of the most important steps in the development of intelligence. This is where the meaning of data is distilled and recommendations arise.

Yet this was the second greatest problem encountered by the firms surveyed. With a good intelligence process, interpretation would have been relatively simple, as various analytical techniques have been specifically created for this task. Secondly, given that the dominant source of information should have been personal contacts, internal sources and embassies, language should not be an issue.

But, even if the dominant source of information is secondary (such as articles, reports), which it was in this study, language still should not be a problem.

There is an abundance of English-language sites on the Internet that provide market information and trade leads (see for example ciber.bus.msu.edu/busres.htm). In reviewing enquiries sent to both Canadian and South African embassies (by companies from both countries), it was found that many of the enquiries were answerable from information found on the Internet. Therefore, concern about the language of the material reflects rather a lack of sophistication in identifying information sources, than an actual language problem. Problems of interpretation reflect a lack of analytical skills.

What Next ? Building an Intelligence Society

Competitive Intelligence and Knowledge Management are growing in significance in South Africa and worldwide. However, South Africa is behind in both knowledge management and competitive intelligence, as revealed by anecdotal evidence and empirical study reported in this article. So what next? How can CI-KM be enhanced in South Africa?

This article suggests that media, government, academics, consultants, associations and business have roles to play if competitive intelligence is to thrive. However, a good start may begin with government assistance.

What role should government play in CI? According to Prescott and Gibbons, "The key question is not whether governments should play a role in a company's CI efforts, but what should be the purposes and methods used by government".[18]

The question is not whether governments should play a role in a company's CI efforts, but what should be the purposes and methods used

Simply put, as is being recognised throughout the world, without appropriate intelligence, companies are unlikely to succeed. Logically, if enough companies do not succeed, then the economy will be worse off.

It follows that without the appropriate intelligence infrastructure, a nation is likely to underperform. It is no wonder then that governments in Japan, France, United States, Sweden, Germany, Canada and so on have made commercial intelligence an issue of national priority and have devoted considerable resources to it.

At the heart of the debate on the government's role in intelligence is the reality that most firms lack the resources and skills required to perform a high level of competitive intelligence activities. Yet competition is so complex that businesses need the resources to gather and process the necessary information required to compete.

As has been described in much previous work, governments have developed intelligence mandates which involve a mixture of intelligence agency activities,[19] infrastructure support through training and sponsorship,[20] and industry direction as is seen prominently in the Japanese model.[21]

"Governments have historically developed unique skills and resources that permit them to collect and analyse large volumes of CI information efficiently and effectively".[22]

Government's role in promoting CI

Government has four primary assets which can be used to enhance CI:

- Outreach potential: Government officers are in regular contact with companies and through visits, sponsored conferences, websites, and so forth can reach many companies;
- Skills: There are several agencies in the government that have employees with skills in different aspects of the CI process;
- Information: The government is a vast depository of existing information;
- Financial resources: The government has access to funds to support these activities and, unlike many businesses, can afford to make long-term investments in infrastructure.

These four assets can be used as the basis for the development of five CI roles.

- Awareness builder: One of the biggest barriers to CI is awareness.[23] Most companies are not aware of what CI is. Government has a variety of mechanisms for reaching out to business. These can be used to build CI awareness. For example, initiatives undertaken in Canada include publication of CI articles on the government's main website (www.strategis.ic.gc.ca/emonitor). Awareness building has also been enhanced by using CI speakers for government-sponsored public forums.
- Developer: Two approaches have been taken by governments to help firms develop CI resources – training and financial support. In France, for example, seminars on intelligence have been sponsored by the government.[24] Similar experiments have been undertaken in Canada. Financial assistance has also been provided in various countries specifically targeted at underwriting a company's intelligence investment. These incentives are particularly important for smaller firms.
- Creator: There is a wealth of information that exists within the government. Recognising this, the Canadian government has been on a five-year initiative to enhance

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their information products. The Market Intelligence and Information task force of the Federal Government has provided base-level intelligence training in intelligence for federal employees with export mandates. In addition, CI experiments are underway with two agricultural agencies (one national and one provincial) to see the extent to which they can develop intelligence products and integrate the intelligence process in daily information activities. Other CI initiatives such as knowledge management systems, multi-agency co-operative projects, and other such CI related issues are still in the formative stages. To date, the only government department in South Africa to pursue this role is the Department of Trade and Industry, which has sponsored an intelligence-training programme for personnel.

- Partner: The value of working jointly with industry in the development of intelligence products has been recognised and acted upon by governments in France, Sweden, and Japan for years. In Alberta (in Canada), a limited joint project was developed in which industry received training and was then asked to participate in a CI project. Again, this initiative is at a formative stage but has the potential to both transfer CI knowledge to industry and involve them in the creation of CI products.
- Mentor: If one looks at the development of CI in the United States, it is evident that former intelligence operatives have played an instrumental role. For example, SCIP meritorious award winners Jan Herring (ex-Central Intelligence Agency) and Ben Gilad (ex-Israeli army intelligence) have brought their training and knowledge on the CI process to many companies. Recognising that ex-intelligence officers have a better understanding of the CI process and the use of open sources than most business consultants and analysts, there has been a growing movement to bring former government employees into competitive intelligence areas.

Until investments are made in the enhancement of an intelligence infrastructure, South Africa will continue to be the victim of the intelligence efforts of its competitors, rather than the beneficiary of intelligence

For example, the Bank of Montreal has hired an ex-Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer to assist with their CI efforts. In South Africa, IBIS Consultants is run by ex-intelligence officers, Grudko Wilson Associates' principals are ex-police/military and intelligence officers, and Imstrat, a satellite imagery firm, is composed of ex-army personnel. While there is no specific programme to place these people in the private sector, the Canadian Institute for CI is looking at ways to facilitate this flow of personnel.

Conclusions

This article points to a growing infrastructure for competitive intelligence and an increase in demand for the infrastructure, but it has also revealed weaknesses in attitudes (which are inward-looking, and do not value primary information), skills (analytical skills are limited), collection sophistication (lack of use of embassies and over-reliance on documented sources), lack of government involvement, lack of media involvement and limited academic involvement. These factors help to explain the limited awareness in South Africa of competitive intelligence and the limited access to an appropriate set of intelligence skills.

Yet South Africa needs competitive intelligence to thrive in today's competitive world. Competitive intelligence can help South African firms find new markets, new products, new technologies and new opportunities.

Until investments are made in the enhancement of an intelligence infrastructure, South Africa will continue to be the victim of the intelligence efforts of its competitors, rather than the beneficiary of intelligence. ✪

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Bookshelf

The library of the Africa Institute of South Africa currently has over 65 000 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. PIERRE BOTHA reviews one of the newest acquisitions.

L Wohlgemuth et al (eds), Common Security and Civil Society in Africa, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999.

This book is the product of an international conference that was organised jointly by the Nordic Africa Institute of Uppsala and the Swedish Foreign Ministry in 1997. Also involved was the Common Security Forum, co-ordinated by the University of Cambridge and Harvard University, with affiliated centres in Russia, Japan, India, Norway and South Africa. The Common Security Forum is a continuation of the work of the Palme Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, which was concerned with political, economic and social conceptions of security.

The Forum is an international network of researchers and policy makers concerned with security "defined in a holistic sense". The term "common security" involves the extension of the domain of security (to the security of individuals and groups as well as nations), of the sources of security (international, local and non-governmental organisations as well as governments), and of the characteristics of security (economic, social, political, environmental and human, as well as military). This conception of security has been in circulation for more than 20 years. Incidentally, former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev adopted the notion of "common/mutual security" in 1987 as part of his "New Thinking" in international affairs, that eventually led to the termination of the Cold War.

Five major themes are dealt with in this volume: economic and social change; prevention of violent conflict; causes of conflict; political security; and the international politics of development partnerships. While all of these themes are important, it is explicitly pointed out that economic and political dimensions of security became especially prominent in Africa at the end of the 1990s.

The prospects of achieving these forms of security in Africa are more promising today than they were ten years ago. This is especially in light of South African president Thabo Mbeki's plan for an "African renaissance" on the continent. Although Samantha Gibson, in a chapter entitled "Beyond the War of Images: Towards Common Security and a New Partnership", refers to a general sense of "Afro-optimism" emerging, she notes that it is important that "Afro-realism" should prevail.

This sense of realism is prevalent throughout the book, especially in chapters dealing with the AIDS pandemic and the breakdown of health services in some African countries; high unsustainable debt levels and a high level of inequalities, which are mentioned as some of the threats to economic and human developmental security.

Africa has since the end of the Cold War experienced a wave of democratisation, or what Samuel Huntington identified as the "Third Wave" of democratisation in the world. Some contributors to the book were "realistic" enough to identify potential threats to these recent gains made in democratic consolidation and greater respect for human rights in Africa.

These aspects include high illiteracy rates, military forces independent of civilian control, weak and divided opposition parties, unaccountable government institutions, and low levels of human rights awareness.

The last session of the conference focused on governance and civil society, as the title of the book implies. It was acknowledged that enlightenment-based principles including provision for freedom of expression and the independent media, protection of individual rights and universal access to basic health and education were fundamental components of strong civil societies and states, and ultimately common security. The discussions focused on the role that the international community ought to play in governance and state-civil society relations in Africa.

Enlightenment-based principles ... including provision for individual rights and universal access to basic health ... are fundamental components of strong civil societies

Although the book does not attempt to offer solutions to all the problems and threats to common security it raises, it is a useful and interesting compendium of approaches to the issue. ✪

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