AFRICA
DEVELOPMENT
AFRIQUE ET
DEVELOPPEMENT

Vol. XXXII, No. 4, 2007

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**A Quarterly Journal of the Council for the
Development of Social Science Research in Africa**

**Revue trimestrielle du Conseil pour le développement
de la recherche en sciences sociales en Afrique**

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Vol. XXXII, No. 4, 2007

Land in the Political Economy of African Development: Alternative Strategies for Reform

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Abstract

Since 2000, there has been an escalation of land-related conflicts in Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire, the Delta region of Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. These conflicts are examples of numerous national struggles for access to land in Africa and reflect the failure of the African state to address the land and development nexus on the continent. The land question in Africa is a by-product of globalised control of land, natural resources and minerals in general, reflecting incomplete decolonisation processes in ex-settler colonies along with the penchant for foreign 'investment' in a neo-liberal policy framework that marginalises the rural and urban poor. Global finance capital is increasingly entangled in conflicts over land, as the exploitation of oil, minerals and natural resources expands into new African enclaves that highlight the external dimension of distorted development. These processes define the significance of land in the political economy of African development. This paper examines the complex social and political contradictions that shape land struggles, including their colonial and post-independence trajectory. The failures of neo-liberal land reforms, based on market forces and their confrontation by popular demands for redistributive reforms are discussed.

Résumé

Depuis l'an 2000, il y a eu une escalade de conflits liés à la terre au Zimbabwe, en Côte d'Ivoire, dans la région du Delta au Nigeria et ailleurs en Afrique. Ces conflits sont des exemples des nombreuses luttes pour l'accès à la terre en Afrique, et reflètent l'incapacité de l'Etat Africain à aborder le lien entre terre et développement sur le continent. La question foncière en Afrique est un sous-produit du contrôle planétaire de la terre, des ressources naturelles et minières

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en général, qui reflète le processus incomplet de décolonisation dans les anciennes colonies de peuplement de même que l'inclination en faveur de « l'investissement » étranger dans un cadre de politique néo-libérale qui marginalise les pauvres des zones rurales et urbaines. Le capital financier mondial est de plus en plus enchevêtré dans les conflits fonciers, au fur et à mesure que l'exploitation du pétrole, des minerais et des ressources naturelles s'est étendue dans de nouvelles enclaves africaines qui mettent en exergue la dimension externe du développement dévoyé. Ces processus définissent la signification de la terre dans l'économie politique du développement africain. Cette étude examine les contradictions sociales et politiques complexes qui façonnent les luttes pour la terre, y compris leur trajectoire coloniale et post-indépendance. Il y est discuté de l'échec des réformes foncières néo-libérales, reposant sur les lois du marché, et leur confrontation aux demandes populaires de réformes en vue d'une redistribution.

Introduction

Africa's land questions are a critical factor in defining contemporary social transformation and in shaping the continent's development trajectory. Land scarcity and access constraints are the main source of persistent food insecurity, rural poverty, distorted accumulation and development, as well as of the escalating conflicts over land rights. Citizenship, as proscribed by contested land rights that mark 'belonging', is increasingly being reconfigured (Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2000). Increased struggles for land reflect the absence of a development capable of absorbing the employment and consumption needs of growing populations into industrialising and diversified economies. The agrarian transition has so far failed to materialise, while the home market remains disarticulated. The unresolved land question in Africa also highlights the failure to address historical social justice and contemporary inequality issues, especially through neo-liberal reforms (Moyo 2000; Palmer 2002). Land property relations are increasingly distorted by growing land concentration and exclusion, the expansion of private landed property and the deepening of extroverted (export) capitalist relations of agrarian production, alongside increased food insecurity and food imports (aid dependence), the continued decline of the value of growing agrarian exports and the collapse of Africa's nascent agro-industrial base.

Recent studies on land in Africa (Quan 2000; Palmer 2002; World Bank 2002; EU 2004) have tended to focus on customary land tenure and 'livelihood' issues rather than on the larger land questions underlying agrarian, mining and industrial development. Although some scholars have questioned whether Africa has a significant land question except in former settler colonies, given the absence of widespread colonial land expropriation, the unresolved agrarian question throughout the continent is widely recognised (Mafeje 1999). This suggests the need to understand the place of land in

longer-term processes of capital accumulation and proletarianisation (Arrighi 1978) as well as the effects of land administration systems on development and democratisation (Mamdani 1996).

Land reform, the agrarian question and national development

Land reform is a necessary but not sufficient condition for national development. The link between land reform and national development was widely acknowledged in an earlier period of development (1950s–1970s), although implementation was generally limited and contingent on 'Cold War' geopolitics (Yeros 2002b). From the 1980s onwards, under the influence of international finance and neo-liberal economics, state-led interventionist land reform was removed from the development agenda and replaced by a concerted market-based land policy. This policy framework pursued the privatisation and commercialisation of land and focused on land transfers according to market principles (Moyo and Yeros 2005a).

The neo-liberal policy framework has had two implications for national development. It abandoned the project of integration of agriculture and industry on a national basis, promoting instead their integration into global markets, and it also aggravated economic and social insecurities, intensified migration to urban areas and created a deepening pattern of maldevelopment (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). With the end of the Cold War, the end of white rule in southern Africa, the deepening of the development crisis in Africa and the emergence of various land crises (e.g., in Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire) and the re-emergence of rural-based land reform movements since the 1990s, land reform has returned to the political and poverty agenda, but less to the development agenda. The practice of land reform continues to be based on market principles, while the theory of land reform has not yet articulated a coherent purpose for land reform in relation to national development. These trends reflect ideological and political differences that are manifested in various forms of organised and sporadic conflicts over land.

Land reform is a fundamental dimension of the agrarian question, and the agrarian question is a fundamental dimension of the national question. The classic agrarian question, concerned with the transition from feudal/agrarian society to capitalist/industrial society, has been only partly resolved by the course of development in the postwar period. While capitalist relations of production have displaced feudal-type relations virtually everywhere, few if any parts of the continent have experienced industrialisation. Indeed the international division of labour in industrial and agricultural production has persisted with only minor changes since the 1960s. The integration of Northern economies amongst themselves and with a small number of new industrial

satellites has deepened, and a new division of labour within global industry and agriculture, based on technological capabilities, financial privileges and mercantilist trade policies, has emerged (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). These trends have increased popular dependence on land for social reproduction, while agrarian productivity potentials remain unrealised.

With the failure to resolve the agrarian question, the national question remains unresolved, as national self-determination, born of the struggles against imperialism in the twentieth century, has failed to deliver development. Indeed there has been a retreat from the terms of the national question itself; under the auspices of international capital, and by means of the liberalisation of economies and an ideology of 'globalisation', the end of national sovereignty and the system of nation states has been widely proclaimed (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). However, as the post-war period of global accumulation reaches its limits, characterised by overproduction in world industry and agriculture as well as by the financialisation of capital, the national question re-emerges with particular urgency.

During the last quarter century many economic and political facts have changed both within African countries and between them. National capital has increasingly been absorbed by international capital except in rare cases (e.g., South Africa), agricultural mechanisation has grown and national economies have become much more dependent on international markets. Externally the international monetary system is less committed to stable exchange rates and fair adjustment mechanisms between commercial surplus and deficit states. The key international currency remains under the jurisdiction of a single state (USA). Capital controls have been removed (under structural adjustments), and international financial markets now fully control national macroeconomic policies. The new system of trade rules and procedures (under the World Trade Organization) has deepened liberalisation and subordinated more African states to mercantilist trading partners from the West, although the emerging trend of Chinese capital in search of African oil and minerals slightly tilts this picture. While regionalism has been renewed through the African Union, and is a potentially progressive process, in practice, regional integration has been undermined by following the priorities of global integration rather than those of the African home market. These conditions suggest the need for an alternative national development strategy based on a credible agrarian reform agenda.

Agrarian reform, including land reform, was always intended to serve national industrialisation. However, recent African land debates have underplayed the national development potential of agrarian reform by counterposing three general views on the purpose of agrarian reform: the 'social', the 'economic' and the 'political' (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). The social

version of land reform is currently predominant in many of Africa's poverty reduction debates (Palmer 2000; Quan 2000; World Bank 2002). This implicitly argues that the existing African agro-industrial base (that which survived structural adjustment and liberalisation) is sufficient and competitive enough and that agricultural export capacity is rewarding but limited by weak foreign investment incentives and to a lesser degree by Northern market distortions. As such any intervention in the agrarian sector should be confined to providing some land tenure security, especially to dispossessed and unemployed workers, until more 'livelihoods' or non-farm employment can be generated elsewhere in the informal economy (Palmer 2000). From this point of view it is also argued that the problem of employment can no longer be dealt with by means of agrarian reform (Bryceson 2000), as had been the formula in the 1950s and 1960s, for this would destroy existing agro-industry. Some argue that smaller-scale production is inherently unproductive and needs to be complemented by growing capital-intensive, large-scale farming (Sender and Johnston 2004) and that the growing urbanisation trends of the last two decades are irreversible, while reflecting de-agrarianisation (Bryceson 2000) and a new urban modernity requiring 'de Soto-type' land tenure formalisation to assign value to ghettoic assets (de Soto 2000). Thus, land reform debates that focus on poverty reduction tend to be informed by a social welfarist perspective on development, reflected in various land tenure programmes in Benin, Malawi, Tanzania and so forth.

The economic version of the perspective on land reform promotes the idea that smaller-scale agriculture could reach a reasonable level of productivity and that land reform is a useful basis for development, since urbanisation is partly reversible (Lipton 1976). This view emphasises the 'family farm' and essentially calls for the promotion of middle capitalist farms utilising wage labour. These would have the potential to absorb labour, depending on the appropriateness of the technologies developed, since these could undermine employment in the longer term (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). Yet for the middle-sized farm to realise its potential of redirecting production to the national market and hence to synergise dynamically with domestic wages, a reversal of neo-liberal policies would be required. States would instead have to adopt a concerted national development policy framework seeking the integration of the home market (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). This framework of petty agrarian commodity production promotion has been advanced in numerous African countries (Bernstein 2005) with the social differentiation process generating less than 10 percent of the middle farm among the peasantry (Eicher and Rukuni 1995).

A related current in this debate sees economic potential in a bifurcated agricultural sector in which large-scale farming specialises in the export of

high-value crops while smaller-scale farming specialises in domestic provi-
sion. However, the current contradictions between small-scale and large-
scale farming in the economic and political process are not expected to at-
tenuate but accentuate, and the bifurcated model would demand a generalised
shift in the national policy framework that would challenge the historical
privileges (in terms of credit, services, electricity, irrigation and marketing
infrastructure) enjoyed by the large-scale farming sector. This bimodal agrar-
ian policy framework has been vigorously pursued recently in Botswana, the
Congo, Mozambique, Nigeria and Uganda, especially with the aid of relo-
cating white Zimbabwean farmers. Opponents argue that the benefits of large-
scale farming are overestimated, given its historical privileges, social costs
and environmental sustainability (Moyo 2005). This argument sees value in
a national strategy of partial 'delinking' from the global market but faces the
chronic foreign-exchange dilemma as well as national and international op-
position (Moyo 2005).

The political version of land reform also has two main tendencies that are
not necessarily distinct from economic thinking: the 'micro' and 'macro'
tendencies. The micro tendency sees political value in land reform as a means
to dissolve non-capitalist relations of production or excessively concentrated
power structures where they continue to exist at local and regional levels.
Land reform in this view should be confined to a targeted local and regional
democratisation project and not to a national project of structural transfor-
mation. By contrast the macro tendency views land reform as a means of
dissolving the political power of large agrarian capital operating in tandem
with international capital and has an interest in the maintenance of an extro-
verted model of accumulation (Moyo 2001). This tendency sees large-scale
land reform as a political precondition for the implementation of a national
development policy for the integration of the home market. It considers pri-
vate landed property an obstacle to the mobilisation of such a national project.

African land reforms, primitive accumulation and development

The economic and material foundation of the African state rests largely on
primary resources extraction and export activities in agriculture, oil, mining
and other natural resources (forestry, wildlife, biodiversity exploitation). With
a few exceptions of countries that have experienced capital-intensive indus-
trial growth, such as South Africa, the control of land and natural resources
and their product markets is a dominant factor in the mainstream processes
of capital accumulation and social reproduction. These determine the rev-
enues and resource base of most African states, such that power structures

and politics are heavily influenced by control of land even where mineral rents are critical.

Large tracts of lands in many African countries are controlled by the state through various property relations. State agencies hold land directly and indirectly, the state has powers over local authorities that control land under customary tenure and, through its regulatory instruments, the state wields powers over statutory lands, particularly leasehold lands and land markets. State power and political hegemony over national territory is expressed specifically through powers over the allocation of land and related resources, the regulation of land tenures and land use and through state structures responsible for the resolution of disputes that arise from competing claims over land. Such control is accompanied by extensive state influence over the allocation and use of water and natural resources, and, through this and other economic policies, the state directs financial resources and incentives that influence patterns of land utilisation. Thus African states broker and build power structures and accumulation largely through the control of land and natural resource allocations using various systems of distribution. Land reforms represent changes in the extant land resource allocations, regulatory powers and institutions of the state, traditional authorities and emerging forms of capital.

The African state, situated within the context of neocolonial class formation processes and extroverted economic structures, is itself shaped by differentiated internal social forces that define political power and accumulation, but these remain subordinated to external capital and markets. Yet the state is central to 'primitive accumulation' in general and access to major national socioeconomic resources in particular, given the absence of a mature indigenous bourgeoisie. Access to political office can be critical to the direction of accumulation. Weak neocolonial African states, whether these were formerly settler colonies or not, retain different degrees of 'customary' regimes of authority, including some forms akin to remnants of semi-feudal regimes, such as those found in Morocco, Ethiopia and northern Nigeria. These play a critical role, together with the central and local governments, in the control and allocation of land.

The primary contradiction facing neo-liberal development strategies and democratic struggles remains the unequally globalised markets. Trade relations are intended to replace state interventions as an instrument of development for the internal needs of society within an integrated economy, based on improving resource and technical productivity and returns to labour at levels adequate for basic social reproduction. State interventions for development, tied under increasingly market-based relations of resource (including land) control, have tended to exclude the weakly organised and favoured

domestic elites and foreign capital through the manipulation of the markets and administrative processes that govern resources such as land and water.

The control of land has increasingly become a key source of mobilising power through electoral politics in which capital and class power direct struggles for democratisation and development. Land reforms can be critical sites of political struggles, when class and race power structures are unevenly pitched in relation to the interests of external capital and in the context of unequal land distributions, as the Zimbabwe experience shows. The 1992 Kenya elections outcome, for example, was grounded in cynical strategies of politicians who manipulated long-standing but latent inter-ethnic disputes over land into violent confrontations (Moyo 2005). Thus, the nature and form of state control and the ideological grounding of the ruling incumbents can be critical to the form and content of land reforms.

The nature of Africa's current intellectual and policy debates on land reflects important ideological and political contestations around the definition of land and agrarian questions, hence the trajectory of land and agrarian reform that is required to undergird sustainable development and the role of the state vis-à-vis domestic markets (including agrarian markets) as well as international markets. The neo-liberal agenda emphasises market liberalisation within a global hegemonic project that subordinates the African nation-state accumulation project to global finance capital. The contradictions of this neo-liberal trajectory manifest themselves partly in Africa's land and agrarian questions, ineffective land reforms and the mobilisation of various social forces around land.

Unique features of the African land question

There are some uniquely African social features that define its land questions and approaches to land reform, including why the dominant emphasis on land tenure reform has evolved. Mafeje (2003) emphasises the absence, at the advent of African colonialisation, of widespread purely feudal political formations based on the specific social relations of production in which land and labour processes are founded on serfdom or its variants, essentially the extraction of surplus value from serfs by landlords through ground rents using primitive forms of land rental allotments, and through the mandatory provision of different forms of 'bonded' or 'unfree' labour services such as sharecropping. The other tributary exactions on the peasantry under feudalism were uncommon in Africa and not as intense where they obtained. Mafeje (2003) points out that most rural African societies were structured around lineage-based communal structures of political authority and social organisation in which access to land was founded on recognised and universal usufruct rights allocated to families (both pastoral and sedentary) of given

lineage groupings (Moyo 2004). Such land rights also included those eventually allocated to assimilated 'slaves', migrants and settlers, as Mamdani (2001) and others note.

This means that African households held land and mobilised their labour relations relatively autonomously of the ruling lineages and chiefs, mainly for their own consumption needs and secondarily for social or communal projects on a minor scale. Under these conditions production for trade occurred on a small but increasing scale since colonialism (Moyo 2004). Amin (1972) has argued that these African social formations had some exploitative elements of tributary social relations of production. These can be adduced from the contributions that households made, from small parts of the household product and labour, to the rulers' social projects (e.g., the king's fields, granary reserves and so forth). The essential issue that distinguishes the African land question from elsewhere is the absence of rural social relations of production based on serfdom, such as land renting and bonded labour, in a context where monopoly over land by a few landlords did not exist. Colonialism extended the extroversion of production and the process of surplus value extraction through the control of markets and extra-economic forces, but left the land and labour relations generically free.

Under colonialism 'indirect rule' modified the organisation of peasant societies through contrived changes to the procedures of customary rule and of leadership and directed peasant production towards generalised petty commodity production, mainly through the control of finance, markets and infrastructures (Moyo 2004). While migrant labour processes were engineered almost everywhere, within limited geographic confines in settler Africa they accompanied extensive and institutionalised land expropriations that led to the proletarianisation of large segments of peasant labour, generating large-scale landlessness and land shortages alongside semi-proletarianisation. Under indirect rule the customary systems of authority with regard to land tenure were thus retained but adapted to suit the needs of the state to excise some lands and allocate them to specific production schemes or classes, and these allowed lineage leaders larger land endowments (Moyo 2005).

While the dichotomy which defines non-settler and settler African land questions, based on large-scale historical land alienation remains, it has increasingly become less acute in some regions of given countries because of generalised but location specific narrow forms of land concentration. This concentration has emerged both from 'below' and 'above' – from below through internal social differentiation and from above through excision of lands to elites using state land administration structures and emerging land markets. This emphasises the fact that the African neocolonial state has been 'activist' in promoting agrarian capitalist change in a manner that has sup-

ported land concentration among capitalist farmers and enabled the dominant classes to marginalise peasants and workers. On a continental scale these processes nonetheless suggest that neither large-scale land alienation processes nor landlessness nor total proletarianisation nor bonded forms of rural labour have resulted. They point to a diffuse but significant structure of land concentration and marginalisation processes that are socially and politically significant (Moyo 2004).

Resilient African peasantries, semi-proletarianisation and agrarian reform

The prevalence of semi-proletarianisation – worker peasants – alongside the retention of large peasantry, or of small cultivators (Mafeje 1997), means that in general African rural societies retain households with independent landholdings, albeit at a diminishing scale and on increasingly marginalised lands. Critically their agricultural production and land use activities and relations of production are restricted by the quality and scale of land available and by state agrarian policies as well as markets which extract significant surplus value from them. African land and agrarian reforms therefore need to redress these land inequities and direct land use towards internally beneficial and articulated development for the transformation of Africa's peasantry (Moyo 2004).

The peasantry – small-scale/family agriculturalists operating within the generalised system of commodity production – does not constitute a class in itself, but inherent in it are the antagonistic tendencies of proletarian and proprietor (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). The ideal peasant household reproduces itself as both capital and labour simultaneously and in internal contradiction, but this combination of capital and labour is not spread evenly within the peasantry for two main reasons (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). First, the peasantry is differentiated between rich, middle and poor petty commodity producers, a spectrum that ranges from the capitalist that employs labour-power beyond the family to the semi-proletarian that sells it. As such, the middle peasantry is the only category that embodies the ideal type of petty-bourgeois production, neither managing to hire nor sell labour-power – and which in turn is rare. Second, the combination of capital and labour is not spread evenly within single households either differentiated by gender or generation; patriarchs control the means of production, while women and children provide unwaged labour. This may appear on the surface as a 'different' mode of production, but it has been argued convincingly that petty-commodity production is firmly embedded in the capitalist system and in fact is a normal feature of capitalist society, even if a subordinate and unstable one (Gibbon and Neocosmos 1985).

Under capitalism the peasantry remains in a state of flux within the centre-periphery structure spawned by colonialism, as proletarianisation co-exists with peasantisation and semi-proletarianisation. The form and scale of the actually existing peasantry in Africa is both an empirical and an interpretive problem to be understood from the composition of household income by source, including non-exchangeable sources of sustenance and from an analysis of household residential patterns as between town and country (Gibbon and Neocosmos 1985). It has been argued that under structural adjustment peasants have become 'problematic', as they are 'multi-occupational, straddling urban and rural residences, and flooding labour markets' (Bryceson 2000a). Yet the African peasantry has evolved in this way for much of the twentieth century.

However structural adjustment has been accompanied by intensified migration. Africa now has the fastest rate of urbanisation in the world (3.5 percent annually) and nearly 40 percent of the population is now urbanised. Migration should not be taken to mean full proletarianisation or permanent urbanisation, but the spreading of risk in highly adverse circumstances. Had this urbanisation been accompanied by industrialisation and job formation, the conclusion could have well been otherwise. The reality is different – urbanisation alongside de-industrialisation and retrenchments. Urbanisation takes the predominant form of illegal and unplanned settlement. It is notable in this connection that migration is not merely one-way, as workers retrenched from mines and farms are also known to seek peasantisation, or as urbanites enter the land reform process. This situation is mirrored by trends in Latin America that are not substantially different even if the population there is nearly twice as urbanised and still urbanising (Moyo and Yeros 2005a).

Intensified migration has been a two-way process in Latin America as well, as opposed to secular urbanisation, which Kay terms the 'ruralisation of urban areas' and 'urbanisation of rural areas' (cited in Bryceson et al. 2000), whereby rural and urban workers compete both for jobs, including agricultural jobs, and for residential plots in both urban and rural areas. It has also been observed that retrenched workers from mines and industry have joined this struggle and have also sought to become peasants themselves, the most prominent case being in Bolivia, where former miners have taken up coca production (Petras 1997). The semi-proletarianisation thesis is disputed by those who see urbanisation and proletarianisation as definitive and therefore dismiss agrarian reform as anachronistic, especially Kay's particular version of semi-proletarianisation, which underestimates the political significance of the countryside and even combines with the 'end of land reform' thesis to write off an alternative pattern of accumulation (Bryceson et al. 2000). The semi-proletarianisation thesis has yet to be overturned ei-

ther in theory or in practice, especially given that agrarian change within the contemporary centre-periphery structure does not provide for massive population relocations to the north.

The rise of a richer class of peasants alongside a majority who became semi-proletarianised or landless means that full proletarianisation has been generally forestalled, not least by state action as well as by rural households that hold onto a plot of land and maintain the dual income strategy of petty-commodity production and wage labour. Rural non-farm activities and markets have proliferated, such that between 30 and 40 percent of household incomes are now derived from off-farm sources. The transition to capitalism in the periphery has thus taken place under disarticulated accumulation and in subordination to the accumulation needs of the centre. In consequence the transition has not been characterised by an 'American path', as identified by Lenin – that is, a broad-based accumulation by petty-commodity producers 'from below' – but by varied paths.

Where the neo-liberal social agenda failed spectacularly in Zimbabwe, large-scale re-peasantisation has taken place outside the control of the World Bank, hence the penalties imposed from the North, but a new pattern of accumulation from below has not yet emerged (Moyo and Yeros 2005a). Such trends are now 'normal' processes of agrarian change in the African periphery under neo-liberalism, where rural populations have been subjected to unfettered market forces, where they have struggled for re-peasantisation among other political and economic ends and have in effect struggled to reproduce functional dualism largely on their own, with variable success and different and contingent levels of support from state and non-state agencies. Alongside this semi-proletarianisation process, various social hierarchies derived from gender, generation, race, caste and ethnicity have intensified under capitalism and functional dualism (Yeros 2002a).[1] In a contemporary world disarticulated accumulation and its corollary, semi-proletarianisation, provide the structural economic basis for the flourishing of powerful social hierarchies that either fuse with class (e.g., race, caste) or cut across it (gender) and reproduce apparently non-capitalist forms of 'landlordism', even despite the historical culmination of the 'junker path' (Yeros 2002a). The synergy between class and race is notable in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, where historical domination and the process of resistance have fused class and race discourses (Moyo and Yeros 2005a).

Land and agrarian questions in settler Africa

Another critical factor which defines the African land question in relation to its development path is the legacy of the settler colonial land and livestock expropriations that accompanied colonial conquest and the nature and ex-

tent of reparations that are demanded, based on 'living memory' and as an integral element of resolving the 'national' question (Moyo 2004). This nationalist land question of sovereign right and of redressing racial and ethnic imbalances in property and economic relations has tended to be underestimated in spite of the numerous indigenous land struggles evident today. Land reform programmes in this situation, where compensation of current large landholders is considered almost normative, face popular expectations that former colonial masters should pay the victims of current land reform expropriations, if not also the victims of colonial expropriation, who have suffered long-term loss (Mamdani 2001). Demands for colonial land reparations have been made in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Namibia and on a smaller scale in Botswana and Swaziland, as has been the case in other nations with a history of settler colonial land expropriations. In some countries where historic land reforms occurred, for example, in Japan and Taiwan, these were financially supported by former colonial or imperial powers, especially in the context of cold war political hegemonic efforts.

Reparations for colonial land losses in Africa have not been adequately addressed (Moyo 2004). African governments, the Zimbabwe government in particular, allege that racism and protection by international donors of their land-owning 'kith and kin' and of their capital in Africa is at the centre of the land reform dilemma and of the current political controversy. Current structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and poverty reduction strategies, which provide lending and development assistance on condition of neo-liberal economic and governance reforms, undermine national capacities to redress these land grievances according to the rule of law. This feature emphasises the colonial and external dimension of Africa's land question and reform processes, as well as the political controversy of market-driven land reform strategies in the context of neo-liberal 'globalisation' (Moyo 2004).

Consequently demands for agrarian reform in settler Africa have struck at the heart of the dominant national/cultural identities through which the conditions of super-exploitation are reproduced. In Africa, however, the issues of race and class have been strongly politicised for a longer period (Fanon 1961; Cabral 1979), and armed national liberation struggles against colonialism intensified these. The attainment of majority rule across the continent, within the neocolonial framework, was characterised by the nurturing of small, indigenous, extroverted bourgeoisies with an interest in defending the disarticulated pattern of accumulation, while in southern Africa neocolonialism coincided with structural adjustment. National politics have been galvanised by rural and urban class struggles through growing class differentiation among blacks. This has given impetus to a new period of inter-capitalist conflict between emergent black bourgeoisies and established

capital, both extroverted and both bidding over the land question. The result has been a stark bifurcation of the national question. On the one hand indigenous capital has confronted settler and foreign capital, transforming the meaning of 'national liberation' in its own terms and hijacking land reform, while on the other hand the historical realities of class and race persist, characterised by functional dualism within a white supremacist framework, including the racialised landlordisms to which it gives rise (Moyo 2001; Rutherford 2001; Yeros 2002b).

Three dimensions of Africa's land and agrarian question[2]

Three land questions therefore dominate the political economy of development in Africa today. These are the increasing concentration of land control and restricted access to marginalised rural and urban populations, the expansion of marketised land transactions and the persistence of land-use processes that distort agrarian transition. Land scarcity and denial of access to natural resources by large landholders and the state through laws that exclude the majority and that privatise public resources, all contribute to human distress, poverty, landlessness and homelessness. In some situations, it is the scarcity of arable land that is at stake (e.g., in North Africa), while in others (e.g., in West Africa) it is the system of land administration and conflicts between the state and local communities and various other social groups (men, migrants, women, urbanites, civil servants, youths and poor households) that are problematic (Amanor 2003). In former settler colonies, it is the challenge of land redistribution and related land struggles that are dominant.

The land distribution question: Equity and socio-political relations

Land distribution inequalities in Africa vary in their broad character depending on the degree of colonial history, foreign ownership and internal class and ethno-regional differential. Settler land expropriation varied in Africa. It was most extensive in Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia but also occurred to a lesser extent in Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia. The largest scale of white settler land expropriation occurred in South Africa, where 87 percent of the land was alienated. After independence white settler populations in all these countries tended to decrease, although the proportion of land held by white minorities has not decreased proportionately. Instead there has been a gradual increase in foreign landholdings in countries such as Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi in the context of renewed interest by international capital in natural resources based around tourism and mining (Moyo 2005). In Malawi during the last three years long-term Asian residents have increasingly been identified as 'for-

eign' landowners, largely on racial and dual citizenship grounds, given that land policy reforms prohibit foreign land ownership. Absentee land ownership exacerbates feelings against foreign land ownership. In Namibia corporate ownership of lands hides the influx of foreign landowners, particularly those who are shifting land use from agriculture to tourism. Racially based differentiation of economic power and wealth associated with some degree of land control remains a source of land conflicts. Even in some non-settler African countries, small foreign immigrant populations such as the Asians in East Africa tend to be associated with large freehold and leasehold landholdings.

Land distribution problems in non-settler countries occurred initially through rural differentiation processes, which heightened from the 1970s and escalated in the 1990s. The maturation of an African petit bourgeoisie after independence saw new landholding concentrations among retired public servants, professionals, indigenous business people and other urban elites. These social forces emerged from earlier nationalist, political and administrative leaderships, traditional elites and new post-independence middle-class elements whose accumulation treadmill focused on agrarian exports. Such rural differentiation, alongside the growth of poor rural peasantry and semi-proletarian populations that straddle the rural and urban divide, explains the demand for land reform policies in favour of elites. Evidence from Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia also reveals that rural land inequality has grown in line with structural adjustment programmes. Differential access to land and the growth of land concentration have emerged both from 'below' and from 'above'.

Colonial land injustices and current land policies have led to increased differentiation in the control of and access to land. Increasingly land ownership patterns are derived from endowments arising from class differentiation strategies that emerged in the colonial era (Lumumba and Kanyinga 2003) and have led to growing landlessness. For example, Kenya's land law grants enormous powers of control of land to the president, who holds land in trust for the state. Kenyan presidents, however, have tended to grant land to a few individuals and corporate interests. This process has affected the majority of the lands utilised by pastoralists, who occupy and use over 60 percent of the Kenya landmass. Thus, from above, land allocation and land reform policies have promoted land accumulation by the direct official provision and private grabbing of large landholdings by the elite. From below processes of local agrarian and power differentiation have encouraged local elites to amass larger landholdings amidst growing land scarcity and landlessness. This has entailed widespread situations in which local agrarian capitalists have emerged and acquired larger-than-average tracts of land through internal social differ-

entiation processes. These processes include resource accumulation from land grabbing, from various state resources and from the accumulation of petty agricultural savings, wages and remittances and other non-farm sources. Local land concentration also entails situations in which traditional leaders, elders and indigenous 'settlers' have hoarded larger land parcels of better quality. Land tenure reforms tend to formally recognise discriminatory customary tenure rules or to condone their persistent abuse by local elites and local state functionaries, as well to introduce statutory tenures for the benefit of these elites. While unequal landholding structures are not as extreme as in the white settler territories, processes of land concentration now occur on a significant scale.

Colonial and post-independence land policies also tended to partition national economies into ethno-regional enclaves of unequal growth, where land and resource concentration occurred alongside marginalisation. Land conflicts take the shape of 'ethnic' struggles among pastoralist groups competing for the control of grazing lands and water supplies, especially during droughts (Flintan and Tamrat 2002). Such land conflicts escalated following the demarcation of boundaries that fragmented pastoral groups and impeded cross-border movements and undermined the viability of customary land and resource-use systems. Minority groups have suffered substantially, and land distribution conflicts affecting some ethnic groups, especially minority 'indigenous' groups (such as the San/Bushmen in Botswana and the Herero in Namibia) are common in some countries, especially where post-independence land expropriations by the state have facilitated or led to the reallocation of land to local elites and foreign capital. In some countries the spatial re-ordering of villages and families was instrumentalised by the colonialists to consolidate ethnic-based power structures of their choice and to create a framework within which taxes could be collected, migration regulated and selected land allocation strategies pursued to suit their interests. Thus many African social or ethnic conflicts are structured by the unequal control of land and natural resources, depending on the histories of land control, farming systems and political structures. Unequal land distribution also arises from the growing tendency for land concessions and sale to foreign companies through investment agreements in agriculture, tourism, forestry and urban land investments. Multinational companies have become a critical force in the unequal control of land, emphasising the importance of the international dimension of the land question.

Land rights, private property and markets
A major dimension of Africa's land and agrarian question has been the search by both colonial and post-independence states, as well as emergent landholding classes, including foreign capital, for the transformation of custom-

ary land tenures and property rights into private landed property and the establishment of land markets based on individual freehold and leasehold titles to rural and urban land. The experience with land tenure reforms is perhaps best documented in West and East Africa. Several countries in West Africa have pursued land registration as a step towards creating land markets (Moyo 2003). Land tenure policy and legislative reforms have escalated in West Africa since the early 1990s, with countries such as Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania introducing the concept of private property in response to such pressures (Delville et al. 2002). When empirical evidence questioned the relevance of privatisation in promoting security of tenure and the lack of marked differences in investment between customary tenure systems and private property rights, the land tenure policy debate shifted towards 'local rights recognition' (Delville et al. 2002). The increased commercialisation and expropriation of land as a result of the production of export crops set in motion serious conflicts, increased land pressure and resulted in the growth of a land market in Ghana (Amanor 2003). These tenure reforms essentially veer towards establishing land markets over the long-term.

In East Africa and the Horn, post-independence land tenure reforms have ranged from individualisation and privatisation, as in Burundi, Kenya and the Comoros to a collectivist approach in Tanzania and Ethiopia (Moyo 2003). Most countries in East Africa have provided some legal recognition to indigenous customary land tenure (Bruce 1996). Tanzania, Ethiopia and Eritrea abolished private ownership and sought to replace indigenous tenure systems with alternative community-based tenure reforms. In North Africa tenure reforms took ascendance from the 1970s with an incomplete process of registration and certification of ownership in Tunisia and Morocco. The process of privatisation of state and collectively owned lands has also been slow, as has the emergence of land markets.

The widespread trend in Africa in the 1970s and 1980s towards individualisation and titling of customary lands was sponsored by donors who were convinced of the superiority of private property rights (Platteau 1996). When these schemes failed to gain social and political acceptance, the World Bank in the 1990s argued that, as population pressure increased, societies would spontaneously evolve new property relations and land markets and that the task of African governments should be to formalise such evolving property relations through titling (Moyo 2003). However, contrary to the claim of recognising local land rights, the establishment of land titles and registers has also facilitated a new wave of land alienation and investment by domestic and foreign entrepreneurs.

In general land conflicts arising from attempts to market land by assigning exclusive land rights to individuals have led to a conflictual relationship over the power of the state to allocate land vis-à-vis that of customary law authorities. Control over land allocation and concession procedures in post-independent African states tends to be increasingly delegated to elected or appointed rural councils, leading to conflicts between formal law and customary land rights, for example, in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso (Delville 1999) and in Ethiopia (Submarian 1996). Although the state has taken over the absolute right of land allocation, these local authorities usually remain legitimate in the eyes of the community and continue to enjoy considerable political power over land management systems (Submarian 1996).

In many African countries a dual legal system for land conflict management and adjudication has been the source of many conflicts and contradiction over land rights (Tsikata 1991; Shivji 1998; Lastarria-Cornhiel 2002). Customary law in land matters in southern Africa, for example, applies mainly to indigenous Africans, while the formal legal system is reserved for white settler land markets (Mamdani 1996). African countries with ethnic groups that practice different customary legal systems may or may not recognise the dominant systems of customary adjudication. In those countries with significant Muslim populations (such as Nigeria, Tanzania and Sudan) the adoption of Islamic family laws in predominantly Muslim regions contradicts both the customary laws and received legislation on land that applies to other regions with different legal traditions (Lastarria-Cornhiel 2002).

Many communities resent the heavier presence of administrators (besides the traditional leaders) in customary systems of tenure that is found in freehold tenure regimes, perceiving it as restricting (and in some cases criminalising) use of natural resources and imposing land use policies that the local people may not like. The fact that individuals under freehold tenure, including those on plantation estates, tend to have more rights to the management of their land creates the problem of the assumed superiority or inferiority of the different forms of tenure, when in fact these problems are based on the form of land administration.

Thus tenure inequities are reinforced by the fact that the expropriation of land for 'commercial' and 'social' development is usually carried out by central state institutions that, in the name of development and national interest allocate land to state projects and private commercial interests to the exclusion of the poor (Amanor 2003). When rural people oppose this expropriation, the legal channels available to readdress their concerns are limited, since the state has created the legal framework that has already initiated the process of expropriation. This is usually carried out by unrepresentative land bodies, including chiefs, elders, and others in leadership positions at ward

level (Shivji 1998; Amanor 2002; Murombedzi 1999). While chiefs are often the partners of the state in expropriating farm land, they are recognised by the state as the legitimate representatives of the people, so that their role in the mediation of land conflicts is usually overshadowed by transmitting government orders to the rural people and ensuring compliance with government policies (Amanor 2003).

Extroverted agrarian development and distorted home markets

A long-standing land question in Africa is the manner in which development policies, including economic incentives and public allocations, have directed the use of land in ways that are not beneficial for national development and that favour distorted accumulation by a small elite and foreign capital. The productive purposes of land use, including the types of commodities produced and their trade and domestic benefits, and the levels of productivity promoted by these policies, have tended to remain extroverted.

Land use policies currently undervalue land, largely by allocating land and related resources to commodities with poor returns and domestic linkages. This external co-optation by neo-liberal policies has led to the demise of African agriculture, expanded food insecurity, dependence on food imports and food aid and the inability of agriculture to accumulate investible resources and finance itself without resorting to external debt. The trend towards expanding land use patterns for exports has led not only to the loss of local livelihoods (pastoralism and peasant cropping systems) but also to increased conflicts over the control of land and gradual processes of land alienation. One controversial trend emanating from the liberalisation of land use policies is the conversion of farming land to exclusively wildlife and tourism-based land uses through the consolidation of large-scale farms into even larger scale 'conservancies'. These land uses are justified as being the most environmentally, socially and economically sustainable management of land and natural resources in fragile areas. But these conservancies add to the previous exclusion of peasantries from substantial lands by the state in the name of attracting national, regional and international capital in the tourism, forestry and biotechnology sectors. They remove the visibility of the human face of individual land ownership from the struggles over land and shift these to abstract legal entities of ubiquitous domicile, justified through putatively benign environmental theologies (Moyo 2000). Thus, the socioeconomic face of rural differentiation through large-scale land ownership and use for external markets is transformed into remote public and private shareholding structures that extol modern common property management regimes and decry traditional communal tenures.

Tourism, environmentalism and related markets have thus created a new land frontier in African states in which various 'stakeholders' at the local,

district, provincial, national and international levels, involving private, state, NGO and community actors, are engaged in struggles for the exploration and preservation of new forms of biodiversity and the methods of their economic and social exploitation (Moyo 2000). This preferential allocation of state resources to land uses aimed at the reproduction of nature in state lands and in parks and forests emphasises their short-term commercial and macroeconomic value to the state, elites and foreign capital, rather than any interest in rural poverty reduction. Land use policies and regulations tend to be based on the view that large farms are critical for agricultural export growth and that small producers should focus on production for their own consumption and domestic markets. In most of Africa, except perhaps in western and northeastern areas, relatively larger landholdings under freehold or leasehold tenure are supported by the state because of their perceived superiority for the production of agricultural produce for export. Yet smallholders on customary land grow almost all the coffee exports in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The same is true for tea, beans and various horticulture products in Kenya. In addition there are many smallholder cocoa farmers in West Africa and smallholder cotton farmers in western, eastern and southern Africa. At the same time evidence suggests that smallholder production of food for own consumption has become critical for the food security and sustainable livelihoods of the majority of Africa's people.

Much scholarship on Africa tends to consider national internal agrarian policy deficiencies to be the main cause of Africa's agricultural and rural problems. Yet the most striking feature of African agricultural performance over the last three decades is the growing rural income distribution inequalities and broader social differentiation (Ghai and Radwan 1983) consequent upon the expansion of rural markets and of negative global economic integration. In historical perspective these interpretations of the causes of the agrarian crisis reflect poorly on the African nationalist agenda, because it has delivered neither industrial development nor stability and has generated greater social conflict over land and other natural resources.

Shifts in African land use patterns have always been a highly contested dimension of its agrarian question. Land use policies increasingly uphold a moral and socioeconomic value in which allocating prime land to extroverted (export) cropping, livestock and wildlife and tourism uses is considered of greater utility than land use for national economic integration to satisfy the home market as defined by the land needs of the majority of the rural and urban poor. Instead a few large landholders, and the animals themselves, are privileged by the exclusion of peasantries from vast tracts of land and natural resources and state financial allocations. Policies and regulations that directly or indirectly orient land use towards minority capitalist classes and

external markets have thus become a major site of contestation throughout Africa.

In most of Africa land use regulations and planning frameworks have been an ideological tool for maintaining unequal distribution of land and inequitable security of tenure. The regulation of land use, usually rationalised on the basis of the need to protect legitimate public interests, is often unevenly applied to different tenure systems and through this to different classes of landowners and land use systems. In many cases the imposition of land use regulations is intended to protect the interests of emerging agrarian capitalists rather than the public or national interest. In other cases the regulations may in theory protect the public interest but, because of unequal land distribution, their impact is to deny the excluded peasantry their legitimate right to state support. The question is whether these new generations of land use policies and regulations promote efficiency in the utilisation of land and labour resources and thus improve national development in general. The persistence of under-utilisation, low land productivity and external land use orientation suggests that economic policies have been an obstacle to agricultural transformation, while promoting new forms of control over land ownership and the production content for the benefit of narrow interests.

Land reforms in Africa: Redistribution versus tenure reform

African redistributive land reforms would be expected to involve restoring lands that are physically controlled by large landholders through the resettlement of displaced peasants and alienated semi-proletarians and the enlargement of peasant land areas using repossessed contiguous lands. Securing land rights of the poor mainly by re-allocating them the 'title' to independently hold the landholding and/or by upgrading the tenure conditions under which lands are rented is also relevant in parts of Africa where land rent and sharecropping have emerged, especially in West Africa. Redistributive land reforms are critical in large parts of southern, eastern and northern Africa, where highly unequal landholdings have produced landlessness and land shortages. However limited redistributive land reforms had been attempted there since the late 1950s, while since the 1980s gradualistic market-based land reforms have been initiated in southern Africa. Land reform was only 'radicalized' recently in Zimbabwe. The need for redistributive land reforms would also be expected in other African countries where localised and regional enclaves of land concentration have emerged through gradual and piecemeal expropriation by the colonial and post-independence state and private actors.

Some of the stated objectives of land redistribution in Africa include:

- decongesting overpopulated areas

- expanding the base of productive agriculture

- rehabilitating people displaced by war

- resettling squatters, the destitute and the landless

- promoting more equitable distribution of agricultural land

- de-racialising or expanding indigenous commercial agriculture.

These objectives are underpinned by the aim of addressing historical injustices of colonial land expropriation and to assert the right of access by 'indigenes'. Land redistribution has tended to be severely circumscribed by market-oriented approaches to land acquisition and legal challenges to land expropriation mechanisms by large land owners, while the negotiated voluntary transfer of land has not occurred on a significant scale (Moyo 2004). In East Africa redistributive reforms were mainly pursued in Ethiopia and Kenya.

Redistributive land reform processes in Africa span the 40-year history of national liberation, but the experiences vary according to the land questions faced in each country. Whereas different socioeconomic and political specificities determine the nature of land reforms carried out, the gradual shifts in the nature of national liberation struggles among the countries since the 1960s reflect changing ideological and political mobilisation of the social forces engaged in resistance to imperial rule and changing land reform strategies. For example land reform experiences in southern Africa exhibit a changing divide between radical nationalist-cum-socialist redistributive land reforms and liberal approaches (Moyo 2004). Where national liberation was decisively concluded, as in Mozambique and Angola, the land distribution question appears to have been broadly resolved, although new sites of localised land concentration have emerged. Where liberation was only partially concluded, as in the main settler territories of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, negotiated settlements left both the national question and the land question relatively unresolved. In particular the racial dimensions of the national question were not adequately addressed, as structures of wealth, income and land distribution remained intact and protected by liberal democratic constitutions and market principles.

More radical land reforms entailed the nationalisation of colonial, foreign and settler landholdings, as in Zambia during the early 1970s and in Mozambique and Angola from the mid-1970s. Zambia and Tanzania pursued 'socialist' land and agrarian reforms based on state marketing systems and the reorganisation of land settlement and use (villagisation and rural development in Tanzania and resettlement and integrated rural development in Zambia), while Mozambique pursued land nationalisation with more intensive attempts at socialist transformation using state and cooperative farms.

Angola, which started-off mired in civil war, did not pursue further significant land reform after land nationalisation. Civil war in the lusophone territories, fuelled by their relative international isolation and by South African destabilisation contained radical agrarian reforms there, and post-conflict land tenure reforms have re-introduced some land concentration.

In contrast more liberal strategies of land reform were adopted in the colonial 'protectorates', which mostly experienced indirect colonial rule accompanied by minor degrees of white settlerism alongside cheap migrant labour systems (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland, Lesotho). Here land reform involved a limited degree of expropriation of lands accompanied by market-related compensation with some colonial finance, as was the case in Swaziland and Botswana. The expropriated land was 'indigenised' as large farms, with limited foreign and white minority large-scale land ownership and estate farming remaining alongside the emergence of state farms and resilient peasant and pastoral agrarian structures. Liberal approaches to land reform consisted mainly of limited market-led land redistribution efforts and attempts to modernise peasant agriculture within a contradictory context of imbalanced public resource allocations focusing on the large-scale indigenised and state capitalist farming sub-sector, and agricultural export markets.

Zimbabwe and Namibia since the 1980s used the liberal state-centred but market-based approach to land transfers. Land was acquired by the state for redistribution on a willing-seller-willing-buyer basis, meaning that land identification and supply was market-driven. The governments identified the demand for land and, where possible, matched it with this private supply. These programmes were slow in redistributing land, except during the very early years in Zimbabwe, when the approach was accompanied by extensive land occupations on abandoned white lands. The use of compulsory land acquisition by the state, with or without compensation for land and improvements, was pursued mainly in the early independence periods, when expropriations with varying levels of compensation were adopted in Zambia and, since the 1990s, mainly in Zimbabwe. This approach involves direct intervention by government in the identification and acquisition of land.

Another liberal approach to land redistribution, tried to a limited degree in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, is the 'market-assisted' approach espoused by the World Bank. This approach is meant to be led by beneficiaries, with support from the state, private sector and NGOs within a market framework. Very little land has been redistributed through this approach so far, mainly in South Africa. This approach was implemented in Malawi in 2005, using a World Bank loan in the context of the usual macroeconomic policy conditions. Finally a 'community-led self-provisioning' strategy (Moyo

2000) has been followed in Zimbabwe, mainly in the form of 'illegal' land occupations by potential beneficiaries. This approach has tended to be either state-facilitated and formalised or repressed by the state at various points in time (Moyo 1995).

Despite all these approaches relatively little progress has been achieved in the implementation of redistributive land reform in Africa, while greater effort has been placed on land tenurial and land use regulatory reforms. However more progressive land tenure reforms to counter the general tenure insecurities and land grabbing processes facilitated by regressive state-led land tenure reforms are necessary. Current resistance to land marketisation and 'individualization' schemes, as well as to the manipulative reform of land administration structures through the adaptation of customary tenure procedures and institutions and new efforts to decentralise and reform land governance systems, is a response to the contradictions that confront progressive land tenure reform. However land tenure reform in Africa also requires institutional reforms that can defend the poor against potential land losses as well as accommodate those excluded (women, minorities, settlers) from increasingly scarce arable lands. Such tenure reforms would also need to be able to prevent and resolve conflicts over competing claims to land rights and ensure the fair administration of land rights and land use regulations. Whether the land tenure reforms required would include the ability to transact (rent and sell) and mortgage peasant lands, especially in the absence of measures to prevent land alienation and concentration, is as politically contentious as its feasibility is questionable.

The role of the African state in promoting equitable access to and control of land through tenure reforms has had the opposite effect of promoting increased land concentration. Existing African legal frameworks and institutions for managing land allocation and land use or dispute resolution tend to protect the interests of those with disproportionately larger land rights, including property rights derived from past expropriation, rather than the interests of the victims of these inequities. Indeed the literature on Africa's land tenure identifies weak land administration systems as the main issue of concern (Quan 2000; Adams 2000). Land administration reforms tend to be proposed within a neo-liberal conception of good governance, focusing on the decentralisation and democratisation of land institutions, enhancement of land administrative efficiency, broad-based representativity of local structures of land control and civil society participation in land administration, within a framework of introducing formal and statutory law into land management systems. The main purpose of these proposed reforms is to develop 'secure land tenure' regimes – and implicitly to make the institutions benign to market processes.

However, most African governments have yet to allocate the resources and build the capacities required to create these new systems of land administration (Palmer 2002). Decentralised land reform implementation processes have failed to take off, largely due to a lack of both financial resources and technical capacities, as well as the lack of political will. Yet there is no doubt that African land management institutions pose vexing problems and that these constitute an important aspect of the land question. The institutional frameworks for land administration are exceedingly complex and fractured (Shivji 1998; Palmer 2002). There are numerous competing agencies involved in land administration, including line ministries and central government departments, large parastatals, urban and rural local authorities and traditional leaders (Moyo 1995). The responsibilities of these different agencies in different aspects of land administration within the different land tenure areas overlap and create confusion and conflict among the various players, thus posing difficulties for the creation of integrated and comprehensive land administration processes (Shivji 1998).

A truly democratic approach to land administrative reform would require that the basic principles of democracy – equity, efficiency, accountability, transparency, legitimacy, and participation – be the guiding criteria for resolution of land administrative problems (Shivji et al. 1998). The concentration of administrative powers over land and natural resources in national authorities is the main obstacle. Popular demands for transparency reflect concerns over corrupt land and resource allocations, especially the tendency for state officials and political leaders to dominate licenses, leases and concessions. The land administration institutions also tend to be inaccessible and unrepresentative of local interests (Shivji et al. 1998).

In many countries land administration remains highly centralised and unrepresentative, while the institutions that adjudicate land issues at the local level are widely dispersed and weak at best (Shivji et al. 1998), a situation which tends to perpetuate centralised powers over customary land tenure regimes. Furthermore, as Amanor (2003) argues, there are limited channels for addressing land grievances and demands for land tenure reform. Rural popular organisations tend to be weak and dominated by lineage elders, a framework that has been reinforced by the state to prevent rural demands from being placed in a broader horizon beyond the community (Amanor 2003). Thus, since the territorial distribution of local 'traditional' authorities are generally based upon lineage/clan social structures with particular ethnic identities, land conflicts have tended to assume an explicit or implicit 'ethnic' character. Colonial administrations in Africa universally created administrative and political districts around 'tribal' chiefdoms, which in many cases imposed regional centres of ethnically-based chiefly authority over groups that had in

fact been autonomous, thus creating conflicted land administration structures. Moreover the preoccupation with formal land tenure reforms has tended to mean that most official land policies neglect redistributive aspects such as improving access to land, water, nature parks, forests and woodland resources by the poor, while efforts to improve environmental security, alleviate poverty and improve land and labour productivity tend to focus on small-scale palliatives in marginalised peasant lands.

Land movements and struggles in Africa

Because of the centrality of access to land in the livelihoods of the majority of Africans, social demand for land reforms – expressed in different forms depending on the nature of social forces which articulate them – have grown. Indeed renewed debates about the nature of African peasantries and their future suggest that mainstream intellectual discourses on the struggles for land in Africa have tended to underestimate the political significance of the land question in discussions on an alternative development path for Africa. In Africa numerous civil society groupings associated with the current renaissance of peasant organisations are predominantly middle-class, with strong international aid linkages. These structures tend to neglect radical land reform strategies and reproduce formal grassroots peasant organisations as appendages of middle-class development and democratisation agendas. Rural operations of civil society in Africa within a neo-liberal framework have been characterised by demands for funds for small-project 'development' aimed at a few selected beneficiaries (Moyo 2002), leaving a political and social vacuum in the leadership of the land reform agenda (Moyo 2001). Membership of formal rural or farmers political unions tends to be widely differentiated, with leaderships dominated by an elite group of farmers whose demands are for larger portions of freehold land (Moyo 1995). These organisations, like their counterpart community-based organisations which form mainly under the social control of lineage hierarchies, far from representing the majoritarian peasant demand for redistributive land reforms, have been co-opted into neo-liberal land tenure reformism. The majoritarian land interests are more often reflected in informal movements representing a variety of social forces, including those that pursue land occupations, resource poaching and other forms of 'sabotage'.

Land occupation movements such as those in rural and urban Zimbabwe before and after the country's independence represent an unofficial or underground social pressure used to force land redistribution onto the policy agenda (Moyo 2001). The 2000–2001 occupations in Zimbabwe marked the climax of a longer, less public and more dispersed struggle over land in that country, which intensified under adverse economic conditions that were exacerbated

by the onset of liberal economic and political reform. The dynamics of land reform in this and other contexts are complex and can best be understood in political terms, that is, in terms of a protracted struggle by peasants, poor urban workers and other groups for access to land and in terms of the reaction to this struggle by the dominant landholding class and by the state (Petras and Veltmeyer 2001). Land occupations thus reflect a tactic of class struggle and direct collective action.

Land movements are differentiated and adopt different strategies whose tactics may contradict some progressive struggles on issues such as democratisation. In Africa the tactics of land occupation for example have not been nationally comprehensive, and the absence of a political and institutional infrastructure for widespread mobilisation of the African peasantry has been a major bottleneck, along with neo-liberal ideologies that define the strategies of dominant civil society organisations. These ideologies inform us more on how farmers' associations can be directed to advocate agendas grounded in neo-liberal policies, on agricultural modernisation through increased exports and improved land use practices, on the short-term financial and environmental utility of land use change for global markets and ecological stabilisation.

Yet land movements and struggles are numerous, albeit isolated and scattered, even if many are incipient and not formally organised. High-profile and low-profile conflicts of both a spontaneous and engineered genre abound (Moyo 2001). Some land movements resist the dominant logic of capitalist development in rural areas and in particular struggle to retain control over land (Lumumba 2003). In general even formal farmers' organisations and unions that collaborate with the state are differentiated in their political intent and domestic policy demands, given their relationship to capital, state-driven land processes and external social forces. Contemporary African rural movements, especially those that are organised, including those that are in the process of organising, and that have a progressive agrarian reform agenda, have proliferated over the last two decades but have not in most cases become the nuclei of oppositional politics within their respective states. Nor have they pushed radical land and agrarian reform to the centre of the development agenda. This weakness or vacuum arises because their social base entails a rural-urban mix of small cultivators and proletarians, including the urban retrenched and unemployed, and because their leadership remains dominated by middle-class urban elites. Their tactics of direct action, using mainly land occupations and resource poaching in private and public lands, are overwhelmed by state repression and the welfarist projects of the NGO sector.

For all their differences in tactics, strategies and results, the Zimbabwe war-veteran-led movements has been among movements that have laid claim on the most demanding of internationalisms. That the Zimbabwe war veterans movement did not capture the imagination of the left worldwide has less to do with the violence that was associated with it (which was in fact far less than in other political convulsions in Africa, Asia and Latin America that the left has supported) and more to do with the 'civilised' post-national and anti-state norms of the anti-globalisation movement. Even the Landless People's Movement (LPM) in South Africa felt the contradictions of the situation, defending the land occupations in public fora but without going so far as to produce an official position.

Rural land movements have tended to be relegated to informal politics, while giving prominence to more organised middle-class civic groups and policy organisations that typically advocate market-based methods of land reform and liberal civic and political rights issues. Yet most civil society organisations, which are generally one-issue oriented in their advocacy, have tended to focus on proceduralist (redistributionist or governance) perspectives on social and economic change rather than on the structural issues required to address development challenges. Over the years the formal demand for radical land reform has tended to be submerged, especially in recent struggles for democratisation within a neo-liberal framework. Civil society discourses on land reform, therefore, tend to focus on law and governance issues, offering a critique of state-led methods of land acquisition without offering alternatives to land market acquisition and without mobilising an agrarian reform agenda focused on an alternative development agenda.

In general, demands for radical land and agrarian reform in Africa was led under colonial rule by the liberation movements and in the 1970s was pursued by means of armed struggle. In the independence period civil society land advocacy has been constrained by predominantly middle-class, social-welfarist and neo-liberal values, which are in turn dependent on international aid. Radical land reform continues to be demanded mainly by former liberation movements, war veterans' associations, the scattered efforts of traditional leaders and spirit mediums and a few emerging but narrowly based 'leftist' civil society organisations. As we have seen in South Africa, small left-leaning political parties and NGO groupings have supported the formation of a significant Landless People's Movement (LPM) that demands extensive land reform. However the contradictions between the mainly middle-class intellectual leadership of the landless peoples' structures and the trans-class and nationalist nature of the interests in land have become evident in the slow maturation of a nationwide radical land reform advocacy agenda. Nevertheless the LPM's demand for land redistribution using an explicit threat

to boycott the ANC in elections has had the effect of bringing greater urgency to the government's land reform initiatives.

Indigenisation or affirmative action lobbies, seeking the construction of a broader agrarian capitalist class, some with ethno-regional and gender foci, have on the other hand re-focused the land reform agenda towards the de-racialisation of the ownership base of commercial farmland in settler Africa and of a bi-modal large-small farmer agrarian structure. Thus a dual but essentially nationalist approach to land reform advocacy by aspirant large farmers and poor peasants now dominates the formal or official land reform agenda in Africa. This has shifted policy discourse on the criteria for access to land, refocusing the redistribution vision from the 'landless' and 'insecure' towards the 'capable' and 'efficient' indigenous agrarian capitalists, within the terms of the neo-liberal global development paradigm and using regional mobilisations.

In Botswana, some civil society land reform advocacy tends to be mobilised within a social and human rights framework of defending the land rights of 'indigenous' ethnic and marginalised minority groups, particularly the Basarwa. Increasingly the land struggles in Botswana involve ethnic minorities challenging the dominant paradigm of nation building that has been constructed through the diffusion of the values of the majority culture of the dominant Tswana groups. The Basarwa, often referred to as 'remote area dwellers', have historically been a servile underclass exploited by dominant Tswana groups as cattle herders and labourers (Molomo 2003). Removed from the major urban centres and enjoying limited government-assisted rural development and infrastructural facilities, they were recently moved out of the large Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) in a manner that subverted their land rights and subsistence livelihoods in order to expand the national tourist industry. Ethno-regional land movements are also increasingly seeking to attract state attention to land reform issues in their districts of origin. The land movements of the San in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana demand restoration of their land. Land struggles in Botswana involve ethnic minorities and NGOs challenging the dominant paradigm of the nation-state and demanding the reversal of Basarwa land alienation and social disruption. A trans-national land and social rights movement of the San ethnic formations in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia has also emerged with the support of NGOs from these and Western countries. Similarly pastoralist movements have emerged in East Africa.

With a few exceptions, such as the Land Campaign in Mozambique, which succeeded in making rural communities aware of their new rights under the law and how to go about legally establishing them (Negrao 1999), most of the new national land policies that result from NGO lobbying reflect

mainstream interests. The common approach used to guide such interests includes expert panels, task forces, investigating teams or comprehensive commissions of inquiry that involve 'consultation' processes and reports that often provide material for the state's land policy decisions (Moyo 2004). Thus, for example, civil society advocacy has sought to unravel the landholdings of agrarian capitalists in Kenya, but their demands for radical redistribution have been muted. In Zimbabwe, on the other hand, recent rural land occupations reflect a diverse range of social forces including the rural landless, former refugees, war veterans, the rural poor, the youth, former commercial farm workers, women's groups, the urban poor and the black elite (Moyo 2004). While social movements that demand land reforms cannot be idealised, various progressive and retrogressive struggles for land reform suggest that their importance cannot be underestimated. The re-emergence of radical land reform in Zimbabwe since the mid-1990s, which coincided with the demise of its structural adjustment programme, marked an important shift in the political and economic relations between the peasantry and the state vis-à-vis urban constituencies.

Conclusions

The African state has neither promoted equitable access to land through redistributive reforms nor progressive land tenure reforms. Instead land concentration has increased. This is because existing legal frameworks and institutions for managing land reform tend to protect the interests of those with disproportionately larger land rights, including property rights derived from colonial expropriation, rather than expanding the productive capacities of the poor. African customary law and customary land rights have been manipulated to advance land concentration throughout the continent, including in those countries where large portions of the land were alienated under private property tenure regimes.

The fundamental issue is whether the strategies of emerging African land movements have the potential to influence radical land reform in the classical and historical sense of addressing the agrarian question. Examining this issue requires a structural rather than an eclectic analysis of Africa's agrarian questions, including the social and class interests and strategies of emerging social movements (Rahmato 1991; Veltmeyer 1997; Moyo 2003) and the emergence of an alternative African development vision unfettered by neo-liberalism. Resolving Africa's land questions is critical to addressing the failed agrarian transitions and designing alternative development trajectories. This challenge underlies the national question in Africa today and calls for more introverted development strategies based on new international and regime linkages.

Notes

1. 'Non-capitalist' phenomena were noted by classical theorists: Marx (1976: ch.13), noted the trafficking of children in England as a function of industrialisation and Lenin (1964: 204-206) the persistence of a quasi-feudal labour service in Russia) reflecting the propensity of capitalism to re-create such phenomena in the longer term (Yeros 2002a).

2. For details of the arguments here see forthcoming CODESRIA Greenbook, Moyo, 2008, *African Land Questions, Agrarian Transitions and the State: Contradictions of Neo-liberal Land Reforms*, Dakar: CODESRIA.

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Development, Social Citizenship and Human Rights: Re-thinking the Political Core of an Emancipatory Project in Africa

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Abstract

The paper begins from the axiomatic point that, despite the form it eventually took, namely that of a neo-colonial process, development was understood and fought for in Africa as [part of] an *emancipatory political* project central to the liberatory vision of the pan-African nationalism which emerged victorious at independence. Indeed independence was always seen, by radical nationalism in particular, as only the first step towards freedom and liberation from oppression, the second being economic development. Indeed 'economism' and 'statism' were mirror images of each other: it was believed that only the economy could liberate humanity and that only the state could drive the economy to progress. Today, the first proposition has been retained but the second has been dropped from hegemonic discourse. Yet the two are inseparable twins; it is in fact the case that just as the latter is false so is the former, for human emancipation is and can only be a political project. While development today is said to be guided by the (not so invisible) "hand of the market", the state has simultaneously 'subcontracted' many of its development management functions to external bodies such as NGOs. These are frequently simply new parastatals, vehicles for social entrepreneurship for a 'new' middle-class of development professionals. We have now a new form of state rule which forms the context for re-thinking development and politics. Central to this new form of rule is the hegemony of human rights discourse. This paper begins by reviewing the political assumptions of the nature of citizenship underlying T.H. Marshall's argument for 'social rights'; it provides a critique of human rights discourse and civil society from an emancipatory perspective, situating these within the new forms of imperialism and comments on the character of political parties and social movements in understanding political emancipation today. It argues that in Africa, if

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one is to think an emancipatory project, citizenship must be conceived as active citizenship, and political subjectivity must be thought, not as management or opinions but, following the work of Badiou and Lazarus, as the freedom to think new 'possibles'.

Résumé

Cette étude part du point axiomatique selon lequel, en dépit de la forme finalement prise par le développement, à savoir celle d'un processus néocolonial, pour lequel l'Afrique a lutté et qui fait partie d'un projet politique émancipateur au cœur de la vision libératrice du nationalisme panafricain qui s'est révélé victorieux à l'indépendance. De fait, pour le nationalisme radical en particulier, l'indépendance a toujours été considérée comme la première étape vers la liberté et la libération de l'oppression, la seconde étant le développement économique. En effet, « l'économisme » et « l'étatisme » ont été l'image inversée de l'un et de l'autre ; l'on croyait que seul l'économie pouvait libérer l'humanité et que seul l'état pouvait conduire l'économie au progrès. Aujourd'hui, la première proposition a été retenue mais la seconde a été effacée du discours hégémonique. Cependant, les deux sont des jumelles inséparables ; le fait est que tout comme la première, la seconde proposition est fausse car l'émancipation humaine est et ne peut être qu'un projet politique. Alors qu'il est dit qu'aujourd'hui le développement est guidé par la « main du marché » (pas si invisible), l'état a simultanément « sous-traité » beaucoup de ses fonctions de gestion du développement à des organismes extérieurs tels que les ONG. Celles-ci ne sont souvent que de nouveaux organismes paraétatiques, des véhicules d'entreprenariat social aux mains d'une nouvelle classe moyenne de professionnels du développement. Nous avons maintenant une nouvelle forme d'étatisme qui constitue le cadre d'une nouvelle réflexion sur le développement et la politique. L'hégémonie du discours des droits humains est au cœur de ce nouvel étatisme. Cette étude commence par passer en revue les hypothèses politiques sur la nature de la citoyenneté qui sous-tendent l'argument de T.H. Marshall en faveur des « droits sociaux ». Cela suscite une critique du discours des droits humains et de la société civile à partir d'une perspective émancipatrice, en les situant dans les nouvelles formes de l'impérialisme et dans les commentaires portant sur la nature des partis politiques et des mouvements sociaux, dans la compréhension actuelle de l'émancipation politique. Selon l'argumentation qui en est faite ; Si, en Afrique, l'on pense à un projet émancipateur, il importe que la citoyenneté soit conçue comme une citoyenneté active, et la subjectivité politique doit être pensée, non pas en termes de gestion ou d'avis, mais à la suite des travaux de Badiou et de Lazarus, en terme de liberté de penser à de nouvelles « possibilités ».

Introduction

I begin from the axiomatic point that, despite the form it eventually took, namely that of a neo-colonial process, development was understood and fought for in Africa as (part of) an emancipatory project central to the

liberatory vision of the pan-African nationalism which emerged victorious at independence. Indeed independence was always seen, by radical nationalism in particular, as only the first step towards freedom and liberation from oppression, the second being economic development. It was after all Nkrumah who noted that 'true liberation' would only finally come with national economic independence from imperial domination. Up to this day Africa is seen by many nationalists as unfree because of its economic dependence, and not so much because of its politics, as if the road to freedom, justice and equality was not necessarily a political one.

The failure of development to emancipate the people of Africa was not the result of a betrayal or a con trick, it was rather the effect of a common worldwide conception in the twentieth century, a view according to which human emancipation could only be achieved through one form of *state politics* or the other. Indeed, economism and statism were mirror images of each other: it was believed that only the economy could liberate humanity and that only the state could drive the economy to progress. Today, the first proposition has been retained but the second has been dropped from hegemonic discourse. Yet the two are inseparable twins; it is in fact the case that just as the latter is false so is the former, for human emancipation is and can only be a political project. To maintain that human emancipation is essentially an economic question, is to necessarily collapse into statism and to foreclose the possibility of political agency. Today, the interests of capital are simply managed by the state in different ways than they were prior to the mid-seventies. In fact, economic liberalism, social democracy, 'actually existing socialism' and Third World developmentalism have all relied (and, insofar as they still exist, still do) on the state (or supra-state-like institutions) to *manage* economic forces, as it was held that no other entity could possibly do so.

Today, such state management simply means the management of the economy by the state in the interests of capital in a manner which is in all essentials equivalent to 'private sector management'. Such management is today primarily biased towards financial interests, while restraining, incorporating and otherwise softening the impact of popular responses so as not to threaten these interests. The shift from a dominant so-called Fordist 'regime of accumulation' to a more 'flexible' regime in a globalised economy is a dimension of this change, not its supersession (Harvey 1990). Imperialism and neo-colonialism have taken different more complex and more diverse forms in today's 'globalised' world, they have not disappeared. It follows that if we are to consider development as an aspect of human emancipation, it must be thought differently today, and not abandoned to the market which can only 'emancipate the few' – an obvious contradiction in terms as the idea of emancipation has to be universal to have any meaning.

If neither the state nor the market are emancipatory, the challenge then is to help to rethink development in a non-statist and non-economistic manner, and perforce to rethink politics in a manner that is not state-focused, despite the unavoidable importance of the state and its institutions in the field of politics. To detach development from its foundations in both the state and in the economy, to think of it as truly political – i.e. as emancipatory – is the major yet necessary challenge without which we cannot move forward in Africa today. I can only hope to make a very small contribution to this thinking here.

Development and freedom

The idea of an economic prerequisite for freedom, was of course central to the notion of progress in whichever ideological configuration it took, liberal, social-democratic or 'Marxist-Leninist' (where it took the form of the 'primacy of the productive forces'). The corollary of this ideology of the primacy of economic development was the central role of the state in the process. In capitalist societies, the state was either to manage change so as to maintain order as in the case of the various forms of liberalism, or to mitigate the unequalising effects of the market as in the case of social-democracy, or both (Cowen and Shenton 1996). The 'progress', which nineteenth century thought maintained could be realised through the teleological unfolding of history, was held by twentieth century thought to be realisable in the 'here and now' via an act of will through control of the state (or the 'commanding heights' of the economy or a number of variations on the same theme). This overwhelmingly voluntarist perspective was therefore not unique to developmentalism (whether in Africa or elsewhere in the Third World), but permeated the whole of twentieth century thought, even beyond the confines of development theory as Badiou (2005a) has clearly shown.

However today, the temptation often exists to re-varnish the tarnished slogans of social democracy, to bring back (perhaps a slightly modified version of) the post-war European social democratic model and even 'rediscover' the long lost writings of the revolutionaries of the eighteenth century such as Tom Paine (see Stedman-Jones 2004). The South African state is currently refurbishing the 'developmental state' model and seeing Malaysia as its (democratic?) model. Notions of the 'public good' or 'social citizenship' are resurfacing along with arguments on the need to spend state resources on infrastructural projects, while the 'social responsibility' of big capital is touted as an important component in 'public-private' partnerships. While neo-liberalism has not yet been abandoned, there seems to be a serious seduction of many by these formulations, as they seem to presage some kind of alternative to the extreme crassness and highly exploitative character

of Western neo-liberalism. However, an economic critique of this liberalism is clearly insufficient; if a critique of its politics is not undertaken, such purported alternatives could end up being an expensive error for thinking/developing an emancipatory alternative.

In both Europe and in Africa (and probably worldwide), the politics of the twentieth century were the politics of states and parties and the dominance of economic thought over politics, as the latter was usually reduced to (class) interests expressed by parties and the state. While the colonial state attempted to overcome its economic problems at home by 'developing' its colonies, especially post 1945 (Cowen and Shenton 1996), in post-colonial Africa the same colonial statist practices were continued paradoxically in order to overcome economic dependence. The same coercive and exclusive politics against the working people were now justified in terms of building a nation. In very few cases were attempts made to free and encourage the creative possibilities inherent in the people.

Not only did the state dominate development, it did so by subsuming popular-national interests to western ones and thus reproducing neo-colonial structures and practices. Capital accumulation did not only take place via the plunder of state resources, it did so in compradorial ways (Shivji 1985). While the state managed class (and other) struggles either through outright coercion (forced removals, labour, cultivation, dispossession etc. the idea was either for the state or market to 'capture', in the formulation made famous by Hyden, those beyond their power in order to increase the rate of exploitation. Development then was thus contradictory from the very start, it was concerned to increase the welfare of the population through achieving economic growth, but given the paucity of technology, that growth could only be achieved fundamentally through what Marx had referred to as the 'formal subordination' of labour to capital – an increase in exploitation through physical means. It increased capital accumulation primarily through dispossession, therefore as has been mentioned on numerous occasions, the state took a direct part in the coercive character of production relations (Mamdani 1987).

Today the state has delegated (or perhaps better sub-contracted) its development management functions to external bodies such as NGOs. These are frequently simply new parastatals and simultaneously vehicles for social entrepreneurship for a 'new' middle-class of development professionals. The activists of yesterday have largely joined the state, not necessarily directly, but by becoming subsumed within the new mode of rule through 'civil society'. Activism has been replaced by professionalism. 'Feminism' and 'empowerment' for example, have often been transformed from being popular struggles and demands, to being professions. We have now a new mode of

state rule which forms the context for re-thinking development. Central to this new mode of rule is the hegemony of human rights discourse and the incorporation of NGOs into the state either directly by turning them into parastatals, or by subsuming them within a state domain of politics.

If we attempt to analyse the process of transformation and development from an emancipatory perspective, which is what I am arguing we should do, a crucial lesson has become apparent today, namely that the state cannot emancipate anybody, or at least no more than a select few. Why? For a number of reasons of which I only wish to mention three core ones here.

First, because state subjectivity is invariably bureaucratic and founded on a managerialist ideology. Today that managerialist ideology is identical to that of private corporate interests (so-called 'private sector management') and a specific 'public sector management' (or 'public administration'), which had suggested some specificity in particular concerning a certain social responsibility by the 'public service' towards 'the public' seems to have been pushed aside. Irrespective of the specific character of managerialism today, the latter is a feature of the state in general, of all states without exception and therefore has, in truly democratic conditions, to be counterbalanced by popular democratic pressure. This feature is simply the result of the fact that the foundation of the state is precisely control and regulation, and that the state sees itself as rightly holding the monopoly of power and knowledge and not only of the deployment of violence. At best therefore in its management of social change, all the state can do is to substitute itself for popular struggles and independent popular organisations, all in the name of the monopoly of knowledge and/or the maintenance of social stability. To avoid misunderstanding, it should be stressed that I am referring here to state 'modes of thought', in simpler terms to 'subjectivities'. All this is to be clearly distinguished from possible structural or other contradictions within the state between different institutional or other interests, or indeed from state provisioning or the enactment of progressive social legislation. Moreover it should perhaps be reiterated that the state (institutionalised power) is in no way, either conceptually or politically, to be reduced to the government. Sociologically, I would include private security firms as well as the mainstream press within the state, the former within the repressive and the latter within the ideological state apparatuses (Althusser 1971; Poulantzas 1978).

Second, because the state systematically transforms a pre-existing emancipatory politics into a technical process to be run by professionals (planners, economists, lawyers, judges, administrators, etc.) under its ambit within bureaucratic structures and subjectivities. This amounts to a process of de-politicisation of say a popular nationalist or revolutionary politics. In sum, the state systematically evacuates politics from state life in favour of tech-

nique. In addition, under liberal democratic systems, politics is reduced to voting which itself becomes simply a question of numbers to be predicted, counted and analysed by professionals. This process is a highly complex one but ultimately universal in its fundamentals. It also includes, in today's parlance, the *institutionalisation* of rights fought for by people and their transformation into 'human rights' to be defended and delivered by the state itself (Neocosmos 2005).

Third, because evidence overwhelmingly suggests that it is the state (along with corporate, bureaucratic or communitarian interests) in whatever form and irrespective of ideology, which is and has universally been the main threat to genuine democracy; and that the latter has only been won by hard-fought popular struggles by workers, peasants, women and all the multitudes of the oppressed throughout the world. Thus, while it is important for state power to be divided between various mutually controlling institutions and 'powers', it is ultimately only the people who can be the fundamental guarantors of freedom and democracy, not a constitution or the judiciary. In Africa the examples are legion of cases whereby the people never rose to defend democratic constitutions subverted, undermined and finally overthrown by rulers in search of uncontrolled power, simply because these constitutions had lost the confidence of the people, due to their evident manipulation and corruption by politicians, or to their simple exclusion of popular concerns.

To stress that the state cannot emancipate does not mean either that the state is not of use in the development process or indeed that it is absent from the sphere of politics altogether. In actual fact, during the first phase of the post-colonial state (1960s–1970s), that of developmentalism, although a national emancipation project may have failed because of its exclusion of large sections of the population, at least some state project was in existence, a fact which is no longer the case today. Despite its problems, the necessity of supporting that programme at the time cannot be denied, while in fact its origins were precisely in an emancipatory vision. The best way of stating this point is simply to note that state-led emancipatory projects are simply obsolete today. In fact, today we have completely to re-invent emancipatory politics, as such a conception has simply disappeared from thought. Thus, reminding ourselves of the emancipatory vision of pan-Africanist struggles for development in the early life of nationalism is crucially important for the recapturing of such a vision. It is to this vision that we must be faithful, and not to a fetishism of state power.

In sum then, the question we have to pose ourselves is: if indeed the state cannot emancipate anybody, how is emancipation and perforce emancipatory development to happen? Clearly the market cannot do so and no one

believes it can, so how? Can development be thought of as an emancipatory project today? I want to discuss one way of addressing this issue and the connection between state, development and emancipation through a brief look at the work of T. H. Marshall and the experience of European, particularly British, social democracy.

Social democracy and social citizenship

It is useful to start with the dilemma which was central to classical sociological thought, namely that the fundamental problem of the maintenance of any society was to combine state authority on the one hand with a moral community on the other. While political theory was concerned with the management of social change by the state in order to maintain stability (Cowen and Shenton 1996), classical sociology was concerned with the existence of a 'collective consciousness' in Durkheim's sense, which would set the commonly agreed parameters of social life in the nation. While in turn of the century sociology, the notion was accompanied by a heavy dose of social pathological and religious arguments, this does not diminish the argument's significance for the contemporary world. For example, it is this moral community which is seen as able to provide the conditions for a consensus in the public sphere according to which recourse to violence would be excluded from the public arena. This idea of 'wanting to live together' (*le vouloir vivre ensemble*) finds resonance today among advocates of human rights discourse. It refers to consensual politics and is central to the liberal political philosophy of Hannah Arendt (Arendt 1982).

The development of such a moral community could not, for classical sociology, be a simple state imposition, but had to be present within the whole fabric of society. This is quite contrary to today's neo-liberal discourse for which moral community can be built through constitutionalism, the rule of law and the overall legitimacy of the state. These features of liberal democracy simply amount to restrictions on state politics at the level of the state itself; wider society is excluded from holding the state directly to account except through organised interests in civil society, a fact which does not necessarily imply consensus. Ultimately, the whole of society can only have a say on which members of the elite are in power at election time, but not on the character of the state as such. The African experience from the colonial period onwards has been one of state coercion, little legitimate authority and the attempt (when it happened) to build a moral community through state ideology of one form or another. The only conception which comes close to measuring up to a moral community today is no longer sought within African popular culture, but within what is sometimes termed 'a human rights culture' imported from the West (Mutua 2002).

T. H. Marshall was quite unique in laying out the link between human rights and development within what was the dominant paradigm of social democracy in the post-war period. What is interesting about Marshall's writings is not only his serious commitment to a genuinely *social* democracy, in which the negative effects of market capitalism on the working masses could be fundamentally countered by state social spending, but also his belief in 'progress' as leading to equality, an equality which he saw as embodied in citizenship. Of course, this was supposed to be a political and not an economic equality, that is, an equality of citizens in relation to the state, itself constructed by the state. A double dream in capitalist conditions, yet in conditions of post-war economic boom and of full employment it made sense, especially during the statist social optimism of the period. This optimism saw an end to the seeming linear succession of civil, political and social rights, this end being largely equated with 'the more equal society of the future' (1964: 346). Such a future was being realised in post-war Western Europe with the setting up of 'welfare states'. 'Social rights', which these were meant to deliver, were 'the rights to an acceptable standard of economic welfare, to health and [...] to education' (1964: 290). Although these rights would not lead to a totally egalitarian society, after all inequality was required to spur the working classes to work harder, the idea was to produce a 'free and independent working class, protected and sustained by their basic rights as citizens' (ibid: 287). The idea then was to create an inclusive society, in which everyone would benefit from citizenship rights and thus 'be accepted as full members of the society' (p. 78). In this way, 'the inequality of the social class system may be acceptable provided the equality of citizenship is recognized' (ibid). 'Citizenship has itself become, in certain respects, the architect of *legitimate* social inequality' (p. 77, emphasis added). However unless it could transform itself, he saw the 'welfare state' as being threatened by (Galbraith's notion of) the 'affluent society''. Such a society, Marshall argued, was the antithesis of welfarism, as 'it looks eagerly for windfalls' from speculation legal or illegal, 'bogus expense accounts, football pools, premium bonds'; the latter 'was based on the opposite principle. It did not reject the capitalist market economy, but held that there were some elements in a civilized life which ranked above it and must be achieved by curbing or superseding the market' (ibid.).

He continued despondently by noting that: 'what is more disturbing is that the Affluent Society does not appear as yet to have a soul at all, either to lose or to look for, and it is unaware of what it lacks' (ibid: 302). Now that we have seen the disastrous effects of the development of this 'affluent society' which we now refer to as neo-liberal capitalism, we need to go beyond Marshall's thinking. In fact his perspective is limited by a number of factors

which we are much more aware of today from our historical and geographical vantage point in Africa.

Nevertheless, what should be noted here is not so much the obvious attempt to legitimise class oppression (as has been mentioned at length) - an oppression evidently sustained by the state - but a double conception of the importance of state legitimacy, a notion itself central to classical sociology: first the subtle understanding of the necessity of a moral order for a necessary commitment to the system, so that the poorer sections of the national community can develop a stake in it; and second the locating of this stake in the rights of citizenship. This method of resolving the problem, which I identified earlier, between state power and a societal moral order, was addressed in a specific way by European social democracy. This way was made possible partly by the specific ways in which Fordist capitalism combined accumulation, exploitation, consumption and full employment policies with the role of the state as a virtual monopoly of welfarism, as I have already mentioned.

Interestingly, in hindsight, Marshall also made a number of remarks concerning 'voluntary societies', by which he refers to what we call today NGOs, which are worth repeating. He notes for example that 'representative government alone will not create a true democracy if the citizen cringes before the official, or if he sullenly resents his authority' (p. 348). What he sees as a solution however is 'co-operation between statutory and voluntary services' (ibid) and this despite the fact that he realises that there is fundamentally no distinction in their forms of operation between statutory and voluntary bodies and associations, and moreover that these voluntary agencies only have a 'moral responsibility' towards their clients as they are not directly representative – they have 'no such constituency' (p. 349) – particularly as 'voluntary supporters' gradually become replaced by 'professional employees of the society' (p. 350). After all he notes: 'voluntary action is part of public policy' (p. 353) and 'the state must have the final word' (p. 355). These observations are more sophisticated than many we hear today regarding NGOs; the conclusion we can draw from his argument is that voluntary NGOs have clients and operate for the most part on the basis of a subjectivity which is identical to that of the state. Marshall does not believe that (liberal democratic) state practices are in any way oppressive, hence his failure to consider genuinely popular organisations in his argument.

Social citizenship in Africa today

We can agree with Marshall that social citizenship is the solution to the problem of reconciling state legitimacy with a moral community. Yet today, economic provisioning cannot be put before popular politics because we live at

a time of economic crisis which has overtaken the conceptions of full em-
ployment, mass consumption and welfare provisioning which characterised
Fordist-cum-social democratic/Keynesian forms of accumulation, as well as
developmentalism in the post-war period. Mass unemployment and mass
poverty are seen today as unavoidable features of contemporary capitalism.
A return to classical social democracy is unlikely if not impossible within the
current global socioeconomic context. The populations of the world can there-
fore not be so easily convinced to defer or abandon their direct political
rights of citizenship through the provision of economic welfare, state social
infrastructure and high standards of living; these are simply absent for the
majority in conditions of hegemonic market subjectivity. In any case if we
are to remain faithful to an emancipatory conception of development, this
can no longer be conceived as statist. Today if it is to have any meaning,
social citizenship must be provided with a fundamentally different content.

What is very interesting to note, is the common prevalence of concep-
tions of the necessity to develop a moral community politically among many
of the popular movements against the oppression of colonial as well as post-
colonial states. In fact, this notion, although not always understood in an
identical manner, contains the *leitmotif* of an identification of 'moral com-
munity' with a community of active citizens. In other words it could be sug-
gested that a common feature of popular opposition in Africa has been pre-
cisely the understanding of moral community as an active citizenship of
political agency, whereby ordinary people seem concerned to oppose to the
clear immorality of the state and colonial/market culture, a different concep-
tion of morality in which active citizenship plays the key role. Indeed it could
be argued that it is this conception of active citizenship which has the char-
acter of a true democratic universal, not the passive citizenship of human
rights discourse which is dominant today.

We can see from an analysis of the trajectories of struggles for independ-
ence in Africa, what happened throughout the world at different periods.
This could be termed a *shift from rights to human rights*, a shift from an
inclusive moral community of active citizens in a period of struggle for inde-
pendence, to an exclusive essentialist community of passive citizens after
independence. This can be seen in the case of one of the first struggles for
independence in Africa and in one of the last, in Algeria and in South Africa.
In the former case Fanon's (1989, 1990) analyses portray a clear distinction
between a period of popular upsurge against colonialism, where people be-
come transformed into active citizens taking their own destiny in hand, and a
post-independence period, when they become passive citizens of the state,
approving of the chauvinism which systematically excludes foreigners (to
begin with). I have outlined very similar processes in the South African case

in my own work, with the added importance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in transforming South Africans from political agents in the 1980s to supplicant victims in the 1990s (Neocosmos 1996, 1999, 2006). In both cases we can see a transition from an active popular conception of citizenship which is largely inclusive in perspective, to a passive state-imposed conception of citizenship as indigeneity which is exclusive of the growing number of 'others'. The fundamental reason for the change in either case is the collapse or defeat of an independent popular emancipatory politics.

Understanding the transition in this way illuminates some of the links between state power, active citizenship, and the moral order necessary for national emancipation, and displaces 'human rights discourse' from its position of uniqueness, to being only one particular (statist) conception of politics. It therefore contributes to a necessary critique of liberalism. If in wishing to understand the transition from colonialism/apartheid, we remain at the level of the state/party/organisation, the shift is invisible, which is what the re-writing of history by the state after liberation attempts to do in order to show a linear continuity. A human rights culture – the hegemony of human rights discourse – can thus be understood as part of the process of production and reproduction of what Badiou calls the 'capitalo-parliamentary' system, that is, the liberal state which simply manages capitalist interests. In those countries where human rights discourse is being resisted by the government, it nevertheless provides the main ideological support for an oppositional perspective, in this way authoritarian systems provide a main source of subsistence for liberal democracy.

Citizenship, from an emancipatory perspective, is not about subjects bearing rights conferred by the state, but rather about people who think about (who are capable of truths in Badiou's sense) becoming agents through their engagement in politics as militants/activists and not as politicians. In fact it is important to understand how this stress on political agency was central to popular struggles and how it is still prevalent among many popular movements today. For example, Fanon's *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* is a detailed investigation into different examples of change in social relations brought about by popular struggle. These include changes in the position of women in society, the effect of independent radio stations, and changes in the family.

In other words, the point is that during the period of popular national upsurge, citizenship as a unifying, inclusive conception, as a community of active citizens, is being born. No distinction is made between people on the basis of indigeneity but only on the basis of their devotion to the struggle. By the time he writes *The Wretched,* we have the following well known account of xenophobia under the post-colonial state:

> On the morrow of independence [the] native bourgeoisie ... violently attacks colonial personalities... It will fight to the bitter end against these people "who insult our dignity as a nation". It waves aloft the notion of the nationalization and Africanization of the ruling classes. The fact is that such actions will become more and more tinged by racism, until the bourgeoisie bluntly puts the problem to the government by saying "We must have these posts" (ibid: 125).

We have here an account of a clear transition between the two forms of citizenship I have referred to: the popular inclusive conception founded on active citizenship and the state conception founded on indigeneity and passivity. It is also important to note the similarity with work on the South African struggle of the 1980s which makes similar points regarding the character of popular struggle in this period (Neocosmos 1998; Van Kessel 2000). The point is not to idealise popular struggle but to note that, despite all its contradictions, it enables the development of a different conception of citizenship.

Can a 'human rights culture' enable active citizenship?

Development today is regularly used along with names such as 'participation' and 'human rights'. Indeed it seems impossible to think of popular politics outside the parameters of the discourse of human rights. The language is pervasive in the societies of the South and seems today the only way in which human emancipation can be conceived, simply because human rights discourse provides the parameters through which people in communities resist oppression and assert their rights vis-à-vis the depredations of authoritarian states and capitalist interests. Yet at the same time, 'human rights' language is also the language of the new form of imperialism, the justification, inter alia, for the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and the slaughter of countless civilians in the process. Human rights and participation is also central to the language of the World Bank and is in danger of becoming, in the formulation of one recent publication, 'the new tyranny' in development (Cooke and Kothari 2002). How are we to make sense of this contradiction? Does human rights discourse enable or disable the active citizenship which I have argued must be put at the centre of our thinking today? These are some of the questions in dire need of answers. I shall propose a way of approaching them in what follows. I shall try to deal with these issues, admittedly superficially, under two main headings: the relationship between human rights discourse and political passivity, and the role of human rights discourse in imperialism today. Both are closely related because human rights discourse is fundamentally a-political.

Human rights discourse and passive citizenship

Human rights are said to be realised within what is referred to by neo-liberal discourse as 'civil society'. Civil society in the literature is usually equated with NGOs, but this excludes organisations which operate at the margins of legality or which are totally 'informal'. It excludes politics outside a domain formally recognised by the state. Civil society is better understood as a domain of politics over which the state attempts to exercise its hegemony. This attempt is often successful (otherwise civil society is said not to exist) despite the possible contradictions between government and specific NGOs. It is in civil society that citizenship rights are said to be realised, however these are to be realised in a manner which keeps them firmly away from any (emancipatory) politics which question the state itself as they take place within the framework of 'human rights'. However, before addressing this issue, it is important to stress the fact that civil society is not the only realm of politics outside the state, and moreover it is possible to suggest that civil society in Africa today forms a realm of politics which is dominated by the state itself. To put the point simply, the politics of civil society are state politics, for it is the state which pronounces on the legitimacy of the organisations 'of civil society'.

However, from the perspective of a democratic emancipatory project, the state should not be allowed to dictate whether popular organisations are legitimate or not, and neither can intellectual inquiry allow itself to narrow the concept to adhere to state prescriptions; only society itself should be entitled to bestow such legitimacy. In this sense South Africa for example, can be said to have had an extremely powerful and 'vibrant', as well as politicised, set of popular organisations in the 1980s but these never formed a 'civil society', and were not described as such at the time because of their quasi-illegal nature and their illegitimacy in the eyes of the state. In fact, it was precisely the political distance of these organisations from the state, the fact that they had exited the state domain of politics and operated beyond the (obviously restricted) civil society of the time, which accounts for the 'vibrancy' of such popular organisations in the South African townships of the 1980s (Neocosmos 1998, 1999). Conversely, it can also be pointed out that the neo-liberal conception of civil society also implies recognition by civil society organisations of the legitimacy of the state. This view cannot include explicitly revolutionary organisations within civil society. For such a viewpoint therefore, these same opposition organisations in South Africa in the 1980s (UDF, Civics, Youth and Women's organisations etc.), which were fighting the apartheid state as such and which were thereby constantly testing the limits of legality (their activities were often wholly illegal), could not be rigorously said to form a 'civil society'. Indeed they were only described

in such terms in the 1990s, when the state had no option but to recognise their legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

For neo-liberalism therefore civil society exists solely under conditions of mutual recognition between it and the state, only under liberal democracy. It is this mutual recognition which defines the parameters of the state consensus and is itself the result of struggle. Moreover, it is the state which retains the monopoly of national universality. Civil society organisations can be tolerated but only if they represent particularistic interests. Any claims to such universality, in other words if a popular organisation is said to represent 'the people's interests' or 'the national interest', would mean that it is liable to be seen by the state as a threat to its monopoly of universality. A state 'national' consensus is structured within a state domain of politics comprising the political relations between the state and its institutions on the one hand, and the 'official' or 'formal' civil society of citizens on the other. Other forms of politics by unrecognised organisations are seen as beyond the consensus and can thus be de-legitimised in state discourse. These organisations and politics therefore exist outside or beyond the limits (at best at the margins) of civil society. Because of such partiality therefore, 'civil society' cannot be conflated with 'organised society' as the term necessarily implies some form of exclusion (Neocosmos 2004). The distinction between liberal democracy and say colonial/apartheid forms of authoritarianism can be said to concern inter alia the extent and forms taken by such exclusion.

Simultaneously this mutual recognition is given substance by 'human rights' which are visualised as formal and universal (that is, ahistorical and a-contextual), and therefore not subject to debate or contestation because they are deemed to be scientifically, technically or naturally derived. Civil society today is said to be the realm within which human rights are realised or expressed. These rights, even though fought for and achieved through popular struggles throughout society, are supposed to be 'delivered' and 'guaranteed' by the state. They are taken out of popular control and placed in a juridical realm, where their fundamentally political character is removed from sight so that they become the subject of technical resolution by the judicial system. Human rights, therefore do not only depend on a spurious Western philosophical humanism of 'Man' for their conception, an ideology through which individuals are 'interpellated as subjects' by the state itself (Althusser 1971), they also represent the de-politicisation and technicisation of popular victories under the control of the state. The people are forced, if they wish to have their rights addressed and defended, to do so primarily within the confines of, or in relation to, the state institutions of the judiciary.

Thus, even though 'rights discourses can both facilitate transformative processes and insulate and legitimise power' (Krenshaw 2000: 63), the poli-

tics of human rights is, at best, a state-focussed politics and is predominantly reduced to a technicised politics, which is limited to a demand for inclusion into an existing state domain. Thus a struggle for rights, if successful, can end up producing the outcome of a fundamentally de-politicised politics. In fact it could be asserted abstractly that, while in pre-liberal writings and practice the state expressed the will of God, in liberal writings and practice, the state expresses the will of Man; freedom simply consists in obeying that will (Althusser 1971). In sum, technique and science (the bearers of which are experts and state expertise) are in this manner unavoidably abstracted by the state from the socio-political context and conditions which alone give them meaning, and thus acquire a life of their own, independent of that context and those conditions. To be accessed by ordinary people and democratised, they need to be re-politicised and their technical quality shown to be, at best, only partly independent of socio-political content (Foucault 2000).

It has been rightly mentioned on many occasions – this was the essence of the Marxist critique of 'bourgeois rights' – that the poor and oppressed were systematically excluded from exercising their rights because of unaffordability, lack of knowledge and access to all the resources which (bourgeois) state power monopolises and which are necessary for the realisation of rights. Equality of rights it was stressed, was simply impossible in an unequal society. Therefore the supposed universality of rights was fallacious as the 'human' in human rights (as indeed the idea of 'Man' as a transcendental human subject) was in fact, the Western, white, bourgeois male.

If human rights discourse contributes to the maintenance of privilege for the privileged and to the exclusion of the oppressed majority from state politics, it also has the effect of absolving the latter from the responsibility of engaging in political activity themselves. This is because it is maintained that some external body such as the judiciary (or the criminal justice system as a whole), the health system, an NGO, political party or whatever - in other words a state institution – will resolve the political issue at stake on their behalf. As, for example, the judiciary will only deal with individualised subjects and not with the historical context of social structures, issues concerning power relations are rarely raised. Moreover, given that the greatest threat to rights comes from the state itself, we have the interesting phenomenon of one state institution (usually the judiciary, its members unelected and unrepresentative) being charged with defending people's rights against other state institutions; the state is thus meant to police itself, this particular right is removed from the people.

The whole system, both materially and culturally, thus has the effect of excluding the majority from official state politics on the one hand, while making it difficult if not impossible for them to mobilise politically on the

other. It amounts to a permanent system of political de-mobilisation and dis-empowerment – a process of fundamental de-politicisation of the majority (Englund 2004). It leads to and sustains the complete antithesis of an active citizenship which is the necessary basis of democracy and gives a whole new meaning to the expression: 'the rule of law'. Non-citizens, despite the setting up of juridical structures such as international courts, are regularly excluded from rights which can only be claimed through one's 'own' state. Thus, despite the liberal view that it is universal human subjects who are the bearers of rights, these can usually only be accessed by 'citizens' of a state, as it is the latter which bestows that status upon them (Mamdani 1995). Of course, the apparent benefits of citizenship, as feminist scholars in particular have noted, are differentially distributed, as the powerless are much less able to secure them (Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999; Hassim 1999).

The effects of political dis-empowerment and the consequent political passivity must not be understood as restricted exclusively to civil life, as they permeate deeply into the constitutive social relations of the fabric of society itself, as the authoritarianism of social structure replicates and makes possible the authoritarianism of state power (Foucault 2000). This is particularly obvious in conditions of post-coloniality in Africa, conditioned as these societies are by the authoritarian legacy of colonialism and apartheid. It is quite unsurprising then that personal responsibility based on power, and control inter alia over education, housing, work let alone over desire, sexuality, knowledge as well as over self or personhood, is quite simply lacking. Neo-liberalism, which provides the socio-political passivity of empty choices without power, and abysmally fails to even consider the conditions and capacity for its own induced or interpellated subjects to make responsible subjective decisions, is itself the ultimate ideological source of child-like powerlessness. The simple fact that state (or other) power is expected to decide on one's behalf, and that this is systematically internalised in the process of identity formation, is arguably what lies at the root of issues of powerlessness as disparate as those of HIV-AIDS, the alienation of youth from society, the absence of people-centred development and poverty. Conversely and happily for the state, the 'commonsense' apparent 'obviousness' of the immutable absence of a capacity to make such decisions, means that an even weaker 'other' can always be found to provide a simple and obvious answer to one's powerlessness in those cases where the intervention of power, in whatever form (state institutions, market, NGOs, family, etc.), fails to live up to expectations which it has itself cultivated. Xenophobic violence, violence against women, children, babies, the elderly and so on (the weakest sectors of society), as has been noted on innumerable occasions, is closely linked to powerlessness.

Paradoxically then, a rights discourse purportedly concerned with pro-
viding the enabling environment for freedom, within the context of liberal-
ism in a post-colonial society, fundamentally and systematically enables its
opposite – political and social dis-empowerment – through the hegemony of
a state-centred consciousness. Today even state politics is reduced to man-
agement; after all what is 'good governance' if not efficient management
and administration? At the same time we must remember, as I have already
noted, that the distinction between public and private sector management
has been largely obliterated; it is the latter which dominates today; this we
are told is an effect of 'globalisation'. 'Good governance' and even 'popular
participation' in hegemonic discourse, simply refer to the most capital-friendly
management techniques possible (Taylor 2002).

Having systematically de-politicised the population and systematically
disabled their engagement in active politics, state agencies and politicians
can then regularly emphasise the 'irresponsibility' of allowing too much free
expression and organisation as this would lead to support for demagogic
politics, for capital punishment, xenophobia, racism and so on. In other words,
having produced political passivity, illiteracy and ignorance, these are then
used as justifications for placing restrictions on democracy by calling on
'enlightened despotism' from those in power – much as under apartheid and
colonialism, state-induced ignorance among the oppressed was used as a
justification for the maintenance of colonial power. In sum, liberalism in
post-colonial Africa systematically militates against the formation of a moral
community of active citizens, in other words against the construction of a
political community properly understood. In the absence of political agency
given the hegemony of political passivity, political choices cannot be made
by the overwhelming majority, and political morality disappears; these are of
course the necessary conditions for political exclusion and violence. The
miserable moralism of 'human rights discourse' is fundamentally part of these
conditions. Human rights discourse then is an obstacle to active citizenship
and especially to the development of emancipatory politics; 'human' rights
are and can only be understood as *institutionalised* rights.

In Africa generally the technicisation of politics, the evacuation of poli-
tics from the state and its replacement by managerialist ideology, has meant
the exclusion of the majority from active citizenship and the structuring of a
state and elite consensus around political illiteracy and passivity especially
as the state concurrently 'naturalises' its dominance and technicism. We are
told that there is no alternative to the way things are done, for this is natural
and in conformity with the consensus of the scientificity of state activity.
Moreover, civil society in Africa, the realm of rights, has become, sociologi-
cally speaking, a middle-class phenomenon which provides employment and

opportunities for social entrepreneurship for professionals and members of the elite who, as a result, are the only ones to acquire the full benefits of citizenship (Kanyinga and Katumanga 2003). Gramsci's (1971: 263) formulation 'the state = political society + civil society' appears particularly apt under such conditions.

Human rights discourse and the new imperialism
In a different context, Chatterjee also stresses the role of international NGOs in spreading human rights discourse which, he argues, forms one of the main pillars of imperialism today. It is important to stress these points here as they are constitutive of the currently hegemonic conception of democracy and human rights. It is important to recognise that in the new form of imperialism – which does not have a clear centre – it is not simply that the power of governments to make decisions on their own economies is undermined, even perhaps more importantly, national sovereignty is being undermined by human rights discourse. This takes a number of forms including the trial of gross violators by the International Human Rights Court in the Hague (so that they are not accountable to their own people) and the propagating by international NGOs (Oxfam, Médecins sans Frontières etc.) of Western conceptions of human rights. It is clearly in this way that the foundations of empire are being laid. The connection between imperialism and human rights is explained extremely well by Chatterjee:

> Liberals are now saying that [...] international law and human rights must be established all over the world. Where these are violated, the guilty must be punished, without undue regard for the privileges of national sovereignty. If the leaders of states themselves have little concern for the law, if they themselves ride roughshod over the human rights of people, then why should the excuse of national sovereignty be allowed to come to their rescue? In that case human rights would never be established. What is needed, therefore, is the drafting of a global code of state practice and the creation of international institutions to monitor and implement this code. On what authority will these international judicial institutions be set up? Bodies run on the principle of one country one vote, such as the United Nations General Assembly, will be utterly inadequate to the task. The liberal democratic countries must come forward to accept their responsibility in creating the institutional space for the operation of an ideal global sovereignty. The name for this sovereign sphere [...] is empire (2004: 98).

Of course, if the responsibility of 'Western democracies' extends to ensuring that democracy and the rule of human rights is to be accepted throughout the world and if there is any (obviously misguided) resistance to such acceptance, then democracy and human rights must be imposed by force if necessary.

Chatterjee (2004: 100) continues:

> The theorists of the new empire have talked of still more wonderful things. This empire is democratic. It is an empire without an emperor. The people are sovereign here, as it should be in a democracy. That is precisely why this empire has no geographical limits. This is not like the empires of old where territories have to be conquered by war to add to the size of the empire. Now empire expands because more and more people, and even governments, looking for peace and for the lure of economic prosperity, want to come under its sheltering umbrella. Thus empire does not conquer territory or destroy property; rather, it encompasses new countries within its web of power, makes room for them in its network. The key to empire is not force but control. There is always a limit to force; there is no limit to control. Hence empire's vision is a global democracy [...] We can see the exercise of control right in front of our eyes [...] Even such a deeply political matter as punishment for alleged violations of human rights has now become the jurisdiction of new international judicial institutions. The trial of Milosevic is the most dramatic example of this.

However this is not all. While supra-national courts such as the European court of Justice or the International Court of Justice in the Hague are set up by agreement between states in multinational fora such as the UN, there is also another much more subversive and insidious aspect to the establishing of the hegemony of human rights discourse: the operations of so-called 'international civil society'. Chatterjee continues:

> If the protection of human rights is a function of empire, then that task is being carried out not simply by the international courts. It is being done daily, and diligently, by numerous such international NGOs as Amnesty International, Médecins sans Frontières, or Oxfam, whose able and committed activists probably have never suspected that they are, like little squirrels, carrying the sand and pebbles that go into the building of the great bridge-head of empire. But that is where the ideological foundations of empire are being laid (pp. 100-1).

As Mutua explains, 'although the human rights movement arose in Europe, with the express purpose of containing European savagery, it is today a civilizing crusade aimed primarily at the Third World [...] Rarely is the victim conceived as white' (2002: 19, 30). And Badiou continues:

> Since the barbarity of the situation [of victims in the Third World – MN] is considered only in terms of 'human rights' - whereas in fact we are always dealing with a political situation, one that calls for a political thought-practice, one that is peopled by its own authentic actors - it is perceived, from the heights of our apparent civil peace, as the uncivilized that demands of the civilized a civilizing intervention. Every intervention in the name of a civilization *requires* an initial contempt for the situation as a whole, including its

victims. And this is why the reign of 'ethics' coincides, after decades of courageous critiques of colonialism and imperialism, with today's sordid self-satisfaction in the 'West', with the insistent argument according to which the misery of the Third World is the result of its own incompetence, its own inanity - in short, of its *subhumanity* (Badiou 2001a: 13).

And even more directly:

The refrain of 'human rights' is nothing other than the ideology of modern capitalism: we won't massacre you we won't torture you in caves, so keep quiet and worship the golden calf. As for those who don't want to worship it, or who don't believe in our superiority, there's always the American army and its European minions to make them be quiet (Badiou 2001b: 2-3).

In case anyone doubts this, it is perhaps important to recall how those in power in South Africa so easily swallowed the hegemonic refrain of the equating of human rights with market freedoms, the then minister of trade and industry, for example, stressing that 'the struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa was substantially advanced by the successful campaign to link trade and human rights' (Erwin 1998: 57). Clearly from a position of power, in a post-authoritarian state it does seem that human rights do 'substantially advance' or 'immeasurably increase' freedom, yet it soon becomes apparent that this 'freedom' is nothing like universal, nor indeed democratic. Even the recent ideology of 'multiculturalism' in plural societies can be seen fundamentally to be a disguised form of racism corresponding to new 'softer' and 'more democratic' imperial relations. Zizek (1999: 216) makes the following observant comment vis-à-vis multiculturalism, one of the offshoots of human rights discourse today, and its affinity with the current form of imperialism usually referred to today by the more benign term 'globalisation':

the form of ideology of this global capitalism is multiculturalism, the attitude which, from a kind of empty global position, treats *each* local culture as the colonizer treats colonized people - as natives whose *mores* are to be carefully studied and 'respected' [...] just as global capitalism involves the paradox of colonisation without the colonising nation-state metropolis, multiculturalism involves a patronising Eurocentric distance and/or respect for local cultures without roots in one's own particular culture [...] multiculturalism is a disavowed, inverted, self-referential form of racism, a 'racism with a distance' – it 'respects' the Other's identity, conceiving the other as a self-enclosed 'authentic' community towards which the multiculturalist maintains a distance made possible by his/her privileged universal position.

This is a crucially important remark. Just as there is no obvious centre for capital (or indeed empire as Hardt and Negri 2001 argue) today – capital is literally global – there is no centre for 'multiculturalist' racism and no centre

for human rights discourse. It is the latter which is the equivalent of multiculturalism in the legal/NGO realm of civil society. Human rights discourse is the new racism, it is the ideological vanguard of the new form of empire; it has been re-discovered and re-packaged by international NGOs, so that popular struggles for rights and entitlements become ultimately transformed into demands for human rights to be *delivered* and *protected* ultimately by states and not by people themselves. That is why it is so easy to be convinced by the apparently liberatory character of liberalism, for it seems to provide a vision and theory of freedom. However, it is becoming more apparent that just behind the benign and smiling faces of international NGOs or the humanitarianism of the UN lies the hideous grimace of all out war and the destructive and systematically anti-human power of the US, the only super-power and World policeman (Harvey 2005).

In sum then, the politics of the new imperialism today are the politics of neo-liberal 'democracy' and human rights. This is why it is fundamentally flawed to think that a discourse of human rights has an emancipatory content. Of course, in case activists may start to feel uneasy, I must repeat that I am not dismissing struggles for rights, rather what I am concerned to argue is for a clear distinction between the struggle for rights by people, particularly those with a universalistic appeal, and the requests for human rights from states, NGOs and multinational institutions. In fact when one is struggling for rights against any injustice or oppression, one is exercising active citizenship and asserting one's humanity, when one is appealing for human rights, one is simply exhibiting one's passivity vis-à-vis power. Paradoxically then, it is the second practice which is de-humanising, as it removes agency from people; it is various state institutions that decide the content of humanity, which they simply reduce to politically passive individuals; human rights discourse is thus the antithesis of true humanity as it systematically undermines human agency. There can be therefore no emancipatory politics founded on human rights discourse and proliferating the number of recognised rights in international conventions does not constitute the way forward.

If one wishes to find a way around the contradiction between the oppressive state and the necessity to construct a moral community in Africa, the arguments of social-democracy are no longer helpful. This is fundamentally because they deny the importance of (an emancipatory) politics in favour of the economy and the state (while simultaneously leaving the whole neo-colonial edifice at the global level in silence), thus reproducing, within the context of empire, the eternal and abstract '*danse macabre*' between state and market. Both of these have to be made accountable to society, hence the centrality of politics. While the state is definitely an important component of the field of politics, politics can no longer be reduced to the state. A funda-

mental re-thinking is required, one which places political agency at the foundation of a new social contract between society and state. It is more important than ever that this thinking distances itself from the vulgar money-spinning and miserable moralism of a human rights discourse, which forces people into victimhood, as it has come to constitute a humanism without a project which has discarded human agency in favour of appeals to the state. In the absence of such critique, the language of 'decency' and 'fairness' (Rawls) and that of 'democracy' and 'freedom' (Sen) will remain the empty verbiage it now appears to be in Africa despite the valiant efforts of such thinkers to save it from total corruption.

I shall argue below that emancipatory politics eschews the passivity of victimhood in favour of the construction of political agency. Reasserting the centrality of politics in theory is a difficult enterprise, particularly as (emancipatory) politics is not always in existence and is clearly largely absent at present. Such a re-thinking of politics should arguably begin by stressing the central importance of a moral community of active citizens, drawing on the experience of various traditions and popular movements in Africa and elsewhere as well as on the philosophy of those who attempt to understand politics as human militant activity (for example, Badiou 1998a; Lazarus 1996). In order to recover an emancipatory project of development, it is precisely from an analysis of politics that intellectual work must begin.

Social movements and politics

Given the collapse of the great emancipatory projects of the twentieth century, social movements are often seen today as the hope for, if not the actual solution to an emancipatory future. Yet social movements alone have not shown themselves to be emancipatory. After all, movements are difficult to sustain over time. One of the core problems of emancipatory struggles has been understood, at least since the revolutions of the eighteenth century (American, French and Haitian), as concerning the linkage between a social movement on the one hand and organised politics on the other. In the twentieth century, particularly since Lenin's *What Is to Be Done,* this problem has been resolved through the formation of political organisation in the form of parties. These have allocated to themselves the monopoly of political knowledge, while movements provided the impetus and the mass base. *Irrespective of their specific ideology*, political parties of intellectuals were said to be necessary in order to *lead* (dominate) the movement and direct it toward the desired outcome. Of course, as parties later melded with the state, the problem of who the party represented, the state or the people/masses, arose in acute forms for those who wished to be faithful to an emancipatory concep-

tion of politics. Invariably, the contradiction was resolved in favour of the state. Today the party form must be transcended as it is statist in essence.

On political parties

The failure of social democracy in the West like the failures of the developmentalist project in the South and of 'actually existing socialism' in the East, have forced us to re-think human emancipation. All these were state projects. Central to this new emancipatory project must be a different understanding of politics in which the state is not the source of all wisdom and for which people are capable of exercising thought as active citizens. It seems that in Africa it is only on the basis of such an active citizenship independent of the state that a genuinely national consensus can be achieved and that a civic normative order can be gradually constructed. In the absence of this, only a state-consensus is possible in conjunction with the indifference and alienation of the majority from national formal state politics, as is clearly the norm today where, in addition, political parties have become vehicles for the enrichment of elites rather than links between society and state.

While in Europe this de-politicisation of politics has become evident perhaps since the crisis of social democracy, in Africa, popular disaffection with politicians and hence parties has been longstanding. It has been apparent on the continent that political parties, rather than being links between civil society and the state as maintained by liberal democratic theory, have become state agencies for placing members of dominant social groups into powerful state posts with the consequent reproduction of an extremely powerful and corrupt elite, which is seen quite apparently as accumulating at the people's expense through access to state resources. Parties in Africa often end up being instruments for reproducing sectarianism at the expense of the national interest, so much has been evident since the struggles of the 1980s for the so-called 'second liberation' of Africa (Ake 2002). In actual fact of course, the liberal conception of political parties which sees these parties as links between the state and civil society, is premised on the view that the state domain is the exclusively legitimate domain of politics. If society were itself to be politicised through the expansion of a genuinely popular domain of politics, then it could be that political parties as presently organised become redundant, or at the very least contested as the exclusive form of *political* organisation.

In fact, Hannah Arendt made the main point, which I am stressing here, long ago, namely that parties must be understood fundamentally as state institutions:

> parties, because of their monopoly of nomination, cannot be regarded as popular organs, but [...] are, on the contrary, the very efficient instruments

through which the power of the people is curtailed and controlled [...] Hence, from the very beginning, the party as an institution presupposed either that the citizen's participation in public affairs was guaranteed by other public organs, or that such participation was not necessary and that the newly admitted strata of the population should be content with representation, or, finally, that all political questions in the welfare state are ultimately problems of administration, to be handled and decided by experts, *in which case even the representatives of the people hardly possess an authentic area of action, but are administrative officers, whose business, though in the public interest, is not essentially different from the business of private management* (Arendt 1963: 269, 272, emphasis added).

This statement acquires even more relevance today when the difference between public and private management has virtually disappeared. Now, if it is true that politics has been evacuated from political parties and the state and the evidence to this effect seems rather convincing, we need to ask the question of whether politics has now been embodied in NGOs and social movements or whether it has disappeared altogether from social life. In order to begin to approach this question, even before we can investigate it empirically (something well beyond the scope of this paper), we need to construct an alternative to the distinction between state and civil society, a distinction which, because it is embodied in neo-liberalism, is therefore also embodied in state politics, in other words within the problematic of 'governance'.

This can be done by stressing a distinction between different forms and domains of politics characteristic of the state and of the elite/ruling class who are associated with it on the one hand (elite politics, state politics, dominant/hegemonic politics, etc.), and those domains and forms of politics practised by those excluded from and oppressed/coerced by it on the other (popular politics, subaltern politics etc.). This distinction must be undertaken on the basis of the social relations, cultural practices and discourses within which each exists. This is the view taken for example by Partha Chatterjee and his colleagues in India who have analysed the relations between state politics and subaltern politics, and it is the view taken here (Chatterjee and Pandey 1992). Chatterjee (1993: 12) notes for example that, in the case of India, 'each domain [of politics] has not only acted in opposition to and as a limit upon the other but, through this process of struggle, has also shaped the emergent form of the other'.

In general, it can be argued that the fundamental reason for the difference between the politics of the hegemonic groups and those of the subaltern groups in society is related to the role which the state itself plays in each. In particular, the ruling classes and groups establish their hegemony through the state and hence through one form or other of authoritarian, bureaucratic or administrative political practice. These various forms of politics are by

their very nature state-founded politics, if not wholly *étatiste* in nature. Such a politics not only restricts democracy in one way or another and to some degree or other but channels it within formalistic exercises which empty its content while retaining its shell. These kinds of politics may differ along a continuum between say liberal democracy and dictatorship, but they always exhibit elements of a bureaucratic or authoritarian practice, simply by virtue of the fact that they are founded on the modern regime of power. The managerialist politics which have become hegemonic in the public spheres of today's liberal democracies, as well as in multinational organisations such as the United Nations and so on, are evident examples of this.

The hegemonic project of the ruling classes or groups therefore is founded on a politics which is structurally and fundamentally undemocratic (irrespective of the complex contradictions between various interests or positions within the state apparatuses), as it has to manage state rule bureaucratically. Its undemocratic nature may be more or less tempered and restricted by popular pressures and especially democratic prescriptions emanating from within society. These subaltern forms of politics emanating from within society are clearly contradictory, including as they do both authoritarian as well as democratic forms of politics and may be expressed in completely different representational forms from those associated with the modern state (religious, 'traditional', literary, theatrical, etc.), but they may possibly form a distinct domain of a counter-hegemonic project (Chatterjee 1993). If it is to be more than a state-centred project, this has to be founded on a popular-democratic politics and thus on a project for the democratisation of the state itself. Indeed it is an argument of this paper, that popular-democratic or *consistently democratic* politics are the kind of politics which are by their very nature emancipatory and which are of greatest interest to the majority of the people of Africa - the poor and the oppressed. The possibility for the development of emancipatory-democratic politics therefore will tend to be found primarily within the popular domain of politics as, despite the contradictions within it, the domain of state politics is founded on administrative, managerial and bureaucratic concerns, the nature of which is anything but democratic.

In his more recent work, Chatterjee (2004) extends the distinction between state and subaltern domains through expanding Foucault's notion of 'governmentality' which the latter distinguished from other forms of rule such as sovereignty (Foucault 2000: 220). For Chatterjee it was the emergence of 'mass democracies' in the twentieth century in the West which produced an entirely new distinction, that between citizens and populations. While the concept of 'citizen' carries an ethical connotation of participation in the sovereignty of the state and hence of claiming rights from the state, a

process through which the state secures legitimacy, under 'governmentality' the regime of power secures its legitimacy through:

> claiming to provide for the well-being of the population. Its mode of reasoning is not deliberative openness but rather an instrumental notion of costs and benefits. Its apparatus is not the republican assembly but an elaborate network of surveillance through which information is collected on every aspect of the population that is to be looked after (Chatterjee 2004: 34).

Thus, populations do not bear any inherent moral claims. Ideas of participatory citizenship fell by the wayside in the twentieth century and gradually 'the business of government has been emptied of all serious engagement with politics' (ibid: 35). Of course one can see this as central to European social democratic norms and to the state in Africa, where governmentality had predated the existence of the nation state under colonialism, along with what Cowen and Shenton (1996) have called 'trusteeship'. The latter was the idea that an agency, in this case the state, sees itself as entrusted to act on behalf of others for their own benefit. We have then a post-colonial state born into governmentality so to speak, so that in addition to stressing notions of citizenship and nation-building, it also becomes understandable how 'delivery' can be seen today as the main legitimising feature of the post-apartheid state in South Africa for example. Not only was this the case, but in adopting technical strategies for modernisation and development, 'older ethnographic concepts often entered the field of knowledge about populations – as convenient descriptive categories for classifying groups of people into suitable targets for administrative, legal, economic or electoral policy' (ibid: 37). Hence, the importance of 'tribes' or religious groups in most of Africa and that of 'races' in South Africa today as objects of policy.

On social movements

Given the decline and loss of legitimacy of political parties, how then are we to understand the relationship between popular movements and politics, between the social movements of what Hardt and Negri (2001) call 'multitudes', and politics? Hardt and Negri's idealisation of spontaneity imbues the 'multitudes' with the same qualities of a historical subject with which Marx had endowed the proletariat. The 'multitudes' are to be the saviours of humanity, a position largely adhered to also by Samir Amin (Amin and Sridhar 2002). This is quite unconvincing, simply because the politics of many 'multitudes' are still imbued with insurrectionist assumptions for example, a form of politics inherited uncritically from our statist past, as insurrections were meant to take over state power. In any case there can be no historical subject if we are to be consistently anti-humanist. The existence of social movements is not in itself sufficient evidence of an emancipatory alternative, and

in any case it is in the character of such movements to rise and fall as their concerns become difficult to sustain. What is required in addition to recognising the importance of social movements, is the development, both in theory and in practice, of an emancipatory politics, something which is not simply given by capitalist society.

South Africa is the one African country where the study of social movements is the most developed today. Yet, for the most part, these movements seem to be concerned above all with protesting about the slow pace of state 'delivery' of housing, land, water, electricity, etc., along with the commercialisation of these resources, rather than with providing an alternative vision of society. References to 'socialism' are still left undefined while little attempt so far is made to construct an alternative in practice. The argument of these movements therefore seems to be one which stresses the lack of integration of communities into the capitalist system rather than an alternative to that system. At the same time the economic character of their demands seems to lend these movements a class character to the delight of those wishing to see a 'working class' everywhere (see for example, Alexander 2005). The South Africa literature still seems to either romanticise social movements (Desai and Pithouse 2003), or to maintain that to have so far failed to organise a political party is an indication of the lack of progress of such movements (Ballard et al. 2005). On the other hand, Barchiesi (2005: 237) notes much more accurately that traditional 'class-based discourses and practices retain a crucial relevance for community movements that are contesting the neo-liberalisation of the South African transition'. Yet he observes that, given the context of a collapse in wage-employment, 'organizations, emancipatory visions and social claims based on wage-labour are in crisis'. We should add 'sociological theories' to this list. Given this economic situation, and given the growing cynicism with regard to the incumbents of state power, 'classism' has lost much of its explanatory and political relevance. The difficulty has been that there is as yet little to replace it with.

In sum, so far it appears difficult for these movements and their intellectual supporters to think beyond statist or 'classist' political solutions, a perspective more and more at odds with social reality. Clearly, if oppression gives rise to resistance, and we follow Foucault in maintaining that power is a relation which always includes resistance, then the occurrence of resistance is simply part of the oppressive system itself. It should also be recalled that, for Marx, capital was a social relation of exploitation and that this relation was the essence of the capitalist mode of production, with the result that the fact of worker resistance was, for him, inherently part of the capitalist system itself. Labour unions were precisely an expression of such resistance. Current popular movements are not necessarily breaking with capitalism,

while the latter has shown an uncanny ability to adapt itself to the pressures of 'new social movements' (women's movements, environmentalism etc.), in not altogether different ways through which it had adapted itself to the old. In other words there is nothing inherent in social movements themselves which *necessarily* bears an emancipatory potential, let alone a project. In fact, when social movements are simply oppositional, simply *against* what exists, or clamour for state 'delivery', they can easily be demobilised and incorporated. The appropriation of the discourse of popular participation by the World Bank constitutes yet further evidence of this process of the 'infinite flexibility' of capital (Cooke and Kothari 2002). From an emancipatory perspective, the point must be that movements have to propose something new, something additional, some alternative way of life. They must be 'for' something and not simply 'against' what exists. It is only in this way that they can hold the potential for developing an emancipatory mode of politics. I have noted that one historical constant in Africa has been an assertion of an alternative moral order, a conception of a moral community, a community of active citizens. More critical analyses are necessary in order to elicit the existence of such a perspective or something similar to it, among current social movements.

Insofar as political organisation today is concerned, Badiou (2005c) argues that it needs to be fundamentally distinguished from state forms. In particular this means re-thinking political organisation beyond the party form, which fundamentally operates with a state subjectivity. Political parties have the monopoly of political knowledge (the party line); in order to re-think the politics of emancipation in Africa, we need to develop an understanding of political organisations which do not have such a monopoly and in particular the links between political organisation and political movements need to be rethought; these cannot be allowed to reproduce the role of the party or state as the sole fountain of knowledge and power if an emancipatory conception of development is to be developed. In this sense the notion of 'participatory development' which is commonly used as an alternative to the state-driven process is so vague that it covers an array of practices. The various initiatives reviewed in the work of Wignaraja and others on India (where they seem to be furthest developed) do seem to be attempting to develop a logic which is not statist and where community struggles are able to build: 'alternative grassroots processes [which] can serve to reinforce democratic and political processes, and help building structures with social justice built into them' (1990: 103). Yet at the same time, it is clear that such community initiatives are often dependent on a state which is willing to provide a 'political space', an 'enabling environment' for popular mobilisation. Both a truly democratic state which is sensitive to the development of a popularly founded active

citizenship as well as such an active citizenship itself are apparently needed for an alternative emancipatory conception of development to be possible. Today this environment is being sought in a 'human rights culture' but, as we have seen, this has the opposite effect of reproducing a culture of 'anti-politics'. The potential tyrannical conception of 'community participation' and its takeover by World Bank discourse already noted above, has its roots in the common ideological weakness of popular organisations (Cooke and Kothari 2002).

At this stage, we need to mention the basic condition for an emancipatory politics which as a matter of fact is not always in existence. Zizek (1999: 187-91) has recently discussed this in the work of the post-Althusserian philosophers Balibar, Rancière and Badiou. For Rancière (1995) the political moment is that when those with no place in society, not only demanded that their voice be heard in the 'public sphere' on an equal footing with those in power, but moreover also see themselves as the representatives of the whole of society, for the true universality. Thus Zizek notes, 'political conflict designates the tension between the structured social body in which each part has its place, and "the part of no part" which unsettles this order on account of the empty principle of universality' (ibid.: 188). This is what Balibar (1994: 47) refers to as 'equaliberty', the absolute equality of men as thinking beings, or the 'equation of man and citizen'.

We are now in a better position to distinguish a truly *political* struggle for rights from an appeal for human rights. A prescriptive demand for rights only becomes emancipatory when, in addition to being fought for by active citizens, it makes a universal appeal. Badiou puts it as follows:

> The theme of equal rights is really progressive and really political, that is, emancipatory, only if it finds its arguments in a space open to everyone, a space of universality. If not, despite all the apparent radicalism a community puts into its system of demands, we have a profound submission to the figure of the state [...] (Badiou 1994: 9).

For Badiou politics begins when people (anyone) are militantly faithful to the kinds of events mentioned by Zizek; in his own words: 'politics begins when one decides not to represent victims [...] but to be faithful to those events during which victims politically assert themselves' (Badiou 1985: 75). It goes without saying that such events include popular upsurges throughout the world and particularly, in our context, the popular struggles for national liberation of which one of the most recent was that in South Africa in the mid-1980s (Neocosmos 1998; Van Kessel 2000). Being faithful to such events, means not giving up on the truths of such events, on the new apparently impossible world which such events foretell (Badiou 2001a; Hallward 2004).

What such events mean is that possibilities now appear as truly possible whereas before they could not be conceived. For example, who would have thought before the Haitian revolution in 1804 that slaves could not only rebel but could defeat both French and British armies to acquire control over their own nation? Who would have thought that Mexican peasants could have created a better world in 1910? Or who would have thought that the people of South Africa would have overthrown the oppressive apartheid state themselves as a result of their own political endeavours? In all these cases and in many others, an egalitarian emancipatory vision was crucial to success. In this way, politics becomes 'the art of the impossible', of making possible what appears as a 'void' from within current knowledge. 'Another world' is indeed possible but it can only be so on the basis of the re-invention of an emancipatory politics appropriate to our conditions.

Concluding remarks

While the statism of twentieth century development discourses is clear today, not far from the surface also lurked a humanism for which there was nothing which 'Man' was incapable of. A better world could be built by 'Man' through the state. This was a humanism with a project. Today no one denies the importance of the relationship between development and democracy. The problem is that in the overwhelming majority of cases, democracy is reduced to its liberal hegemonic type, or a variant of it. Development as a national emancipatory project has been replaced in Africa and most of the South by human rights discourse, a humanism for which the people of Africa are no longer subjects but only pathetic victims (of authoritarianism, of the market, of natural disasters). Thus, humanism in the twenty-first century has so far been a humanism without a project (statist or otherwise). Citizenship has been reduced to being a client of NGOs. Without a critique of this political liberalism, there can be no emancipatory development, no human emancipation at all. At most, struggles for human rights today seem concerned with incorporation into the existing system, and do not provide a way to transform it. This critique therefore requires both the re-appropriation of a notion of 'active citizenship' as well as the theorisation of a political subject. It is the broad outlines of such a critique which have been attempted here.

While it has been argued that a concept of social citizenship is central today to resolve the contradiction between a coercive state and the existence of a moral community, it was suggested that such social citizenship can only be understood as active citizenship. Moreover, active citizenship cannot on its own provide an emancipatory vision for the future, yet it must provide the conditions of existence of an emancipatory politics, a politics which needs to be thought from scratch in order to distance itself from state politics. The

development of such a politics is still in its infancy; its sites and possible existence in practice have still to be investigated, while its theorisation only now becomes possible. What is certain is that development and emancipation must be brought back together if we are to remain faithful to the pan-African emancipatory vision of the African people.

Of all the rights ascribed to humanity, one of the most important, arguably that which distinguishes us from mere biological beings and thus that which makes us truly human, is systematically denied by human rights discourse: this is the right to think. The right to think is denied by denying the possibility of anything different to the consensus of a one way thought (*la pensée unique*), of anything different to what exists. As a community activist recently stated in South Africa:

> The leaders [of the country] are saying that it is them who know everything and that the majority of the people can't think. We are saying that everyone can think (South African activist, cited in Desai and Pithouse 2003:17).

This must be the starting point of a different conception of politics. As stressed by Lazarus (1996) who founds a whole theory of political practice on this axiomatic principle, people are capable of thought, of producing truths. As acclaimed recently by Badiou and his friends (*La Distance Politique* 2005: 3-4):

> When all is said and done, the issue in contention concerns the freedom to think; [...] in electoral systems there is no freedom of thought. There is only a freedom to hold opinions. This means the freedom to support those in power (in agreement with the government) or those in the opposition (unhappy with the government) and that is all [...] Politics is not an opinion or a consciousness, it is a thought which fixes new possibilities [...] In politics it is better to achieve freedom through thought rather than to be constrained by opinions.

In Africa, the struggle for freedom today is not about joining 'the community of civilised nations' nor is it about 'good governance', these simply restrict thought to that of the consensus of the new empire; rather this struggle is about reclaiming the right to think.

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Whither African Development? A Preparatory for an African Alternative Reformulation of the Concept of Development

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Abstract

Intended as a preparatory for an African alternative reformulation of the concept of development, this paper problematises Africa's development experience in order to understand the impasse that has characterised it. Three major concerns are addressed: first, development is historically examined as a politically violent and oppressive, culturally deterministic and economically exploitative paradigm operating on a flawed logic. Second, it discusses the reconceptualisation of development as a global project in the current era of neoliberal globalisation, and considers why problems of African development cannot be solved within the context of this equally flawed and problematic reformulation. Finally, the paper proposes ways in which development, rather than abandoned, might be reclaimed so as to allow for reformulations of indigenous African alternatives; that is, reformulated and anchored in indigenous conceptions of social provisioning and the individual's position within a community.

Résumé

Elaboré comme préalable à la reformulation alternative du concept de développement, cet article pose la problématique de l'expérience du développement en Afrique dans le but de comprendre l'impasse le caractérisant. Trois grandes préoccupations y sont exposées : en premier lieu, le développement est examiné sur le plan historique en tant que paradigme politique violent et oppresseur, culturellement déterministe et économiquement exploiteur, opérant à partir d'une logique défectueuse. En deuxième lieu, l'auteur y discute de la reconceptualisation du développement en tant que projet planétaire à cette époque actuelle de mondialisation néolibérale et s'interroge sur la question de savoir pourquoi les problèmes de développement ne peuvent être résolus dans le

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contexte de cette reformulation également défectueuse de la problématique. Enfin, cette étude propose des moyens de réaménager le développement de manière à permettre des reformulations d'alternatives propres à l'Afrique. L'auteur avance qu'au lieu d'être complètement abandonné, le développement doit être repris et reformulé, et enraciné dans des conceptions endogènes d'action sociale et de position de l'être humain au sein d'une communauté.

Introduction

The concept of development, both as an intellectual property and practical enterprise, is in crisis. Though diagnosed to be so for some time now, the stark realities and scale of this crisis increasingly became apparent during the Third World debt crisis in the 1980s, a crisis that has continued and has become even more apparent and glaring in the current era of globalisation. Development was the magic word that gave purpose and a sense of mission to Third World leaders of whatever political and ideological persuasion, especially at the dawn of political independence from colonial rule. In Africa for example, it was the word that undergirded the independence struggle and became an organising ethos around which societies were galvanised and through which processes of social transformation leading to the constitution of new societies were imagined. However, fifty years later, that dream, together with the promise that it represented, has remained largely unfulfilled, as an empty promise, an elusive quest, as Jonathan Crush (1995: 3) calls it. Wolfgang Sachs has pointedly captured this elusiveness in the following words:

> Today, the lighthouse [of development] shows cracks and is starting to crumble. The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crimes have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work. Moreover, the historical conditions which catapulted the idea into prominence have vanished: development has become outdated. But above all, the hopes and desires which made the idea fly, are now exhausted: development has grown obsolete (Sachs 1992: 1).

In retrospect, development, especially in its problematic form discussed below, was perhaps never really a useful concept for the productive organisation of human society, nor was it a concept around which the processes and practices of socioeconomic transformation and human emancipation in the so-called Third World, especially Africa, could be imagined, constructed and realised. As such, it is highly problematic to continue insisting on development, especially in its historical and current problematic form 'as the harbinger of human emancipation' (Tucker 1999: 1). This is so because the world

is replete with practical examples and implications of its failures and unattainability.

The main preoccupations of this paper are three-fold. First, it seeks to historically evaluate the implications of the concept of development on social reproduction in Africa and to interrogate the nature and forms of African development in order to understand the impasse that has characterised development processes on the continent. Second, it aims to demonstrate how the reconceptualisation of development as a global, private sector-led project will not lead to any qualitative change in the impasse of African development. Finally, this paper will seek to identify ways in which development might be reclaimed in order to allow for reformulations of indigenous African alternatives. In that sense, this paper is intended as a preparatory for developing alternative African reformulations of development, both as a theoretical construct and a practical enterprise. It seeks to propose a clarification of the possibilities for a reconceptualisation of development that promotes the embedding of processes and practises of social transformation on the continent in the lived social realities of the region and its people.

Mapping the contours of development

Development has variously been described as a 'social myth' (Tucker 1999) and an 'elusive concept'(Crush 1995: 3). Historically, development has functioned as a mechanism for socioeconomic control, and politically, as an elitist project and practice of control, domination and exercise of power. As Crush points out, development is a powerful language which has historically functioned as a tool to reorder space, imagine and transform societies, rewrite socioeconomic and political landscapes and replace one reality with another. It has also functioned as the language through which people are constructed as projects to be acted upon, and placed in wretched categories needing the 'redemptive' power of modernity (Crush 1995).

Though theories of development date back to the nineteenth century and development itself was explicitly instituted as a political project in the post-Second World War era, its historical roots originated in earlier European thought: the Enlightenment conception of 'progress' and the Promethean self-conception of European civilisation (McMichael 2004: 286). Europe's self-righteous over-glorification owing to its emergence as the world's leading capitalist power led to the unreflective comparison of their civilisation with others they had succeeded in dominating. This process in turn produced 'a *particularistic* conception of modernity that they [Europeans] *universalised* as human destiny'(ibid, emphasis in original). As a language and practice of conceptualising social transformation, development was instituted as a

political project when the United States, under Harry S. Truman's presidency, decided to make it a key aspect of its global vision in 1949.

Emerging as the dominant power out of the Second World War, the United States envisioned a world in its own image. The world would be united under US leadership: the ideology of *One Worldism*, initiated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, would allow for the reconstruction of the economies of Europe and Japan devastated by the war. Politically, it would find expression in the United Nations as a unifying entity, while its economic dimensions would be handled by the Bretton Woods institutions. The intensification of the Cold War between the US-led Western bloc and the Soviet-led Eastern bloc, however, clouded this American imperial vision and led to the redefinition of the concept to *Free Worldism* and *development* under Harry Truman. This, in the words of McMichael,

> ... marked the rise of a US-centred world economy in which American governments deployed military and economy largesse to secure and expand an informal empire as [formal] colonialism receded. With the West's focus now on containing Soviet and Chinese power, the development project settled on the twin foundations of *freedom of enterprise* and the *US dollar as the international currency*. In this arrangement, bilateral disbursements of dollars wove together the principal national economies of the West and Japan. As a source of these dollars, the US Federal Reserve System led those countries' central banks in regulating an international monetary system (McMichael 2004: 74).

This process took place, inter alia, within the context of the Cold War ideological battles between the West and the East. Under such conditions, Truman, according to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, instituted the development project as a mechanism to fight the spread of communism which the US portrayed, in the words of Catherine Caufield, as a 'false philosophy which has made such headway throughout the world, misleading many peoples and adding to their sorrows and their difficulties' (Caufield 1996, cited in Nustad 201: 480-81). The United States, whose founding fathers had constructed it as an ethical, ideological, economic and political 'beacon on the hill', found an opportunity, in the words of Sachs, to give worldwide dimensions to their mission through discourses of development and modernisation (Sachs 1992: 1). These discourses informed the assumptions of modernisation theories in the postwar period. Modernisation expected the Third World to live through the mirror image of the United States and the West. This was what the United States, in fact Western development assistance to the Third World, was intended to achieve in conjunction with the aim of winning allies and forestalling the spread of Soviet influence. As Sachs points out, 'development' was 'the frame of reference for ... [the] mixture of generosity, bribery and oppression which

has characterised the policies [of the United States and the West] towards the South. [And] for almost half a century, good neighbourliness on the planet was conceived in the light of 'development'" (ibid). Since the US constructed itself as the model, it was assumed that the so-called 'underdeveloped areas' could only overcome poverty, attain development and become modern if they mimicked the US and the West. But part of the problematic of this thinking was the underlying cultural deterministic assumption, in the crudest form, that blamed indigenous cultures for the perceived 'backwardness' of 'underdeveloped' societies: modernisation in the so-called Third World had to be achieved through overcoming 'the traditional' understood in Enlightenment terms as not only the opposite of modernity but also as an impediment to 'progress'. This thinking underlay Truman's notion of 'underdeveloped areas' which itself connoted outmoded 'backwardness' that should be overcome through modernisationist development interventions. This was the basis of modernisation theories and approaches to development.

Truman's policy has also been described as a strategy for not only the recolonisation of the ongoing anti-colonial movements at the time, but also as a mechanism for the perpetual colonisation of the imagination of non-Western societies and an instrument for controlling their social realities (Esteva 1992). In fact, as Esteva points out, by merely pronouncing development interventions as a policy, Truman, immediately defined the reality of and actually 'underdeveloped' a diverse and hitherto heterogeneous group of people around the world, homogenising them by their placement in a narrowly defined category of the 'underdeveloped.' This process in turn, robbed billions of their true identity, and transformed them into 'an inverted mirror of other's reality: a mirror that belittles them and sends them off to the end of the queue' (ibid). In this sense therefore, 'development' should be regarded as 'an invention and strategy produced by the "First World" about the "underdevelopment" of the 'Third World ... [and] the primary mechanism through which the Third World has been imagined and [made to] imagine itself, thus marginalising or precluding other ways of seeing or doing' (Escobar 1995a: 212; Escobar 1995b).

The idea of 'developing' the 'underdeveloped areas' of the Third World operated on the same logic of previous Eurocentric cultural imperialist narratives of bringing 'progress' and 'civilisation' to 'primitive' and 'backward' cultures, the crudest form of which found expression in the 'Whiteman's burden'. In this thinking, instrumental rationality was completely essentialised as the justification for human progress (Sardar 1999: 44). The ideal of 'progress' and the dominant discourse surrounding it thus became the operative apparatus of the language of modernity, and also the cultural and political project that justified certain practices while delegitimising others. It sti-

fled other world views, ways of life, being and knowing and placed an unrealistic expectation on non-Western societies to 'catch-up' with the advanced European economic models. It also encouraged the reification of crude economistic and bland mechanistic conceptions of 'progress' which valued economic logic over other indigenous socioeconomic practices as well as cultural and environmental concerns.

Development however, it should be pointed out, is not only about Western exercise of power over the Third World. It is also a political property and controlling instrument of the Third World states and their ruling elites who have arrogated the responsibility of developing societies to themselves. As Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard point out, African and Asian leaders 'positioned themselves to broker relationships among diverse societies, world markets, and international organisations' (Cooper and Packard 1997: 9). The development discourse was not therefore only about how language is used to justify Western exploitation and control of non-Western societies, nor was it only about Western subordination of non-Western societies and belief systems, it was also about the complicity of Third World elites in that very process of Western exploitation and domination and in the violence which accompanied the cultural imposition that employs the language of development. The often uncritical consumption, absorption and somewhat whole-scale internalisation of Eurocentric ideas of progress, social and economic organisations by Third World elites, have very much been part of the crimes and tragedies of development in the Third World. Eurocentrism, as Ziauddin Sardar rightly points out,

> ... is not simply *out there* – in the West. It is also *in here* – in the non-West. As a concept and worldview, the West has colonised the intellectuals in non-European societies. Eurocentrism is thus just as rampant and deep in non-Western societies as in Europe and the USA: intellectuals, academics, writers, thinkers, novelists, politicians and decision-makers in Asia, Africa and Latin America use the West, almost instinctively, as the standard for judgement and as the yardstick for measuring the social and political progress of their own societies (1999: 44).

These leaders are therefore implicated or complicit in the uncritical promotion of Eurocentric ideas and in the perpetuation of cultural violence against their own people. Indeed the reproduction of Eurocentrism or Westernism, be it wittingly or unwittingly, has therefore also been a non-Western practice, as the non-West 'colludes in its own victimisation as well as in maintaining the global system of inequality' (Sardar 1999: 44). The processes of subordination and domination therefore have to be understood in diffused contexts: from the North and within the North, to the South but also within the South. Similarly, and perhaps more importantly, the unmasking of South-

ern complicity in the power relations that reproduces its own victimisation should be central to quests for understanding not only development failure in the Third World, but also attempts at seeking alternative reformulations.

Africa and the elusive quest for development

> 'Now you look me with a scorn, [when] you eat up all my corn'.
> – Bob Marley, 'Crazy Baldheads'

In Africa, the quest for development which accompanied the struggle for political independence, and which continued to dominate the organising ideals of post-independence African societies proved problematic in paradigmatic ways. First, embedded in the concepts and practices of development was the promotion of Westernisation and the privileging of Eurocentric concepts, approaches and models over possible African or other non-Western alternatives. Development was originally packaged as part of the practice and process of transforming and rescuing African societies, which had been constructed as 'backward' and 'primitive' by European colonialists, from their 'primitivity' and 'backwardness,' through modernisation, technological advancement, economic growth and Westernisation. This became, and has remained, the main focus, practise and conceptualisation of development in Africa.

Although there were alternative problematics of and approaches to addressing questions of social transformation and advancement especially in the Third World in general, those concepts and approaches operated on a teleological basis, couched in conceptual languages that privileged and equated development with European progressivism: the end product of any development effort, it was assumed, must be Western-type modernity, economic advancement, and industrialisation. For example, although African states, through the Third World movement, frequently questioned and at times even challenged the legitimacy and dominance of the West in global economic affairs, and the left's critique – seen in the Marxist, dependencia and world systems approaches of the standard modernisation discourses of development – provided alternative conceptions for examining questions of global inequality, exploitation and 'underdevelopment', but they, without question, still accepted this European model of modernisation as foundational, and sought in vain to replicate it in the South (Tucker 1999; Duffield 2001: 22-30).

African elites were especially complicit in this project. They did not seek to thoroughly problematise the Eurocentric foundations of development, or seek to understand that the language of development understood along such clearly Eurocentric lines was in itself implicated in the process of domination of, and the cultural violence that had been inflicted on indigenous social

life and cultures. African statesmen like Senegal's negritude leader, Leopold Sedar Senghor, or Ghana's pan-Africanist champion, Kwame Nkrumah, as 'Africanist' as they were, still held conceptions of socialism and ideas of organising society influenced by Eurocentric conceptions of progress and modernity. Scientific socialism (itself an alternative modernisation approach but of a socialist type) for example, was accepted as an alternative approach that would allow the development of egalitarian societies in Africa, but that quest would be pursued and thought of in 'rational' economistic and Eurocentric terms. Despite the talk of Africanism, and the need for a synthesis of Western and African cultures and ways of life, development in Africa, to a very large extent, in practice, was simply equated to Westernisation and the vulgarisation (or the misrepresentation and confusion at best) of indigenous social life, traditions and cultures. Julius Nyerere's experiment with 'African socialism', for example, is a case in point. Ujamaa was supposed to be a humanist African socialist project, conceived of with the best intentions, yet it ended up being a failure partly because its claims to 'Africanism' were somewhat imbued with Eurocentric and Western conceptions of progress.

Second, the context within which development interventions took place, created the conditions for failure. Development was a function of asymmetrical power relations between 'rich' and powerful Western states and 'development' agencies like the World Bank on the one hand, and 'poor' and weak neo-colonial African states on the other. It served as a mechanism for the operation of neo-colonialism and a tool for winning Cold War allies in the region. Development aid was not neutral in these power relations: it was an instrument for the projection of the foreign policy objectives of the donor countries on the continent. Within the context of the Cold War and the clientelist politics which developed out of it, political rationality gained precedence over the socioeconomic needs of targeted populations.[1] Most of the aid therefore ended up going to Cold-War client regimes, no matter how corrupt and authoritarian they were.

However, even within this context, development assistance ended up benefiting the donor countries more than it did the recipients: it created jobs for their nationals, opened up avenues for the exporting of their world views to the continent and promoted the sale of their products and equipment, etc. In most cases, the bulk of the development assistance was spent on administration (for example, salaries of foreign expatriates), and what was considered technical like planning and surveys, rather than on the actual implementation of the earmarked projects. Quite frequently, the donor countries, through their 'experts' who supervised development projects, were not only ignorant about social conditions and local cultures in the targeted countries, but in

fact held certain abstract conceptions of modernist progress and how it could be achieved. Outcomes would be assumed and the processes through which they were achieved decided upon well before the actual interventions took place. As a result, development interventions, more often than not, became predicated, not on local social conditions and the lived realities of the targeted populations, but on some abstract and a priori conceptions of progress far removed from local realities. The arrogance of foreign governments and their experts in thinking that they knew what was best for African states and the communities in whose lives they intervened, created the condition for failure. It placed enormous constraints on local actors as they grappled with the restrictions imposed on them by the donor states and the development agencies providing the assistance. Development aid was therefore often times self-serving.

Third, and illustrating the abstract and a priori conception referred to above, development was conceptualised only in 'rational' economistic terms. It privileged economic growth and the logic of the market over social provisioning and indigenous cultural, environmental and societal concerns. The excessive attention which was given to the presupposed transition from one extremity (underdevelopment), as V. Y. Mudimbe calls it, to the other (development), was not only highly misleading but it also created the condition for failure (Mubimbe 1988: 4). In fact, the placing of an unnecessary emphasis on formulating techniques of economic change tended to neglect the very structural impediments embedded in the colonial state. These structural weaknesses and defects were inherited by the emerging African state, some of which could not easily be overcome within the contexts of the asymmetrical global material conditions and power relations which underpinned Africa's relations with the West. Development therefore became reductionist, discriminating and deterministic. Anything that did not fall within what was considered rational economic activity mediated by Western conceptions of political economy was considered irrelevant. Thus, in accounting for productive economic activities for example, 'Women, assigned to household [or who worked in the fields], would not be counted, and indigenous peasants, nomads, and forest dwellers could be marginalized or displaced as unproductive' (McMichael 2004). This reductionism then subjugated the fortunes, ways of life and the processes of social provisioning of whole population groups and communities to the logic of the economy, or the market, a process that also determined their social standing and economic well-being (ibid). Economic determinism which stressed the rendering of the environment to economic pursuits placed enormous pressures on the fragile eco-system resulting in a cumulative deterioration of the physical environment as pressures for industrial development, urbanisation, mechanisation of agriculture,

and infrastructural development like road building, led to environmental degradation, erosion, drought, famine and desertification (ibid: 281). It also excluded and further marginalised already excluded groups (for example, women, the elderly etc.) and imposed an alien model which affected social cohesion.

Fourth, the language of development provided a convenient excuse for the political elites to stifle dissent, pillage the national treasury and slide into authoritarianism. Development was defined as a national public sector project, and it fell under the purview of African governments as their avowed mission. It energised these leaders and gave them a sense of mission and purpose. It was the responsibility of the African governments to imagine new societies and transform old ones. However, framing quests for development in such a language also gave power to these governments to define, control and discipline their populations. Everywhere in Africa, development was used as a self-interested and coercive instrument for political control. More often than not, the allocation of economic resources and the provisioning of social services would be determined, not by necessity and need, but by political expediency and greed. Recalcitrant populations, that is, those perceived as not supporting the government of the day (for example, supporters of the political opposition), would be punished and disciplined by being deprived of government funding for necessary projects and access to essential social amenities, while populations or communities deemed as amenable to supporting the governing party would be rewarded, even if the earmarked projects sometimes proved utterly useless because of the unsuitability of their location. In fact, in most African countries, the language of development provided the leverage for descent into authoritarianism and one party dictatorship.

The argument behind the adoption of one party states in Africa was the logic that there was a need for newly independent states to channel the creative energies of their citizens and utilise them in national development which was deemed, as problematic as it was, as the primary purpose of the state, and to which every political party aspired, rather than wasting that energy by engaging in the divisive politics that came with multi-party systems, divisions that would affect the realisation of development goals. What this meant in practice was the foreclosure of alternative avenues for questioning dominant political and social formations. It also meant frowning on dissent and a descent to authoritarianism. The 'almighty' Kwame Nkrumah for example, was impatient with anybody who did not share his vision for Ghana, and this led him to become increasingly dictatorial towards the end of his reign. It is in this sense that development becomes a handmaiden to power with the discourse surrounding it serving the interests of the powerful (ibid: 284).

The problematic nature of African development derives partly from the foreignness of the concept, its practice, its exploitative, its oppressive and its particular political form, which has allowed first the West, and then African elites, to define social relations and phenomena on the continent, and dominate other alternatives practices like indigenous understandings of social provisioning, economic relations and ecological conservation. Africa was not 'underdeveloped' or 'poor' before Europe defined it as thus. As Escobar points out, its people did not even always see themselves as 'underdeveloped' (Escobar 1995a: 213). Similarly, there were various clear indigenous understandings of the environment and methods of ecological conservation. Yet, today, Africa is not only a land of unimaginable poverty and 'underdevelopment', but is also the site of increasing environmental degradation and distress.

These definitions themselves, which now form the standard litany of discourses of African political economy, derive from two major sources, a material process that expropriates, in conjunction with a discursive practice that defines. These two processes should not however be considered as separate moments but rather as mutually reinforcing processes intertwined in a deep complicit relationship which perpetuates both exploitation and discursive and representational violence against Africa. As Jonathan Crush points out, it is important to understand that the discourse of development 'is [in fact] constituted and reproduced within a set of material relationships, activities, and powers' (Crush 1995: 6). Centuries of European or Western expropriation and exploitation of the resources of the continent has bred conditions of underdevelopment and incidents of dispossession. It has also stunted possibilities for social transformation, and engendered high levels of violence against indigenous populations both in psychological and physical forms. But perhaps more importantly, the discourses which emanated out of these material relations cemented the asymmetrical power relations. The power of the Western world to define material and social relations, realities, conditions and phenomena, has allowed them to construct, define and understand the non-West (especially Africa) in a particular way.

The power of the West, as Sardar points out, is not only located in its economic muscle and technological might, but also in its power to define. The West defines what is and what is not. All the non-Western world is left with is to either accept these definitions or find itself being defined out of existence (Sardar 1999: 44). For example, 'underdevelopment' as a condition of the South only acquired real discursive salience and became a part of the modernising language after President Harry Truman of the US presented it as the cornerstone of his policy (Gustavo Esteva 1992: 7). Soon afterwards, it became the clarion call for African nationalists like Julius Nyerere

and Kwame Nkrumah, who insisted on their right to not only rule themselves but to also 'develop' their societies.

Recognising the complicity of knowledge in power relations is very important in understanding the language surrounding the narratives of 'underdevelopment' in Africa. It shows how discursive practices, underlined by unequal material relations, have enabled the West to expropriate African resources, engineer conditions of 'underdevelopment,' define and construct African societies using concepts deeply etched in Eurocentric world views, and have created conditions for the internalisation of these categories by African elites in particular, regardless of political or ideological persuasions. This is a classical situation of, to paraphrase Bob Marley, treating someone with scorn after eating all their corn. Little wonder that Africa's experience with development was and has continued to be disappointing and the continent continues to wallow in poverty and 'underdevelopment'.

Problems of marginality and the intermediate space

Development failure in Africa is, moreover, in part, a result of marginality, which V. Y. Mudimbe has sought to understand and explain as a condition brought about by schizophrenic pairing of two or more dissimilar and unequal systems, ways of life, institutional practices and world views. This pairing was engineered by colonialism; a condition that has created an intermediate space between indigenous African traditions and European modernity, but to neither of which that intermediate space belongs (Mudimbe 1988: 4). It is in this diffused and intermediate space, situated between the definitional extremes of underdevelopment and development, the traditional and the modern, Mudimbe maintains, that social and economic events come to define the extent of marginality (ibid). This intermediate space illustrates the problems of underdevelopment by revealing

> ... the strong tension between a modernity that often is an illusion of development, and a tradition that sometimes reflects a poor image of itself. It also unveils the empirical evidence of this tension by showing concrete examples of development failures such as demographic imbalance, extraordinary high birth rates, progressive disintegration of classic family structure, illiteracy, severe social and economic disparities, dictatorial regimes functioning under the cathartic name of democracy, the breakdown of religious traditions, the constitution of syncretic churches, etc. (ibid: 5).

But marginality is also a result of the power of the narratives of modernity to delegitimise and disrupt indigenous processes and replace them (at least at the formal state-centric level) with modernist economistic conceptions privileging a new division of labour which depends on transnational economic flows and international markets (ibid: 4). This process of disruption

was, and continues to be maintained, by a sustained attack on, and the progressive destruction of, indigenous processes of economic production and social reproduction in areas such as agriculture, textile production and crafts. The quest for modernity initiated by colonialism and pursued in the post-independence era led to the destabilisation of indigenous customary organisations through the incoherent establishment of new social arrangements and institutions. Thus, demographic imbalances between the urban and rural areas due to a massive rural-urban migration and the growing of an urban proletariat, unemployed and marginalised urban youths, etc., are all markers of development failures, conditions that further reinforce marginality (ibid). Any call therefore, for reassessing programmes of modernity in Africa, must accordingly begin with understanding and unravelling this intermediate space, because it 'has been a great problem since the beginning of the colonising experience; rather than being a step in the imagined "evolutionary process", it has been the locus of paradoxes that called into question the modalities and implications of modernisation in Africa' (ibid: 5). These problems have made Africa's experience with the forms of development pursued disappointing and the impact of that disappointment for both society and ecology has been disastrous.

Globalisation and African development

When the crisis of the development paradigm became apparent in the 1980s, following the so-called Third World debt crisis, another discourse emerged. The decline, in the 1970s and 1980s, of the Third World as a 'homogenous' geographical bloc, and of Third Worldism as a powerful pressure group representing the concerns of Third World countries in global political and economic issues, coincided with a paradigm shift in the major Western capitalist countries and this made the deployment of a new language for conceptualising social transformation possible.[2] In much of the Third World, especially in Africa, the optimism which had surrounded the quest for development had given way to despair and disillusionment at the painful realisation that development was an illusory commodity. This period also coincided with the decline of the Soviet bloc and with it, that of socialism. These shifts engineered major economic restructurings in the major Western capitalist states and initiated processes of global structural transformation, now called globalisation. The discourses which developed out of these conditions were intended as a mechanism for the continued domination and control of the imagination of the non-Western world, which in turn allows for the continued exploitation of these societies and the control of their destinies.

The discourse of development was radically altered in line with this new thinking referred to above. Development, which had previously been thought

of as a state-managed industrialisation project, operating on the logic and strategy of mechanisation of agriculture and the construction of nationally protected markets, aided by both private sector investment and foreign development aid, was now redefined as a private sector-led global project operating on the logic of free trade and open markets. In the words of Phillip McMichael, development pursued through economic nationalism and protectionism, 'came to be viewed as limiting ... because it obstructed the transnational mobility of goods, money and firms, in the service of efficient allocation of global resources' (McMichael 2004: 152). But this clearly represented a self-interested argument by big business in the major industrialised capitalist countries.

The implementation of economic restructuring which targeted economic nationalistic arrangements and which involved the radical alteration and limitation, if not complete elimination, of government intervention both in the operation of the market and development processes, now came to be viewed not only as desirable but also as the only hope for the 'underdeveloped' world to remedy development failure, fight poverty and achieve economic growth and development. Development would therefore become a global project driven by market mechanisms and processes managed by powerful multilateral institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Discourses that privileged market rules, as dictated by neo-classical economic principles, and constitutionalised through neo-liberal governance mechanisms, would underpin these processes and would be implemented through economic restructurings that focused on trade liberalisation, deregulation of the financial markets, and the privatisation of state-owned enterprises (Gill 1995). Transnational corporations would be privileged in this new arrangement, so also foreign investment and exports would lead the drive for growth.

The imposition of these ahistorical policy prescriptions in the form of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) following the Third World debt crisis in the mid-1980s, marked the official beginning of the implementation of this global project as a new development strategy for African countries. SAP would extend to the region the process of economic restructuring taking hold of Western societies. But SAP was never entirely about development: it was, in part, an aspect of wider crisis displacement strategy and debt management mechanism that had been put in place as a means of shifting the burden of capitalist over-accumulation in the Western countries onto poor vulnerable states in the Global South and to ensure that these debtor countries honoured their debt. But the powerful discourses deployed in the service of this new strategy, coupled with the enormous coercive material power

of the West, forced these hapless states into implementing Washington's pre-scribed policies.

For Africa, the origins of these debts themselves were not at all entirely innocent. They were accumulated through both dubious practices and by fraudulent and unjustified means. The quest for development is one of the culprits implicated in Africa's debt crisis and economic burden. Develop-ment operates on a logic that perpetuates a vicious circle of exploitation, violence, domination and subordination. Colonialism had instituted truncated national economies in Africa which were by themselves unviable, mostly operating on one-sided specialised commodities, a condition of marginality. But the Eurocentric progressivist logic and economic determinism which underpinned development brought with it certain demands and expectations and placed an unnecessary pressure on these states to 'catch-up' with the West, using resources which were not even there in the first place. The elites who had uncritically internalised this logic, and had proclaimed it as their mission and purpose, resorted to loans to finance development projects when, especially in areas of infrastructure and technology, their economies were unable to sustain the financing of these projects. Most of these loans were however borrowed by corrupt and undemocratic regimes for poorly con-ceived projects that more often than not proved to be white elephants at best. In fact, in most instances, most of the funds even ended up in the pockets of corrupt government officials who were self-appointed intermediaries of the development process.

A combination of corrupt leadership, and buying into the flawed logic of development not only led to failure, but it also bankrupted the state. Bank-ruptcy left these states with no other choice but to resort to more loans. Mas-sive borrowing to offset balance of payment problems and to pay off the initial loans borrowed for the financing of development projects pushed these states deeper and deeper into debt and penury. Debt became a self perpetuat-ing vicious circle and tied a yoke round the neck of the ordinary African. In this sense, the uncritical internalisation of the logic of the development para-digm and the way it was pursued, in part, led Africa into the debt trap from which there seems to be no means of escape.

Debt was also a result of the manipulation of Western governments, espe-cially the United States, as it sought to regain its dominance in global fi-nance (Gowan 1999; see Wai 2005). President Nixon's gamble of a twin strategy of high oil pricing and removal of capital controls in the early 1970s, put in place a new international financial and monetary arrangement centred on the United States as the dominant player, and it 'gave the United States government', in the words of Peter Gowan, 'far more influence over the

international monetary and financial relations of the world than it had enjoyed under the Bretton Woods rules' (Gowan 1999: 24). This system however operated on the logic of crisis as it 'systematically generates payments and financial crises in the South'. Through these internationally provoked crises, the IMF/WB acquired new roles in the regime as auxiliary players. 'The IMF covers the risks and ensures that the US banks don't lose' since they, the IMF and World Bank, would ensure debt repayment through structural adjustment programmes. Banks in the United States had the right to recycle the so-called petro-dollars accumulated in the Gulf as a result of the oil shocks. This was done through loans to Third World countries facing balance of payment problems induced by the shocks and global financial restructuring in the first place. 'If such financial breakdowns were not a systematic element in the regime, the IMF's role would have been marginal, if not redundant' (ibid: 35). In relation to Africa, even with the initial surge of African debt in the 1970s, real interest rates were negative on dollar-denominated loans (Bond 2003: 21).

The dawn of the African debt crisis actually began when the US Treasury suddenly decided to increase interest rates in line with its monetarist policy in the late 1970s. This was all part of its strategy to regain its dominance in global financial and monetary activities described above. A powerful US Treasury with powers over the World Bank and IMF, forced weaker states into compliance with Washington's preferred economic policies through credit manipulation and debt management practices. SAPs were then packaged and marketed through powerful discursive practices that framed them as not only necessary, but the only logical and desirable means of fighting poverty. The globalisation project was then sloganised through the clever use of epithets like 'the global village', as a way of making people in these states feel included.

Through SAPs the IMF and World Bank opened up African economies to a neo-liberal governance framework dictated and directed by them. This included trade liberalisation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises and corporations and the deregulation of capital controls. With SAP, economic 'rationality', in the name of efficiency, took precedence over social needs and provisioning. With the rolling back of government spending in such vital areas as health care, food, education, transport and the elimination of subsidies on agriculture, the real ghost of the new development paradigm promoted by the IMF and World Bank was revealed: SAP was not a development strategy, but a mechanism for domination and economic exploitation. In Africa, their claim to promoting development was a farce. The tale of African misery after over two decades of SAPs would illustrate this fact. Both in academic and policy making circles, there is a general agreement

that SAPs have failed miserably in Africa, in most cases leaving the countries worse off than they were before their commencement. Development pursued through the globalisation project, has proven to be equally unrealistic and unrealisable. It has not brought the economic prosperity that its proponents had promised, what it has left in its wake instead is misery and further impoverishment of the continent. Ankie Hoogvelt captures this sad and gloomy picture:

> ... Africa's primary commodities trade has collapsed [since the 1970s], from just over 7 percent of world trade to less than 0.5 percent in the 1990s. Its share of manufacturing trade never really got a chance to lift off and went down from an already puny 1.2 percent in 1970 to 0.4 percent in 1990s. The exclusionary logic of the present globalised world order is most dramatically attested in foreign direct investment (FDI) flows. Africa's share of all FDI flows to developing countries has dropped from 13 percent in 1980 to less than 5 percent in the late 1990s. Private (non-public guaranteed) finance now contributes less than a tenth of the resource flows into the continent, the rest being made up of various forms of aid (Hoogvelt 2001: 173-175).

This picture, though disappointing, should not come as a surprise. The global development project, pursued through economic policies dictated from abroad was, in a way, designed to ensure the perpetual subordination of the region and the expropriation of its resources. This is why the debt burden persists and why the region continues to suffer unfair trade practices as the Western industrialised world remains very reluctant to open up its markets to African products. It is also why globalisation has been disastrous for African states (Amin 1999: 67).

Coinciding with the adoption of the globalisation project was Third World advocacy for a New International Economic Order (NIEO). The NIEO, as an alternative global development strategy, was preferred by the South for fighting global inequality and poverty. Its aim was to rectify global economic injustices through global income redistribution and the involuntary transfer of wealth and technology from the Western industrialised countries to the Southern states. Though it had its own problems, the NIEO was deemed by the Southern states as a better strategy for fighting poverty. However, it was flatly rejected by the West. If the West was genuinely interested in fighting poverty and promoting 'development' in the Third World, why, one might ask, was the NIEO rejected by them? The answer to this question might not be hard to find: the Western states are not interested in the development of the South. The globalisation project, as has been pointed out, was in fact not about promoting development in the South as was claimed. It was instituted as a response to problems of over-accumulation and declining profitability

affecting the major Western capitalist economies (Bond 2003; Harvey 2003). It was therefore a crisis displacement mechanism, intended to shift the burden of over-accumulation onto poor Southern states.

It would be a delusion to expect that the problems of the continent would in fact be solved within a mindset that uncritically privileges Westernisation and accepts reductionism and economic determinism as foundational. Any process, etched in Western conceptions of the market, controlled and dictated by the West with African elites playing the ancillary role, completely disregarding the socioeconomic dynamics and indigenous cultural and institutional practices of the people of the region, would prove very difficult, if not completely impossible to work in Africa. The economic dictates of globalisation as a development language, which has been the operating ethos of most African economies for some time now, we have seen, is just another vicious Western cultural and economic tool of domination and exploitation operating on the modernist logic of progress.

What this process however demonstrates, more than anything else, is the discursive power of the West to define progress. When it served their purpose to define it thus, economic nationalism was good, but, once that logic outlived its usefulness, the 'developing' world was presented with another cleverly defined buzz word, packaged in such a way that made it sound not only attractive but desirable, at least to the globalising elites in the region.[3] Globalisation in Africa is in that sense an elite conception of modernity serving the interests of the powerful, especially powerful Western states, their huge transnational and multinational corporations and the African globalising elites managing the process in the region. Like the development project, it also promotes a universalism that is etched in a Western localism which privileges a Eurocentric world view over other world views, while at the same time disrupting indigenous processes, institutions and ways of life. The logic which undergirds the globalisation process, should not therefore be regarded as different from the one which dictated and directed the development project. Like the language of development, globalisation is informed by the same logic which, in the words of Samir Amin, 'fatally inspires a gradualist perception of a required evolution through stages; [in which] retarded (or peripheral) capitalist societies have to catch up with the advanced model' (Amin 1999: 54). The telos at the end of both the globalisation and development processes is foundational. It therefore should not be looked at as a different phenomenon occurring in isolation, operating within the orbit of its own logic. It should be firmly placed within the context of modernity and the power relations behind it.

Rethinking African development:
The baby or the bath water?

The problems associated with development have called into question the utility of using its language to conceptualise processes of social transformation and human emancipation. Discourses and debates about the future of development focus on whether to rehabilitate it or completely abandon it and imagine an entirely different future without it. Wolfgang Sachs, for example, calls for development to be banned (Sachs 1992). Similarly, Arturo Escobar believes that development should be completely thrown away because no amount of rehabilitation will rectify its flawed logic. For him, even the critiques of development have reached an impasse, a situation which does not call for a 'better' way of doing development or even for 'another development.' Instead what is needed, Escobar maintains, is a 'radical imagining of alternative futures', 'alternatives to development,' as he calls it, which accordingly 'requires a theoretical and practical transformation in existing notions of development, modernity and the economy'. A starting point for creating such alternative visions for society, he suggests, is to build upon practices of social movements, especially those in the Third World (Escobar 1995a, 1995b; Sachs 1992; Crush 1995; Hall 1992). For Esteva, the attempt at turning 'traditional men and women into economic men' is, to borrow the words of Samir Amin, 'a reactionary utopia' (Amin 1999: 66), against which political actions should be taken in order to allow for a sociological re-imagining of alternative futures. This is because in Esteva's conception, development is in fact dead; it has evaporated and therefore cannot be rehabilitated (Esteva 1992: 22).

Indeed development does carry with it a heavy historical baggage as a legitimating instrument of violence, domination and control which is sometimes difficult if not impossible to think past. However, as Vincent Tucker points out, buying into the logic of abandoning development because of the weight of its historical baggage would also mean abandoning every other concept that has 'been abused and manipulated for purposes of domination and exploitation' (Tucker 1999: 15). Moreover, pointing out the defects and problematic nature of development does not preclude the fact that a reformulation might be possible which in turn could produce some positive moments in human social life. Granted, development has not been a neutral concept, it has been implicated and complicit in the violence perpetrated by modernist discourses, but so also are democracy, socialism, globalisation, the state, freedom and even human rights compromised concepts. Will calling for abandoning development extend to these concepts as well? If yes what are the practical implications? Is it even possible to abandon every word that has been abused and is complicit in modernist projects and discourses? Will

modern technology, which has also been implicated in the development project, be abandoned?

It is important to recognise that though it was a condition imagined and produced, the problem of 'underdevelopment' or poverty is now a 'real' and practical challenge in Africa, and has to be engaged with, if the material structures of political and economic domination within which development discourses have been constituted and reproduced are to be denaturalised and transformed. How then do we begin to conceptualise creating conditions for enhancing standards of living of people and improvements in social life in areas like health, communication, education and transport? The tension therefore between recognising the historical baggage of development and its potential for emancipation thus present a conundrum, to which, Bob Sutcliffe suggests a caveat must be sounded: throwing the baby away with the bath water would not serve any purpose other than helping to compound an already bad situation (Sutcliffe 1995). The focus therefore, according to this metaphor, should be on initiating a reconstruction process of the concept and practice of development that would allow for the keeping of the baby while the bath water is thrown away. That is, rescuing development from its defects, its oppressive tendencies and culture of violence which has accompanied it; a rehabilitation process, as Tucker calls it, that would allow for the restoration of development as a humanist practice for social transformation. Indigenous African processes and practices of social provisioning, and the cultural and institutional contexts within which they take place, I believe, have a place and role in that reformulation.

A reconstruction of development in Africa should necessarily begin with seeking an understanding of indigenous conceptions, processes and practices of socioeconomic provisioning. That is, seeking to understand how indigenous cultural conceptions regarding economic and social processes are mediated and negotiated. Such a process should seek to understand social transformation and economic provisioning on the continent as relational and social totalities which involve different aspects of life. A social totality operates on the logic that social, political and economic life are not separate, but co-constitutive and functioning as an integrated whole, produced and reproduced through interaction with, and co-dependent on the environment and nature. In much of Africa, for example, indigenous conceptions of social and economic practice were predicated on local ecological knowledge and understandings of natural life. Human life and nature were thought of as co-dependent on each other. Nature was not regarded as something to be conquered but as forming an integral part of the very essence of human social life. Such ideas even informed various indigenous community relationships (like farming, hunting, fishing etc.), and cultural practices like religion.

A stress on the 'indigenous' should not however be equated to notions of 'unanimism', as Paulin Hountondji would call it; that is, the idea that a single unproblematic and uncontested indigenous African attitude exists towards nature, social provisioning and economic life. The danger of buying into a unanimist vision is that it prevents the interrogation of the plural and often conflicting strands in indigenous African perspectives, which in turn can foreclose ways in which we sift through these various and often times conflicting attitudes and perspectives. Similarly, notions of the indigenous should not be seen as the validation or blind acceptance of every cultural practice. Some practices on the continent reproduce and reinforce negative tendencies in society like patriarchy, gender inequality and hierarchized oppression. We should therefore be able to recognise and isolate these practices and seek to go beyond them. For true social transformation and human emancipation to take place in Africa, an isolation and exclusion of practices that keep certain sections of society, for example, women, oppressed, marginalised and excluded, must take place. The focus should be on those cultural practices that allow for the construction of alternative societies based on egalitarian principles. An investigation therefore into how the indigenous functions, negotiates, and relates with nature, and how its processes of socio-economic provisioning operates, would help us understand those cultural institutional practices that would point to alternative futures. Seeking to understand indigenous conceptions and cultural practices would help us determine which practices allow for emancipation and social transformation within the African context and which ones do not. And these ideas must necessarily be the basis of any reformulated concept of development in Africa.

This approach then necessarily means the rejection of the practice of privileging of a single world view and way of life over others. The Eurocentric conception of modernity as a progressive process with a clearly defined telos is not only problematic, but in fact also delusory. The idea that modernity should be pursued through Western prescriptions, because its origins were shaped and determined by European experiences, is false. True, modernity emerged as a specific moment in European history, but it was never a monolithic whole occurring within a single orbit. Its dynamics were influenced by diverse historical and social processes which shaped the European historical experiences. The Enlightenment, in fact, had Afro-Asiatic roots which were obscured once Europe *claimed* reason and rationality as their own and instituted the construction of Africans and Asians as Others that needed to be 'civilised' (Tucker 1999; Bernal 1987; Bessis 2003). But even putting that argument aside, modernity itself cannot be reduced to, in the words of Tucker, 'a tightly integrated whole' (Tucker 1999: 9). The colonial encounter which utilised the modernist discourse, though characterised by unequal power re-

lations, was far from being a cultural straitjacket imposed and haplessly absorbed. Rather, it was in fact a dynamic process with contestations and local reactions to its very imposition wherever Europe expanded to. Modernity then took various different forms because of these reactions and contestations. In Africa, for instance, an intermediate space resulted as the realm of modernity (Mudimbe 1988). Given these different expressions of modernity in different places, no single charted course can therefore be imposed and expected to produce the same outcome in different places. As such, understanding the specific context and unique dynamics of these processes in different places should therefore necessarily be central to any reformulation of the development concept. In Africa, for example, investigating the intermediate space, both as a problematic hybridised terrain and as a source of marginality and 'underdevelopment' therefore becomes very important to constructing an alternative conception of development in Africa.

The possibility of interrogating different world views and shifting through their plural and multiple contested categories then becomes very important. Vincent Tucker's call for a plurality of discourses, audiences and terrains, as a way of overcoming the Eurocentric foundationalism of development discourses, therefore not only becomes valid but also very necessary (Tucker 1999: 15). However, the method of instituting dialogue between 'intellectuals' from the West and their counterparts from other cultural contexts, he suggests, can be problematic: it runs the risk of being an elitist project, one that may wittingly or unwittingly, construct people as 'objects' to be acted upon and not subjects that act in their own right. Such an instrumental process would end up disenfranchising the very voices such a dialogue may hope to empower. This takes us back to Escobar's point about using the experiments of social movements in order to imagine alternatives to development. Subaltern voices that have been silenced and constructed as mere hapless objects require space for expression, but intellectual dialogue, though important, is hardly a means of achieving that.

Escobar's suggested alternatives should not, however, be constituted as mutually exclusive with seeking alternative reformulations of development. This is where Escobar's suggestion becomes a little problematic: seeking an alternative can be pursued in conjunction with quests for reformulating development, and presenting these as dichotomous binary processes in opposition to each other is dubious at best. Plurality would allow for the irreducible simultaneous existence and the incorporation of the needs, views, concerns and experiences of grassroots movements, indigenous social groups and their cultural institutional practices and values into practices and processes of development. Plurality should therefore be regarded as a decentring dynamic, involving multiple processes through which social phenomena in different

cultural contexts are understood and accounted for. Empowering subaltern voices can be attained not only through multiplicity of discourses and plurality of terrains or centres (Chakrabarty 2000), but also, and more importantly, through basing processes of social transformation on their lived social realities. A decentring process would allow for multiplicity of perspectives, ways of life, worldviews, experiences, rationalities and practices, instead of just one static model with an in-built logic of progressivism.

Though its recommended solutions for solving the problems of development failure in Africa carry its own problems, the Commission for Africa, for example, recognised the need for such multiplicity of world views in development discourses, especially in relation to Africa:

> Ask the big question 'What is development for?', and you get very different answers in different cultures. Many in the developed world see it as being about places like Africa 'catching up'. Development is often described as about increasing choice for individuals. In Africa, by contrast, you might be told that it is something to do with well-being, happiness and membership of a community. An understanding of the cultures of Africa shows that development means putting a greater emphasis on increasing human dignity within a community (The Commission for Africa Report 2005: 121).

This takes us to the important question of the purpose of development itself. How is development understood by those that are the target of development interventions? Is it a state of being (for example well-being, happiness, community membership), or a stated objective (an intended consequence or a predicted outcome at the end of a teleological process)? In much of Africa for instance, the community is given primacy over the individual and it is the individual's position within the community that determines her/his personhood. It is the community that 'defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory', as is the case with Eurocentric conceptions of liberal individualism (Menkiti 1984: 171). Personhood therefore is acquired, derived from and secondary to the community. Development, according to this idea then is more of a state of being, than a stated objective or abstract idea about catching-up. It is inscribed on the very daily practices of communities and the processes through which they seek happiness and well-being.

Ideas about social transformation and quests for human emancipation and dignity in Africa must be based on the lived social realities of the people who are targets of that transformation. These accordingly should be placed at the heart of the search for alternative reformulations of development. There should be thorough interrogations of these practices and processes, so that they are properly understood and placed within their proper historical, social, political and cultural institutional contexts. A practice that should be

guarded against is developing abstract conceptions, be they of development or proposed alternative futures without it, which have no practical relevance to commonsensical notions and realities of ordinary social life. Specific understandings of indigenous African social practices and how they affect well-being are therefore necessary building blocks for the reformulation of development.

Conclusions

The aim of the paper has been two-fold: first, to problematise the language and practice of development in Africa by illustrating its political, violent and contested nature; second, to suggest a way in which a reconstruction of development might be possible. The paper did not set out to provide concrete solutions, either as a corrective or alternative to development, but to set the stage for an African reformulation or reconceptualisation of the concept. In that sense, this paper is a preparatory work for a future reformulation of development from an African perspective. One thing that has been stressed throughout this paper is that programmes designed for promoting human emancipation, based on problematic conceptions as highlighted in this paper, are bound to fail.

Development is a loaded word. It comes with the tensions and baggage of history, a fact that needs to be recognised in any attempt at reformulation. However, it is also equally important to point out that whatever alternatives that come out of the debate about the future of development are bound to carry with them some problems. The question about the possibility of imagining a world where development is no longer possible is necessary to consider here. Can social transformation and human emancipation be conceived of and practiced in concrete terms without considering development? One would suspect not, since even abandoning development completely and constructing alternatives to it would mean engaging in conscious political acts that set out on other courses that construct development as their opposite. That very fact, involves consciously thinking about development, recognising its power and seeking to go beyond it. But even in practical terms, an increasingly 'globalised' world constitutes a real challenge to any rethinking of development and any attempt at framing an alternative that constructs development as its opposite.

External forces and the process of exoticising and packaging difference as economic enterprise (for example, tourism or eco-tourism), have in many ways constituted a problem in achieving this since they have succeeded in insinuating interpolations into cultures and societies that hitherto were insulated from external 'modernist' influences and within that relational vortex, it has been impossible to keep the language of development at bay. These

processes have instigated comparisons, and through that, consciousness of material differences in comparison to other ways of life. They have further instigated not only the calling into question of hitherto naturally accepted conditions, but also the scrutiny of one's own natural way of life. Questions on whether it is even possible or practical to keep societies insulated from external forces and processes also become important. Are such processes possible, or even necessary? Perhaps the only way of dealing with such external forces is by negotiating an accommodation through pluralistic discourses, processes and practices. Development then should be processes and practices of change and social transformation, a change, thought of not in rational economic, technocratic and instrumentalist terms, but through multiple processes and practices of negotiations, contestations, adaptations and accommodations.

Notes

1. In the 1980s, the Doe regime of Liberia received almost half a billion dollars from the US in development aid because Doe was a key US ally. Doe, a brutal and corrupt dictator started his reign by publicly executing members of the Tolbert regime he had overthrown in a bloody coup in 1980. See Herbert Howe, 'ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping: Lessons from Liberia', *International Security*, Vol. 21, Issues 3, (Winter 1996/97), pp. 145-177.

2. Though Third Worldism never achieved ideological coherence and clarity, or achieved the organisational consistency of international socialism to which it pretended, it however was a powerful voice that was consistent in articulating the concerns of the Third World and sought to challenge both the dominance and legitimacy of the Western world in global political economy (Duffield 2001: 22).

3. It needs to be pointed out here that globalisation is a fiercely contested process, especially from below, in most parts of Africa. In West Africa, for example, it is leading to incidents of social violence, as the dispossessed and marginalised sections of a globalising region negotiate their exclusion, dispossession and marginalisation. It should not therefore be taken that globalisation and dispossession are haplessly absorbed categories from which there is no escape. See Zubairu Wai (2005).

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Beyond the Impasse of African Industrial Development: The Case of Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia

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Abstract

The thrust of this article is to examine critically the importance, performance and under-weighting of the industrial sector in Africa focusing on three countries, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia, in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The article shows that both theoretical and empirical evidence indicates somewhat unsatisfactory industrial performance. The article attempts to explain the way forward (beyond the impasse), by providing alternative approaches, opportunities and recommendations.

Résumé

Cette étude a pour objet d'examiner de manière critique l'importance, la performance et la médiocrité du secteur industriel en Afrique subsaharienne notamment dans trois pays membres de la SADC – le Botswana, la Tanzanie et la Zambie. Il y est signalé que des données factuelles tant théoriques qu'empiriques indiquent une performance industrielle plutôt insatisfaisante. L'auteur s'applique à expliquer la marche à suivre (pour sortir de l'impasse) en proposant des approches, possibilités et recommandations alternatives.

Introduction

In general, industrial development in Africa seems to be given less weight than it deserves; yet it is well documented in the literature that industrialisation has several advantages. The main reason for under weighting industrialisation stems largely from over emphasising the Ricardian theory of comparative advantage in favour of the primary sector (agriculture and

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mining) even in the long term. The current emphasis on international competition and globalisation tends to support this trend. No wonder the manufacturing sector's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) in sub Saharan Africa has been stagnant at about 17 per cent since 1980. In some countries like Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia it has declined. This seems to contradict the conventional industrial development trends or patterns.

The main objective of this article is to examine critically the importance, performance and under-weighting of the industrial sector in the selected SADC countries, thereby providing alternative approaches, industrial opportunities and recommendations. The focus is on Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia, countries which have made great efforts towards economic diversification.

The rest of the article is organised as follows: section two explains propositions on industrialisation and comparative advantage in Africa. Section three examines industrial performance in Africa focusing on the three SADC countries. Alternative approaches, industrial opportunities and recommendations are presented in section four.

Propositions on industrialisation and comparative advantage in Africa

Proponents of industrialisation in Africa use propositions which give more weight to industrial development than primary sector development, especially in the long run. Industrialisation is considered to have several advantages. First, diversification away from the primary sector towards manufacturing reduces risks and vulnerability to the long term deteriorating commodity terms of trade and the associated loss in real income. Second, unlike the primary sector, the industrial sector has more forward and backward linkages with other sectors, especially agriculture and mining. Third, industrialisation contributes significantly to employment creation if the right techniques are chosen. Fourth, industrialisation has a relatively greater possibility of technological transfer and adaptation and the creation of technology.

In general, industrialisation ensures economic independence in the long run (Kapunda 2005: 176). However, as noted in the Introduction, industrialisation in Africa seems to be given less weight than it deserves. The sources of under weighting industrialisation in Africa are essentially (i) the Ricardian theory of comparative advantage; (ii) the unbalanced industrial growth theory in Africa; and (iii) an over emphasis on foreign investment. These sources and their relevant propositions are elaborated hereunder:

(i) The Ricardian theory of comparative advantage seems to over empha-sise the development of agriculture and mining in Africa at the expense of industrial development even in the long run. This has been the trend since the colonial era. One extreme proponent of the comparative law is quoted as writing:

> Given Africa's large endowment of land, its comparative advantage is inevi-tably natural resources, and so Africa should forget about a manufacturing future. Africa can only keep manufacturing activities alive as 'pests' not adding value at world prices and being parasitic on the real economic activi-ties that directly or indirectly pay for their survival.[1]

Nevertheless, African countries have realised the importance of industriali-sation and the hidden agenda of proponents of anti industrialisation in Af-rica. Immediately after independence many countries, including Botswana, Tanzania, and Zambia, started with import substitution strategies to replace imports by goods manufactured domestically in order to meet domestic de-mand. With the advent of structural adjustment programmes, intensive inter-national competition and globalisation, many countries have shifted to an export oriented strategy which requires production of quality goods for ex-port at low prices. Most countries are finding this to be an inevitable chal-lenge.

At least two negative implications of globalisation for industrial develop-ment are apparent. First, the resultant free trade encourages the availability of relatively cheap imported products like textiles from China, which stimu-lates stiff competition and tends to cripple local industries. Second, the ex-pected reduction or removal of subsidies on important industries for rural poverty alleviation (micro, small and medium industries) and other strategic industries, affects their performance negatively.

(ii) Unbalanced industrial growth theory underscores the importance of only micro, small and medium industries and consumer good industries (as if this was the end of the road – the impasse) at the expense of intermediate and capital goods industries. This is in line with the activities of most foreign investors who concentrate on consumer goods which have a relatively short pay back period – a condition for quick profits. However, intermediate and capital goods industries, though expensive, are strategic in ensuring indus-trial linkages, intensive use of domestic inputs, and economic independence in the long run.

(iii) Over emphasis on foreign investment is at the expense of local initiatives, and the adoption and creation of technology. Practically all African countries use imported technology. It is the responsibility of African countries

to learn and adopt such technology and in the long term create their own technology.

Industrial performance in Sub Saharan Africa: The case of Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia

From the previous section it is not surprising to learn that the manufacturing contribution to GDP in sub Saharan Africa has been stagnant at about 17 per cent since 1980. The manufacturing sectoral contribution to GDP has been falling in many African and SADC countries. In Botswana, for example, it has fallen from 5 per cent in 1980 to the current approximate 4 per cent. In Tanzania and Zambia it has declined from 9 per cent and 18 per cent to 8 and 12 per cent respectively in the same period. This seems to contradict the conventional industrial development trends (patterns). For details see Table 1.

Table 1: Comparative Structure of Output in sub Saharan Africa and in Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia (percentages)

		Sub-Saharan Africa	Botswana	Tanzania	Zambia
Agriculture	1980	18	11	52	14
	1990	18	5	48	18
	2000	18	3	48	17
	2004+	17	3	46	17
Industry*	1980	39	45	15	41
	1990	34	56	16	45
	2000	32	45	14	40
	2004+	32	45	16	45
Manufacturing	1980	16	5	9	18
	1990	17	5	9	20
	2000	17	5	7	11
	2004+	17	4	8	12

Notes: * Industry defined broadly to include manufacturing, mining and public utilities.
+ Estimates.
Sources: Compiled by the author using data from World Bank (2002, 2001, 1984), United Republic of Tanzania (2005), Republic of Botswana (2005).

The case of Botswana

Before the advent of globalisation the main industrial strategy was import substitution as documented in the 1984 Industrial Development Policy for Botswana. That strategy was appropriate at that time for the closed economies of the Southern African region (Republic of Botswana 1998: 1).

In 1998, however, there was a need to revise the policy due to the increasing intensity of international competition and globalisation and the great need to diversify economically from minerals to the industrial sector, among other sectors. The resultant 1998 Industrial Development Policy shifted the strategy to export oriented industrialisation. This policy is applicable up to now.

Nevertheless, the performance of the industrial sector, particularly the manufacturing sector, is not very satisfactory. The manufacturing sectoral contribution to GDP has declined to the current 4 per cent from 6 per cent at independence in 1966 or 5 per cent in 1980. Even the contribution of the manufacturing sector to total employment or total export is still low (about 10 per cent). The manufacturing sector however, grew on average by 5 per cent between 1996 and 2004. The mining sector (mainly diamonds) dominates the contribution to GDP (36 per cent) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Manufacturing Contribution to GDP, Employment and Total Export in Botswana (percentage)

Year	Contribution to GDP			Manufacturing Contribution	
	Manufacturing	Mining	Agriculture	Employment	Export
1985	3.2	50.7	5.4	8.5	14.8
1998	4.6	32.1	3.1	9.6	24.0
2000	4.1	36.5	2.7	11.2	10.7
2001	4.0	34.7	2.6	11.0	10.0
2002	3.9	35.9	24	10.6	9.5
2003	3.7	34.7	25	10.6	9.0
2004*	4.0	36.0	25	10.7	10.0

Source: Calculated by the author using Central Statistical Office (CSO) data.

Although the mining sector's contribution to total exports has increased from 76 per cent in 1998 to the current 90 per cent, Botswana still maintains the policy of economic diversification away from mining due to the future risk and uncertainty of the mining sector. The industrial sector is still regarded as central to economic diversification despite its challenges and problems. It is, however, now clear that the industrial sector alone cannot ensure economic

diversification. Other sectors should also be actively involved. Regarding employment, for instance, the manufacturing sector alone cannot be considered a panacea for Botswana's unemployment problem. In fact it is the service sector, because of its labour intensity, that can address the unemployment problem more effectively.

Regarding the impact of globalisation on industrial development, Botswana faces stiff competition from the more industrialised economies of South Africa, Europe, North America and others because of the intensity of free trade promoted by the SADC, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and other organisations and trade agreements.

The current flood of imported cheap products, especially textiles from East Asia, tends to be a great challenge to the country's industrial development. Liberalisation and globalisation have started putting pressure on the government to reduce direct subsidies for the micro, small and medium enterprises and other industries to conform to the rules of international organisations such as the WTO to which Botswana is a signatory. Micro, small and medium enterprises are important in Botswana as they contribute 30 to 40 per cent to GDP. Furthermore, about 50 per cent of formal employment is estimated to arise from these enterprises.[2]

The possible future removal of preferential treatment for Botswana beef due to globalisation forces is likely to lead to a fall in beef prices and result in an adverse impact on the rural population which depends heavily on livestock.

The case of Tanzania

After independence in 1961 Tanzania embarked on industrialisation centred on an import substitution strategy. In 1967 the Arusha Declaration announced the nationalisation of the major means of production. Like Botswana, with the advent of intensive international trade and globalisation, an export oriented strategy was adopted. In 2003 Tanzania came up with a National Trade Policy for competitive and export led growth. However, the country faces stiff competition within the two communities – East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) and beyond. Regarding industrial performance, as noted earlier, the manufacturing sector contribution fell slightly from 9 percent in 1980 to 8 per cent in 2004.

The contribution of the industrial sector to total exports declined from about 11 per cent in 1985 to 7 per cent in 2004. However, recent real growth rates of the manufacturing sector are impressive. The growth rate increased from 4.8 in 2000 to 8.6 in 2004. The recent increase in production has been mainly a result of the rehabilitation of divested or privatised enterprises, the

establishment of new industries, and an improvement in the supply of electricity and water. Industrial employment has been higher than before largely as a result of the increase of private and informal enterprises, especially the small and medium enterprises. About a third of GDP come from the small and medium enterprises in Tanzania.[3]

Table 3: Manufacturing Contribution to GDP and Total Export and Employment Growth in Tanzania (percentage)

	Contribution to GDP			Manufacturing sector	
Year	Manufacturing	Agriculture	Mining	Employment (growth rates)	Export/ Total Export
1985	9.1	50.0	1.5	1.8	10.7
1998	8.4	49.1	2.0	5.5	6.1
2000	8.3	48.1	2.3	6.5	6.5
2001	8.3	48.0	2.5	6.0	7.2
2002	8.4	47.5	2.7	10.3	7.3
2003	8.6	46.7	3.0	8.0	6.8
2004*	8.4	46.4	3.2	-	7.2

Source: Calculated by the author using Tanzania *Economic Survey* (2005) data.

The positive impact of globalisation seems to have contributed to the recent impressive trends. First, a few industrial products have improved their market competitiveness. Products with remarkable sales performance include beer, cigarettes, soft drinks, bottled water, tyres and textiles. The increase in sales is mainly to an increase in quality, an efficient distribution system and rigorous promotion and advertisement. Second, joint ventures and privatisation have also contributed positively in some cases, for example, beer. Third, positive impacts on small industrial enterprises have also contributed to the recent trends. These include import liberalisation on the supply of inputs and spare parts and domestic trade liberalisation.

However, the negative implications of globalisation, if not addressed, may well blur the future performance of the industrial sector. These include, as in the case of Botswana, the flood of imported cheap products, especially used textiles (*mitumba*) and the closure of some small plants and even large ones which cannot produce high quality products at minimum production costs so that they can sell them at competitive prices.

The case of Zambia
At independence in 1964 the economy of Zambia was dominated by the mineral sector. In 1965 mining accounted for about 40 per cent of GDP. Industries beyond those related to mining were few and concentrated in the Copper Belt Region and along the main railway line (World Bank 1993).

Like Tanzania, Zambia in 1968 employed interventionist policies which partly led to the nationalisation of its main industries and the amalgamation of most of the non financial institutions to form parastatals as announced in the Mulungushi Declaration.[4] During this time, state-led import substitution industrialisation was the industrial policy (Kalima 2001: 4).

With the advent of structural adjustment programmes in 1985 and subsequent intensive international competition and globalisation, the industrial policy became more open.

Regarding the performance of the manufacturing sector relative to other sectors, Table 4 shows the sectoral contribution to GDP.

Table 4: Manufacturing Contribution to GDP Relative to Other Sectors in Zambia

Year	Manufacturing	Agriculture	Mining	Services
1980	18	14	20	44
1985	23	13	16	45
1990	32	18	9	37
2000	11	17	9	57
2004*	12	18	8	55

Note: * Estimate.
Source: Calculated by the author using data from various World Bank Development Reports.

It is apparent that the industrial sector contribution to GDP dropped from 18 per cent to about 12 per cent in 2004. The share of the mining sector in GDP has also been declining substantially in the same period.

Alternative approaches, opportunities and recommendations

One recommendation is that the theory of comparative advantage should not be misinterpreted or overused to slow or discourage industrialisation in Africa. This should also apply to the current processes surrounding increased international competition and globalisation.

Second, the positive aspects of international competition and globalisation should be used to encourage industrialisation. With stiff competition the

manufacturing and other sectors in Africa should be more cost conscious than ever before. Similarly, they have to be quality conscious, thereby improving efficiency, productivity and profitability. The industrial sector should also take advantage of international trade opportunities such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and other favourable agreements. Furthermore, since globalisation is expected to reduce technological and other traditional problems of the industrial and other sectors through technical and financial aid from international economic institutions as per WTO negotiations, Africa should take advantage of the implied opportunity.

Third, African governments should guide the free market forces. The current increasing intensity of free trade and globalisation may be misused by profit seekers and monopolists against industrial development and consumers if the visible hands of governments do not intervene through competition policies and other mechanisms to ensure fair competition. Government should continue to support small and medium enterprises with a view to gradually decrease the support once the business has taken off to sustainability. This also applies to infant industries – as noted in the paper small and medium industries are important in contributing to GDP and employment, especially in rural areas where the majority of the poor live in African economies as in Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia. These enterprises should also increase productivity and produce quality products and minimise costs. They may compete indirectly through niche marketing by identifying segments of markets which they can serve better than large firms. They may try to promote exports to markets not tapped by global investors such as exporting African crafts and labour intensive products to the USA, Europe and other parts of the world.

Governments should also play a leading role in developing large strategic industries, especially intermediate and capital good industries, which are not given priorities by private investors due to their long pay back periods. Governments should encourage foreign investors to invest in such industries by providing effective investment incentives such as long tax payment holidays or even embarking on joint ventures with them (Kapunda 2003: 15).

Government should also provide incentives to Africans who excel in innovations and technological performance.

Lastly, the three countries, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia and other SADC countries should take advantage of the industrial and other benefits of integration such as having common industrial strategies, trade agreements and common markets. This also may apply to other regional co-operation and organisations in West Africa and other parts of Africa.

Notes

1. Woods, A. and K. Berge (1977), quoted in Collier (1999).
2. For details see Kapunda (2005).
3. Ibid.
4. The 1968 Mulungushi Declaration is comparable to the 1967 Arusha Declaration in Tanzania which was used to nationalise the means of production.

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An Alternative Theoretical Model for Economic Reforms in Africa[1]

Kingsley I. Obiora

Abstract

This paper offers an alternative model for economic reforms in Africa. It proposes that Africa can still get on the pathway of sustained economic growth if economic reforms can focus on a key variable, namely, the price of non-tradables. Prices of non-tradables are generally less in Africa than in advanced economies, and the typical basket of goods for many Africans will contain more non-tradables, while the reverse is the case in advanced economies. Working through its effect on the real exchange rate and given some plausible assumptions, this paper demonstrates that economic reforms which reduce the price of non-tradables in Africa vis-à-vis the price of non-tradables in advanced economies can lead to real exchange rate depreciation, a rise in net exports, an avoidance of the "Dutch Disease" syndrome and a rise in per capita income. The paper concludes that any economic reforms that either skew consumption in Africa in favour of non-tradables vis-à-vis tradables or that reduce the price of non-tradables in Africa vis-à-vis non-tradables in advanced economies is likely to be welfare-improving.

Résumé

La présente étude propose un modèle alternatif de réformes économiques en Afrique et avance que l'Afrique peut encore emprunter la voie de la croissance économique durable si les réformes économiques peuvent être centrées sur une variable clé, à savoir le prix des biens non échangeables. Les prix de ces biens sont généralement moins élevés en Afrique que dans les économies avancées, et le panier de biens typique de beaucoup d'Africains contiendra plus de biens non échangeables, alors que l'inverse est le cas des économies avancés. En travaillant sur son impact sur le taux de change réel et au vu de certaines hypothèses plausibles, cette étude démontre que les réformes économiques qui diminuent le prix des biens non échangeables en Afrique par rapport au prix des biens non échangeables dans les économies avancées peuvent entraîner une dépréciation

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du taux de change réel, une augmentation des exportations nettes, éviter l'apparition du « Syndrome Hollandais » et une augmentation du revenu par habitant. L'étude en conclut qu'il est probable que toutes réformes économiques qui soit orientent la consommation en Afrique en faveur de biens non échangeables par rapport aux biens échangeables, soit qui diminuent le prix des biens non échangeables en Afrique par rapport aux biens non échangeables dans les économies avancées, ne peuvent qu'améliorer le bien-être des populations.

Introduction

Despite the dominance of long-term growth objectives in the economic strategy of many African countries, achieving the necessary economic growth needed to break the vicious circle of poverty has remained an illusion. In the aftermath of political independence the conformist perception with regard to fiscal prudence and macroeconomic management in African countries was characterised by dirigistic tendencies, namely, large government deficits, repressed financial sectors, inward-looking industrialisation strategies, high inflation and overvalued exchange rates. With the benefit of hindsight, these policies can be seen to be unsustainable, even though they had popular political and economic reasons underlying their adoption. The breakdown of the Bretton Woods (fixed exchange rate) system and the oil price shocks of the 1970s pointed to the need for openness and liberalisation of these economies.

However there are peculiar problems associated with the openness of an economy. In this regard the fundamental macroeconomic puzzle is the simultaneous maintenance of internal and external balance. Internal balance is associated with full or high employment and zero or low inflation, while external balance connotes zero or sustainable current account deficits. The traditional demand management policies have been shown to be inadequate for solving these problems. For example, Hossain and Chowdhury (1998) cite two side-effects that emerge when demand expands in a situation where supply responds with a lag. First, expansionary policies will cause inflation, so that the Keynesian multiplier will only work in nominal terms (Rao 1952). Second, as domestic supply cannot meet demand, the current account deficit will increase. Therefore demand management policies must be accompanied with supply-side policies designed to enhance growth and structural change so that the tradable sector of the economy expands at a faster rate (Corden 1981). But what exactly is the focus of policy makers in the design and implementation of economic reforms in Africa? Why have reforms been largely unsuccessful in many African countries? Are there vantage variables or intermediate targets that African policy makers can exploit to get on the fast track of economic growth? This paper proposes that Africa can still achieve

fast economic growth if reforms focus on a key variable, namely, the price of non-tradables.

Africa and the challenges of openness[2]

There are a number of problems and issues which African economies have to grapple with as a result of economic liberalisation. As previously mentioned, the most abiding question confronting an open economy is the simultaneous maintenance of both internal and external balance. For the purpose of this paper we examine some of the constituent problems which are the aftermath of the openness of developing economies. In general economic parlance these problems are referred to as 'external shocks'. We categorise these problems as demand-related, inflation-related, trade-related, capital-related and resource-related.

Demand-related problems

Demand-related problems arise because of the susceptibility of developing economies to occurrences in the world economy. This can be easily demonstrated using the familiar national income identity given as:

$$Y = C + I + G + X - Z \qquad\qquad (1)$$

Where Y is gross national product (GNP), C is aggregate consumption, I is aggregate gross investment, G is government expenditure, X is exports and Z is imports. The major channels through which external factors affect the domestic economy are exports and imports. Exports are the excess of aggregate demand in the trading partner's economy. If there is a slowdown in that economy, exports will fall, and so will GNP. Arthur Lewis succinctly captured the link between developing countries' exports and prosperity in advanced economies in his Nobel Lecture (1980). According to him the growth rate of world trade in primary products was about 0.87 times the growth rate of industrial production during periods of economic boom in the industrial world. Hence he posits that we need no elaborate statistical proof to show that trade depends on growth in the industrial world. Moroever most developing countries depend on imports for consumption and industrial production. In the absence of domestic equivalents imports will not fall even if exports fall. This causes a further deterioration in the current account balance. Finally most developing countries depend on foreign aid to meet government expenditure. Aid has been found to be procyclical; it tends to rise during periods of economic boom and fall during periods of economic recessions.

Inflation-related problems

Inflation can be transmitted into the domestic economy if trading partners adopt expansionary policies. Expansionary monetary and fiscal policies in a trading partner's country can result in increased export demand, and this can lead to inflationary pressures if the exporting country does not have excess capacity or possesses considerable supply lags. Inflation can also result when exports expand and the balance of payments turns into a surplus position. Under a fixed exchange rate system, increased inflows of foreign exchange lead to monetary expansion, if unsterilised. A number of studies (e.g., Triffin and Grubel 1962; Whitman 1969; Iyoha 1973) have shown that open economies are actually able to export some of their inflation to their trading partners.

The purchasing power parity (PPP) doctrine links movements in the nominal exchange rate to changes in national price levels. The PPP ensures that the prices of homogeneous products are equal across international borders once the nominal exchange rate adjusts accordingly. This relationship can be represented as:

$$P_d = eP_f \tag{2}$$

where P_d is the price index of domestic goods and services, while P_f represents the price index for foreign goods and services. Although there are several reasons why this may not hold in its strictest form, it points to the reality that foreign price changes can be transmitted into the domestic economy if the nominal exchange rate does not adjust. In fact the high inflation experienced in many developing countries in the 1971–1972 periods has been attributed to imported inflation in terms of domestic currencies, owing to the December 1971 realignment of exchange rates (IMF 1973).

Trade-related problems

The Singer-Prebisch hypothesis reflects intellectual skepticism about the benefits of trade liberalisation. This hypothesis suggests that developing countries experience declining terms of trade because of the nature of their export products. Developing countries mainly export primary products, whereas advanced countries export finished products. However, the prices of primary products do not rise as much as the price of finished products. Since terms of trade are defined as the price of a country's exports relative to the price of her imports, developing countries experience a secular decline in their terms of trade. A country can also experience a decline in its terms of trade when there is a sudden rise in the price of an important import. The classic example is the oil price shocks of the 1970s. Since oil is a complement to capital, a rise in the price of oil can lead to idle capital and a fall in production. This

is equivalent to a fall in capital stock which shifts the production function inwards.

There is also a demand side to the problem of declining terms of trade. When the terms of trade decline, the income of exporters falls. This translates into a fall in purchasing power, aggregate demand and output. Given that many imports of developing countries are essential and have no local substitutes, financing these imports can lead to a rise in the country's debt burden.

Capital-related problems

Developing countries have experienced substantial increases in capital flows in recent times (Dooley et al. 1996; Fernandez-Arias and Montiel 1996). Although capital inflows can be a veritable source of foreign investment, the concern with the recent inflows is associated with the short-term nature of such monies. This is the so-called hot money. There are concerns as to the sustainability of the inflow and to the incipient debt crisis it connotes. More fundamentally huge capital inflows, if unsterilised, can lead to monetary expansion, inflation and rise of the real exchange rate (RER). The appreciation of the RER can also offset any expected benefits from liberalising the economy, since devaluation is an integral part of the policy. In countries where the balance of payments responds significantly to occurrences in the capital account, huge capital flows can lead to unsustainable current account deficits. This is even more so if the inflow is in response to a consumption boom, as was the case in Nigeria following the oil price hikes of the 1970s. Finally rapid reversals of capital flows can cause domestic liquidity problems, and large increases in inflows may jeopardise the safety of the banking system as it rushes to expand credit (Hossain and Chowdhury 1998). In the final analysis such capital inflows cause macroeconomic instability.

Resource-related problems

The movement of productive resources between tradables and non-tradables tends to occur whenever there are large shifts in the level of domestic spending. One common case that has received considerable attention among economists is that of a country which experiences a large change in wealth resulting from a rise in the value of the country's natural resource. The effect of resource discoveries or resource price increases can be very remarkable and has come to be known as the Dutch Disease. As the balance of payments improves with the rise in export earnings, the exchange rate appreciates. However, this has injurious effects on the structure of domestic production. The manufacturing sector loses its international competitiveness as their foreign prices rise. This slows down the transformation of the economy and makes it susceptible to resource price fluctuations.

Furthermore, inflation in many developing countries is higher than in advanced economies. When countries fail to devalue to maintain the real exchange rate, the Dutch Disease can arise. The exchange rate becomes over-valued and the prices of tradables are forced to be low, while those of non-tradables rise relatively. This induces consumers to move to tradables, while productive resources move to non-tradables. As Krueger (1978) shows, the aftermath is a chronic balance of payments problem.

Although these problems have the power to destroy the main structure of an economy, well-conceived reforms can either ameliorate their impact or eradicate them completely. In what follows, we suggest an alternative framework for economic reforms in Africa based on this insight.

A theoretical framework for economic reforms

The process of transforming an economy through any kind of economic reform consists largely of getting prices right. For an open, developing economy one of the most important prices is the RER. Using the definition of the PPP doctrine in equation (1) above, the RER can be given a generic definition as follows:

$$RER = e.P_f / P_d \qquad\qquad (3)$$

where all variables remain as defined earlier. Given this characterisation the *RER* is often taken to represent the country's international competitiveness. Hence high domestic inflation relative to the trading partners' inflation levels, assuming no change in *e*, makes domestic exports expensive and worsens the country's trade balance. The reverse is true for low domestic inflation. However, the realness of *RER* is more succinctly captured in its alternative definition as the ratio of the price of tradables (*PT*) to non-tradables (*PNT*). In this definition the *RER* becomes essentially a summary measure of incentives that guide domestic resource allocation and distribution of aggregate demand across sectors.

Tradables are goods and services which have readily available foreign substitutes, such that their prices are determined by the vagaries of international demand and supply. On the other hand non-tradables comprise goods and services which do not have readily available foreign substitutes and do not enter into world trade; their prices are solely determined by internal costs and demand (Salter 1959). The typical textbook examples of non-tradables are housing rentals, construction and haircuts. But others include land, certain types of capital goods, transport costs, social infrastructure amenities such as electricity, water and roads, real estate, hotel services, banking and insurance services, telecommunication services and professional services such as those of doctors, lawyers, teachers, beauticians and housekeepers.

The definition of the *RER* given in equation (3) can be further decomposed. The domestic and foreign price indices are actually a combination of both prices of tradables and non-tradables. Hence,

$$P_f = \theta P_n^* + (1-\theta)\ Pt^* \tag{4}$$

$$P_d = \theta P_n + (1-\theta)\ Pt \tag{5}$$

where θ represents the proportion of non-tradables in the index while * is designates foreign prices. Substituting (4) and (5) into (3), we obtain a more inclusive definition of the RER as follows:

$$RER = \frac{e.\ \theta P_n^* + (1-\theta)\ Pt^*}{\theta P_n + (1-\theta)\ Pt} \tag{6}$$

Given this definition, the *RER* is thus equal to the nominal exchange rate adjusted by the ratio of foreign tradables and non-tradables vis-à-vis their domestic counterparts. Since developing countries cannot influence the price of tradables, the real value of their currency rises with the nominal value and falls with the home price of non-tradables. Hence movements in the RER are significantly affected by movements in the prices of non-tradables.

The economy's stock of productive resources, that is, capital and labour, is assumed to be exogenous. Assuming full resource utilisation in the short run, the expansion of one sector will require the contraction of the other. Following the specific-factors model, capital is sector-specific in the short run. Hence output expansion in either sector will require additional labour inputs. Assuming conditions of full employment additional workers are either drawn from the pool of unemployed people or from the declining sector. However, in the long run, capital accumulation is the main source of output expansion in both sectors.

Studies have shown that the cost of living, represented by a basket of goods that includes food, housing and consumer goods, is higher in developed countries than in developing ones. Assuming that prices of tradables are equal across countries, then the source of this discrepancy can only come from the price of non-tradables. The prices of non-tradables are typically lower in developing countries. If we adopt this premise, then a unit of the currency of developing countries converted to developed country currency through the *RER* will buy more goods in developed country markets than when converted through the nominal exchange rate (*NER*). African countries have more rural areas and rural dwellers than developed countries, while the reverse is true for developed countries. We also assume that the typical

basket of goods for a rural dweller will contain more non-tradables than tradables. Economic reforms or technological improvements that reduce the prices of tradables are therefore likely to benefit both developed and developing countries because of commodity arbitrage and international trade. However an economic reform that reduces the prices of non-tradables in developing countries vis-à-vis non-tradables in developed countries is likely to be welfare-improving for developing countries.

From the definition of the *RER* in equation (6), a fall in P_n will lead to *RER* depreciation, a rise in net exports and a rise in output in the domestic economy. The foregoing proposition depends on the assumption that the Marshall-Lerner condition holds. Depreciation makes exports cheaper in the foreign market and imports dearer in the domestic market. Consequently the true effect of depreciation on net exports may be ambiguous. However, if the rise in exports demand is greater than the fall in imports, net exports will rise, and there will be an unambiguous improvement in the trade and current account balance. Hence the Marshall-Lerner condition requires that the algebraic sum of the foreign price elasticity of exports and the domestic price elasticity of imports be greater than one. That is, the sum of the price elasticities must be greater than one.

In addition, a fall in P_n will induce a shift of mobile resources from the non-tradables sector to the more competitive tradables sector, while domestic demand will shift from the tradables to the non-tradables sector. In order to gain competitive advantage, therefore, African countries must initiate economic reforms which target the supply side of the economy and force the

Figure 1: Interplay between Prices of Non-tradables and the Economy
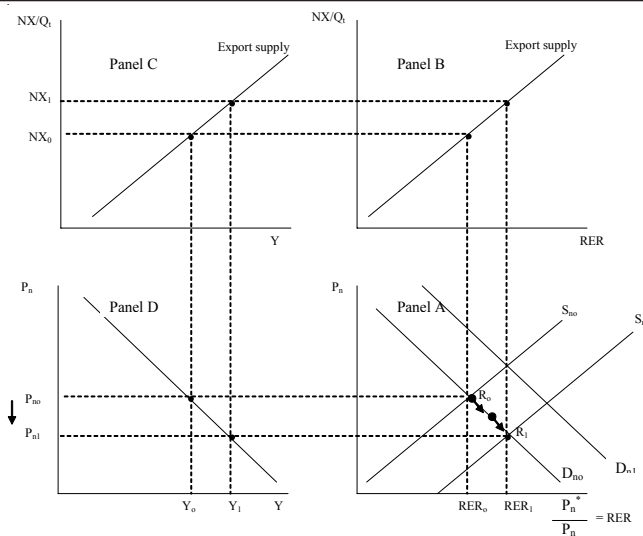
price of non-tradables down. The diagrammatic framework in Figure 1 will help illuminate the basic structure of the economy and the ideas developed above.

In Figure 1, panel A shows demand and supply of non-tradables in the domestic economy. This is measured in the P_n and RER axes. Note that the demand for non-tradables (Q_n) is also measured on the horizontal axis. However, since both Q_n and RER are negative functions of P_n, the graphical representation is still valid. Demand for non-tradables rises as price falls. We adopt the central assumption of the tradables-non-tradables model. Hence domestic demand for non-tradables must equal domestic production, since there are no exports or imports for such goods. Panel B shows the relationship between net exports (NX) and RER. A rise in RER, that is, a depreciation of the RER, will make the country's exports more competitive in the world market and hence increase the country's net exports. Since net exports enter into the aggregate demand function and national income identity with a positive sign, increases in net exports also increase output. This is represented in panel C. Panel D captures the negative relationship between P_n and output, Y. Assuming the economy is at initial equilibrium designated as R_o in Panel A, this corresponds to P_{no}, RER_o, NX_o, and Y_o in the other panels. RER_o is the equilibrium exchange rate because it clears the non-tradables market. This follows directly from our assumption that domestic supply and demand for non-tradables must be equal, since there are no readily available foreign substitutes.

What then will be the impact of an economic reform that targets the price of non-tradables in this economy? Price changes are simply movements along the same demand curve. A reform that reduces the price of non-tradables to, say, point R_1 will have the following implications. Except there are administrative interventions or in the case of inferior goods, a reduction in the price of a good almost always emanates from a reduction in the cost of producing that good. The reform which reduces P_n initially reduces the cost of production. Hence the supply curve shifts rightwards in response to a reduction in cost. This brings the economy to R_1. At this point the RER rises, that is, depreciates to point RER_1 corresponding to point NX_1 in panel B. The rise in net exports represents an increase in output to point Y_1 in panel C, and the interaction is complete in panel D. It shows the relationship between the reform option to reduce P_n and the effect on output.

A sustained rise in income can lead to an increase in per capita income. Assuming this leads to an increase in the demand for non-tradables, this will shift the D_{no} line to D_{n1}. How will this economy react to the rise in P_n arising from the change in demand? The effect of a shift in demand is somewhat different. It simultaneously raises P_n and depreciates the RER. Obviously the

depreciation of the *RER* continues to bestow its advantages on the economy. However, in the case of the rise in P_n, policy makers can resort to the same policies that forced down P_n to correct for the shift in demand.

One should recall that the fall in P_n should have signalled productive resources to move into the tradables sector, while consumers move into the non-tradables sector. Although we have made the rather simplistic assumption that demand for non-tradables must always equal its supply, we must face the question of how to ensure that mobile resources are induced to at least remain in the non-tradables sector to meet increased demand in the sector. First, we underscore the point that the kinds of reforms that reduce the P_n are usually supply-side reforms. Hence these reforms would have reduced the production cost in the non-tradables sector. For example, the provision of electricity actually reduces the price of haircuts because it reduces the cost of that service. In addition, however, government can intervene by providing sector-specific incentives like tax holidays and rebates and other kinds of special treatment for producers in the non-tradables sector.

The induced fall in the price of non-tradables provides a rise in the relative price of tradables in the economy. The reforms advocated in this paper are supply-side policies designed to enhance growth and structural change so that the tradables sector of the economy expands at a faster rate. The above framework can be used to complement other reforms in tackling the problems of openness of African economies. For example, a reform that targets domestic prices can be used to check the problem of overvaluation of the *RER* in many African countries. It can also be used to encourage the development of the manufacturing sub-sector, which is an integral part of the tradables sector. This can help cushion the fears of the Singer-Prebisch hypothesis. Furthermore, the inflation rates of many African countries far outweigh those of the developed countries, and this gives enormous trade advantages to the developed countries. A reform that targets P_n will in part help to check domestic inflation. More fundamentally, such reforms will be useful in correcting inherent structural imbalances in many African economies. In the next section, we illustrate how economic reforms using the suggested framework can help African countries overcome two key problems associated with openness: the Dutch Disease syndrome and destabilising capital inflows.

## Tackling the problems of openness in Africa

The Dutch Disease syndrome
The aftermath of large shifts in the level of domestic spending is usually a shift of production between tradables and non-tradables. There are a number

of reasons why this may occur. For example, it can occur when a country begins to repay its debts. However, the most interesting reason for this occurrence is when a country experiences a large change in wealth because of shifts in the value of natural resources owned by the country. As Black (2002) encapsulates, the Dutch Disease is the effect of an increase in net exports driving up a country's exchange rate, which handicaps the sale of other exports and impairs the ability of domestic products to compete with imports. Many countries have suffered from this syndrome. For example the discovery of natural gas in the Netherlands, crude oil in Nigeria, coffee in Colombia and North Sea oil in Norway all led to large shifts in the production structure of these countries.

In Figure 2, following Sachs and Larrain (1993) we present an illustration of the Dutch Disease syndrome in a hypothetical economy with two sectors, a non-tradables sector and a manufacturing/tradables sector. The economy is at an initial equilibrium at point E_0. This is the point of intersection between the production possibility frontier (PPF) and the long-run consumption curve (OC). The discovery and export of a natural resource, say coffee, shifts the PPF to the right with a new equilibrium at E_1. Comparing the production structure at points E_0 and E_1 reveals four distinct features.

**Figure 2**: Dutch Disease in a Hypothetical Economy
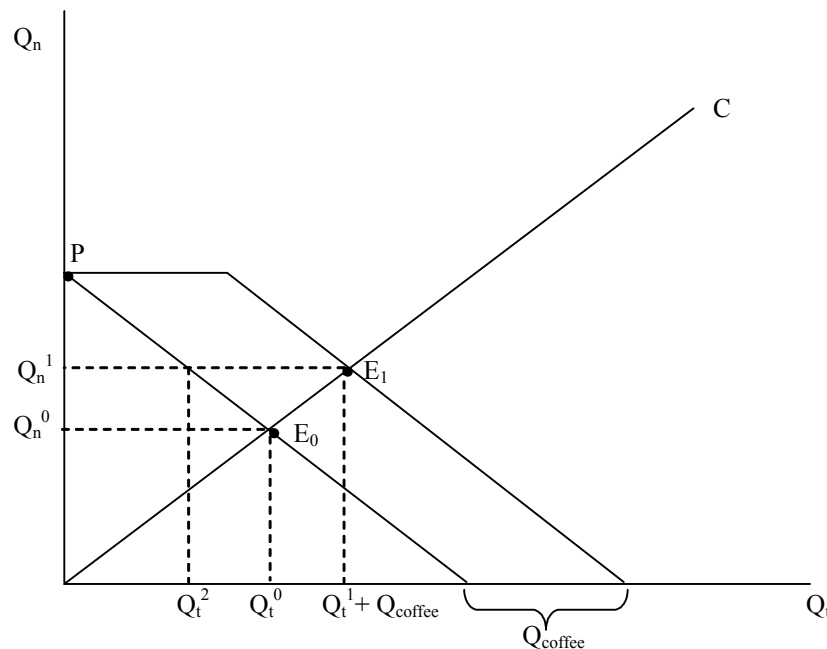
First, manufacturing production has fallen from Q_t^0 to Q_t^2. Second, coffee production has risen from zero to Q_{coffee}. Third, total tradables production has increased from Q_t^0 to Q_t^1 plus Q_{coffee}. And finally, non-tradables production has risen from Q_n^0 to Q_n^1. The problem with the emerging structure, therefore, is that the discovery of coffee crowds out the manufacturing sub-sector. This is made even worse by the appreciation of the *RER* following exports of coffee. Hence the manufacturing industry loses international competitiveness.

Inflation in many African countries is very high. When a country's inflation rate is much higher than those of her trading partners, this may also lead to the Dutch Disease syndrome. This is especially true for countries that operate a fixed or managed floating exchange rate system. The pegging of the *RER* makes tradables relatively cheaper while increasing the price of non-tradables. The result is that domestic demand shifts to tradables, while productive resources shift to non-tradables. One way to avoid this result is to devalue the currency so that the manufacturing sector will regain competitiveness. Considering the characterisation of the *RER* given in equation (5), it is obvious that the only variable that can be easily manipulated to depreciate the *RER* is the price of non-tradables. Although the nominal exchange rate is important for the analysis of debt issues, short-run market clearing under flexible regimes and many other problems, it is the real concept that matters for trade flows. Given the small-country assumption, policy cannot affect the price of tradables, as this is determined in the international market. Consequently, economic reforms can be used to depreciate the *RER* and ensure an avoidance of the Dutch Disease.

How then can reductions in the price of non-tradables (P_n) help to avert the Dutch Disease? The main effects that make this outcome a 'disease' include the shrinkage of the manufacturing sub-sector, the shift in demand to tradables and the movement of productive resources to the non-tradables sector. If reform can help sustain the international competitiveness of the manufacturing sub-sector in the face of a surge in natural resource export, there will be no Dutch Disease. A reduction in P_n achieves this goal by leading to *RER* depreciation. The demand and supply shifts between the tradables and non-tradables sectors are the result of relative price shifts. Productive resources usually move to sectors with rising prices, while demand chases falling prices. This lop-sided economic structure can be averted if reform can precipitate a fall in P_n. To further illustrate this argument, consider Figure 3.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the export of coffee does not lead to an outward shift of the PPF. Rather it rotates along the axes while maintaining the initial equilibrium point. This ensures that the underlying economic structure of production between tradables and non-tradables is maintained. This

Figure 3: Optimal Policy Response to Dutch Disease
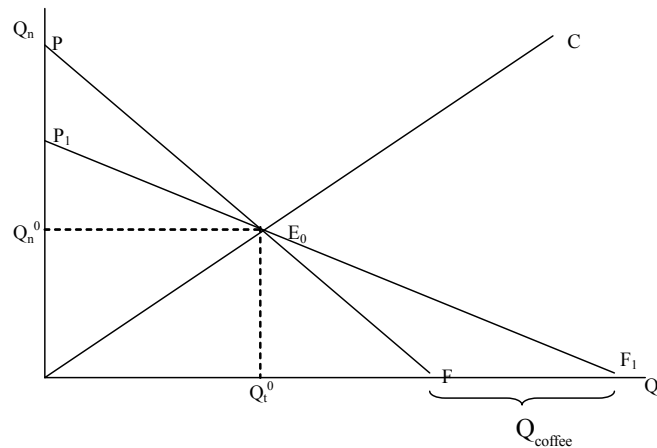
response takes cognisance of the fact that such natural resource booms are temporary and should not necessitate a change in the prevailing structure of production.

Capital flows and macroeconomic instability

One of the most abiding problems associated with capital inflows is the effect on the current account. If a country's balance of payments responds significantly to its capital account, then capital inflows can cause current accounts deficits. The *RER* plays an important role in determining capital flows. At a given *RER*, if the domestic demand for foreign exchange outweighs the domestic supply, the shortfall is usually met by capital inflows. This usually occurs at a low *RER*. Hence clearing this market will require that the *RER* rise. Now, consider Figure 4.

The demand and supply of foreign exchange are measured on the horizontal axis, while the vertical axis measures the *RER*. For analytical purposes we take the Naira (N) as the domestic currency and the Pound Sterling as the foreign currency. Although these functions represent demand and supply, they also reflect a more important concept; they represent alternative equilibrium positions in the foreign exchange market. The *RER* at which both curves intersect is the one which guarantees that net capital flows will be zero. Hence there will be movement in the Central Bank's monetary reserves of foreign exchange.

As Figure 4 shows, ₦20 is the equilibrium RER for zero net capital flows, while a *RER* of ₦10 would compel a capital inflow of £50 million. This is

Figure 4: Foreign Exchange Demand and Supply
– Interaction Between Capital Flow and RER
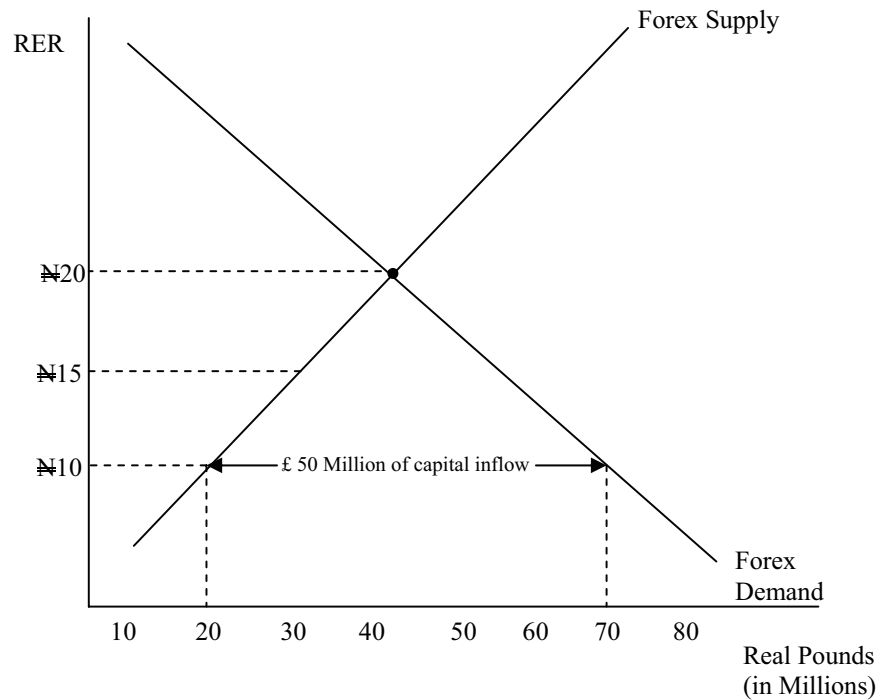
analogous to a reserve loss of the same amount. In either case it suggests that national expenditure exceeds national output. Recall that this scenario induces a shift in demand to tradables, while productive resources move into the less efficient non-tradables sector. The result of this is to worsen the current account deficit. Because of the policy of capital account liberalisation pursued by many African countries, they find themselves operating at the region of the *RER* below ₦20. In order to equilibrate both markets, a relative price adjustment is necessary. This requires the movement of the *RER* to ₦20. The depreciation of the RER will reduce the supply of non-tradables while stimulating demand. This is to eliminate excess supply in that market. Similarly the policy of *RER* depreciation will encourage an expansion of the production of tradables while restraining their demand because of a rise in relative price.

The means by which the *RER* should be depreciated is really not an easy matter. There have been many suggestions as to how to achieve this without

hurting other parts of the economy (Helmers 1988). Most notable among these suggestions are the expenditure-reducing and expenditure-switching policies. Using the familiar national income identity, the overriding objective of the expenditure-reducing policy is to leave the national output unchanged while reducing domestic expenditures on consumption and investment goods so that net exports can rise. As Helmers suggests, one way of achieving this is for the government to reduce its expenditures on such goods. Another is to compel the private sector to reduce its expenditures. This may mean wage cuts. However there are well-known political reasons why this is not feasible. This approach has many disadvantages. It may lead to unemployment and excess capacity in such industries, while the export industry may take a long time to be able to absorb the resources released from these industries. Although we may find some improvement in the balance of payments, it is counter-productive because the decline in GDP will likely lead to a recession. In the case of expenditure-switching policies the major problem is how to ensure that the *RER* actually rises. Using the nominal exchange rate ensures that traded goods then become more expensive in nominal terms. In addition, the domestic price level will also rise. This might signal the wage-price spiral which will lead to further rises in price. This process may, therefore, not produce any increase in the *RER*.

Using the framework developed above, one way to ensure that the *RER* actually rises is to target the price of non-tradables in the economy. This method averts the problems associated with either of the methods discussed above. It militates against inflationary pressures and does not lead to unemployment in any sector. For African countries following some sort of fixed or pegged exchange rate regimes, the inflow of capital is supposed to cause a real appreciation with its associated problems. However a reform that reduces the price of non-tradables in this period negates the incipient real appreciation whilst correcting balance of payments problems.

Conclusions and lessons for policy

This paper neither sets out a particular reform programme nor pretends to have a catch-all solution to Africa's economic problems. Rather, it is an attempt to situate the problems confronting Africa as a result of recently-adopted liberalization policies. The paper has analyzed the problems which accompany openness of African economies, and concluded that economic reforms which target the reduction of the price of non-tradables are likely to be welfare-improving. Given the availability of alternative means of reducing this price, the onus is on the reforming economy to identify the cost drivers of nontradables in the economy. For example prohibitive transport costs and artificial trade barriers have rendered many agricultural products non-

tradables. Hence lower internal transport costs can make these products cheaper in the cities while maintaining the international non-tradability.

The process of economic reform may face a number of challenges. These may be political, ideological, religious or otherwise. In some instances, there can be strong political opposition to currency devaluation in many African economies. However, once the situation calls for it, immediate steps have to be taken to devalue. The longer one waits to implement devaluation, the more tortuous the adjustment process will be. It is important to underscore the point that immediate liberalisation of capital flows may not serve the best interests of many African countries. This is because large speculative capital inflows, by causing a decline in the RER, may offset the effect of devaluation.

The major benefits of economic liberalisation and RER depreciation arise from an efficient, cost-minimising and internationally-competitive manufacturing sector. Since industrialisation and manufacturing are the engines of economic growth, economic reforms in Africa must be designed to make the non-tradables sector unattractive for productive resources, while making the tradables/manufacturing sector the destination of such resources. To achieve this, such economic reforms must be targeted at reducing the price of non-tradables in the economy. This will ensure that domestic demand shifts to the non-tradables sector and that productive resources move into the tradables sector. It will also lead to *RER* depreciation, which ensures that the manufacturing sector becomes internationally competitive. There cannot be a better time for Africa to leave the 'coal agricultural train' and catch the 'electric trade train' as a means of getting on the fast track of economic growth and development.

Notes

1. I thank, without implicating, Abdul-Razaq Olopoenia, Abdul-Ganiyu Garba, Alfred Yaw Barimah and Festus Aigbe for incisive comments to an earlier draft of this paper
2. Hossain and Chowdhury (1998) contains an excellent review of problems and issues associated with openness for developing countries. This section borrows from it.

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Climate Information for Development:
An Integrated Dissemination Model

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Abstract

This paper describes a new conceptual model of climate research and seasonal forecast dissemination for West Africa. The model was developed through a survey of 600 climate information end-users and 27 organisations in four West African countries – Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. Despite significant advances in climate research and climate forecasting, the majority of African countries continue to suffer the full impacts of climate variability with serious adverse implications for economic growth and development. These countries are yet to experience the benefits of climate research for mitigating impacts. The major challenge is lack of access to, and ability to respond to, climate research information by both vulnerable groups and institutions and agencies charged with managing the impacts of climate variability. Additionally funding agencies outside the continent drive much of the research on African climate dynamics. Indeed few African countries have the resources, technical expertise and, in some cases, political commitment to give the necessary priority to climate and environmental research. Therefore, it is important to develop innovative strategies that allow them to take advantage of the results of climate research. The proposed model consists of a regional archive and database for all research related to West African climate variability. The goal is to improve access to emerging research findings and technologies and to avoid duplication of efforts. A second major component includes an institute dedicated to the testing, validation and adaptation of research for practical applications under local conditions. The model illustrates clearly the pathways of climate research information flow and linkages between the research community, policy makers, the media and end-users. Although based on research in West Africa, the model can easily be adapted for other parts of Africa.

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Résumé

L'auteur de cette étude décrit un nouveau modèle conceptuel de recherche climatologique et de diffusion des prévisions saisonnières pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest. Ce modèle a été élaboré à partir d'une enquête menée auprès de 600 utilisateurs d'informations météorologiques et de vingt-sept organisations dans quatre pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest, à savoir le Burkina Faso, le Mali, le Niger et le Nigeria. Malgré les énormes progrès réalisés dans le domaine de la recherche climatologique et des prévisions météorologiques, la majorité des pays africains continuent à souffrir de l'impact de fluctuations climatiques qui les frappent de plein fouet du entraînant de graves implications défavorables à la croissance économique et au développement. Ces pays n'ont encore jamais fait l'expérience des bienfaits de la recherche climatologique en matière d'atténuation d'un tel impact. Le gros défi à relever est le manque d'accès aux informations météorologiques et l'incapacité de réagir à ces informations des groupes et institutions vulnérables et des agences chargées de gérer les impacts des fluctuations climatiques. En outre, les agences de financement à l'extérieur du continent poussent la plus grande partie des travaux de recherche sur la dynamique du climat africain. De fait, peu de pays africains ont les ressources, l'expertise technique et, dans certains cas, l'engagement politique nécessaire pour donner la priorité requise à la recherche climatologique et environnementale. Il importe donc de développer des stratégies novatrices leur permettant de tirer profit des résultats de la recherche climatologique. Le modèle proposé comporte des archives et une base de données régionales pouvant servir à tous travaux de recherche sur les fluctuations climatiques en Afrique de l'Ouest. Il s'agit d'améliorer l'accès aux nouveaux résultats de la recherche et aux nouvelles technologies, et d'éviter les doubles emplois. Un second grand volet comporte un institut affecté aux essais, validations et adaptations requis par la recherche pour des applications pratiques dans des conditions locales. Ce modèle illustre clairement les routes des échanges d'informations sur la recherche climatologique et des liens à nouer entre chercheurs, décideurs, médiats et utilisateurs finaux. Bien que fondé sur la Recherche en Afrique de l'Ouest, ce modèle peut facilement être adapté à d'autres régions de l'Afrique.

Introduction

The impact of climate variability on the economies and development of African countries is well-documented (Berg 1975; Benson 1994; Benson and Clay 1986, 1998; Jury 2002; World Bank 1991). In 1984 the World Bank produced an index to compare trends in per capita food production from 1961 to 1983 for Africa, Latin America and Asia. The index revealed a persistent negative trend for Africa, in sharp contrast to upward trends in the other two regions. The decline appeared especially pronounced during the major drought episodes of 1968 to 1973 and 1981 to 1984, signifying the possible impacts of drought on food productivity.

Twenty years after the World Bank assessment, the situation has not changed appreciably despite significant advances in climate research and climate forecasting. The majority of African countries continue to suffer the full impacts of climate variability with serious adverse implications for economic growth and development. This paper describes a new conceptual model of climate research and seasonal forecast dissemination for West Africa. The overarching goal of the model is to fill a void that results from the absence of a formal climate information system in West Africa and the weakness and informality of the existing links among the disparate units that produce climate information.

The paper is divided into four sections. Section one provides examples of climate impacts on economic performance, section two looks at possible complicating factors that emerge in the climate development link, while section three briefly reviews the status of climate research and seasonal forecast information dissemination in West Africa. Finally, section four presents and discusses the features of the proposed integrated information dissemination model.

Examples of climate impacts on economic performance

Major floods that occurred in central and southern Mozambique in late 1999 and early 2000 clearly illustrate climate-economy dynamics. The floods displaced 500,000 people and caused major damage to key infrastructure, including houses, roads, water and communication facilities. The direct and indirect economic losses attributed to these floods were estimated at over US$600 million (more than double the country's annual export earnings). The magnitude of the disaster affected economic activity in such a profound way – with particular impact on agricultural and industrial production, and over such a large area – that the macroeconomic impacts in 2000 were enormous. Summarising the impacts of the floods, the Mozambican State Budget noted that the floods 'resulted in a sharp fall in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) from 7.5 per cent in 1999 to 1.6 per cent in 2000, inflation reached a high of 12.7 per cent in 2000 as compared with 2.9 per cent in 1999 and the exchange rate depreciated sharply at an annualised rate of 28.2 per cent in 2000 from a rate of 7.7 per cent in 1999' (Abt Associates 2002). This example illustrates that even low frequency or episodic climatic events can have profound economic impacts on a region or state.

Elsewhere, Benson (1994) showed that major drought in 1992 over much of southern Africa led directly to a decline of 9 per cent, 8 per cent and 3 per cent in the GDP of Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa respectively and significantly increased the unemployment rate in those countries. Jury (2002) showed that variations in the March to November rainfall in South Africa

explain nearly 50 per cent of GDP annual growth rate and suggested that swings of climate are manifested in South Africa's GDP fluctuations on the order of US$5 billion. Tarhule (2005) provides yet another example of the economic impact of climate hazards. On 20 July 1998, major flooding occurred in an important commercial market (Petite Marché) in Niamey, the administrative and commercial capital of Niger. The floods washed away an inestimable amount of trade goods and over 500,000,000 CFA (approximately US$830,000) in cash currency (Tidjani 1998). The loss from this one flood event exceeded the total annual budget for social welfare for all of Niger's 11 million inhabitants.

The reasons for the connection between African climate variability and economic impacts are obvious. First, human welfare and seasonal rainfall variability are strongly interlinked throughout most of Africa, arguably more so than in most other regions of the world. Whereas drought might lead to higher food prices elsewhere, in many parts of Africa it frequently leads to famine resulting in mass starvation of thousands of people and agricultural losses that disrupt the region's fragile economy. The reason for this is that agricultural production is at a near subsistence level, and the margin between normal food supply and starvation is extremely small even during normal years. As a result there usually is very little food to carry over from one year to the next, so that feast or famine cycles proceed in rhythm with the seasonal rains. Additionally, climate-induced food shortages reduce tax revenues while increasing expenditure on relief, social welfare and the logistical costs of food-related imports (Benson and Clay 1998).

Second, rain-fed agriculture is the single largest employer of labour in Africa. In West Africa, approximately 75 per cent of the labour force is engaged in one form of agriculture or another (up to 90 per cent in some countries, such as Niger and Burkina Faso). Moreover, it is important to point out that climate impacts generally permeate throughout the society and may affect even sectors not traditionally associated with or directly reliant on climate. In a study on climate information use in West Africa, Tarhule and Lamb (2003) found that 90 per cent of respondents, regardless of their primary occupation, expressed great concern about the impacts of climate variability and drought. This finding came as no surprise, because many so-called office workers in Africa also engage in some kind of agriculture to supplement their income. Furthermore, as noted above, adverse climatic conditions frequently translate directly to higher food prices impacting on everyone.

Finally agriculture (read, rain-fed agriculture) contributes a significant proportion of GDP in many African countries (on average about 40 per cent for West Africa as a whole, but up to 70 per cent in some countries, such as

Liberia). Thus, fluctuations in GDP frequently reflect major shocks in the agricultural sector.

Possible exacerbating factors

Owing to major regional changes in socio-economic activities, population growth and environmental degradation, some researchers fear that the economic impacts of climate variability may get worse rather than improve in the years ahead. In West Africa, as elsewhere in Africa, new socio-economic dynamics continue to superimpose upon and further complicate the climatic problem. Previously, nomadic livestock herders migrated out of the semi-arid Sahel zone during the dry season or periods of prolonged drought. This out-migration mitigated drought impacts by easing pressure on water and grazing resources. However, during the past few years nomadic herders have found their migratory routes increasingly blocked (due to increased urbanisation and expanded agricultural activities), forcing them to spend longer periods (sometimes the entire year) in the Sahel.

Rapid population growth also portends serious problems for climate impacts. West Africa's current population growth rate is estimated at 2.45 per cent, noticeably smaller than the 3 per cent growth rate prevalent during the 1980s and 1990s but still among the highest rates in the world. Major urban centres are growing even faster with growth rates of between two to three times those of the national population. To feed the burgeoning population, agriculture and livestock grazing have expanded correspondingly, often extending into marginal areas ecologically unsuited to such activities (Glantz 1994). Expansion in cultivated acreage has been especially large, because production tonnage has remained static during the past three decades. In other words increased crop output has been achieved primarily through expansion of cultivated area, with serious consequences for ecological sustainability. Demand for firewood in the urban centres has contributed further to massive deforestation in the surrounding areas. Around major cities like Niamey, tree cover has been so reduced that from the air the city itself appears as the most heavily wooded area within a radius of 30 to 40 km (Foley et al. 1997). With the runoff-moderating vegetation cover removed, increased erosion and sediment production from the exposed surfaces clog already limited urban storm drainage systems (Späth 1997), increasing flood risk (Tarhule 2005). This particular example qualifies primarily as environmental abuse, but the role of such degradation in amplifying climate hazards makes it relevant to the present discussion.

The Status of climate research and information dissemination in West Africa

The above analysis suggests that for many African countries, development, however defined, depends critically on the ability to mitigate the impacts of climate variability and hazards, especially floods and droughts. As with most natural hazards the capacity for dealing with climatic hazards depends principally on the extent to which (see van Appeldoorn 1981:7):

- the problem is understood,

- such knowledge is accessible to potential victims, and

- society and vulnerable groups have the ability to act upon the information provided.

If we understand this three-point criteria as proceeding sequentially, then West Africa as a whole could be said to be somewhere between the first and second criterion. 'Beginning in response to the disastrous drought of 1968 to 1973, considerable research and monitoring effort has been directed at trying to understand the physical causes, dynamics and socio-ecological impacts of Sudano-Sahelian drought' (Tarhule and Lamb 2003: 1741). This effort is still ongoing, with new initiatives like the African Monsoon Multidisciplinary Analysis (AMMA), an international project to improve the scientific knowledge of the West African Monsoon (WAM) and its variability with an emphasis on daily to interannual scales. The project held its first international conference in November and December 2005 in Dakar, Senegal. AMMA builds substantially on a previous long-run study, the Sahel-HAPEX initiative, which investigated the links between hydrologic and atmospheric processes and their role in Sahel droughts (Le Barbé and Lebel 1997).

In contrast to the concerted efforts of more than three decades to understand the causes of droughts, only during the past 10 years or so have there been any attempts to systematically evaluate how, or even if, the results of such research are accessible to communities and activities at risk (second criterion above). To a degree this delay reflects difficulties with understanding the causes of droughts, which must necessarily precede any programme of information dissemination. Even so, substantial progress has been made. Recent advances concerning the causal mechanisms have now led to reasonably skilful season-ahead climate forecasts (up to several weeks in advance). Such information can now be applied to benefit society including 'the reduction of weather/climate related risks and vulnerability, increased economic opportunities, enhanced food security, mitigation of adverse climate impacts, protection of environmental quality, and so forth' (Garbrecht et al. 2005:

227). For West Africa this new knowledge has provided the foundation for
the annual West Africa Climate Outlook Forums, which have issued sea-
sonal rainfall predictions since 1998 (Regional Climate Outlook Forums
Review Organising Committee 2001). Similar developments have occurred
elsewhere in SSA. Major regional organisations, notably the African Centre
of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), the National
Hydrological and Meterorological Services (NHMS) and the Centre Regional
de Formation et d'Application en Agrométéorologie et Hydrologie
Opérationelle (AGRHYMET) have taken the lead in disseminating climate
forecast information. Additionally Famine Early Warning Systems (FEWS),
established by the United States Agency for International Development
(USAID), provides assessments of vulnerability to drought and famine for
up to six months in advance, based on consideration of rainfall, vegetation
and crop yield data and, increasingly, social information (Stern and Easterling
1999; USAID 1999, 2000). In many countries multi-disciplinary forecast
monitoring groups comprised of analysts from ACMAD and the national
hydrological and meteorological services have been established to develop
consensus regarding each season's rainfall forecast and to disseminate and
monitor the response to that forecast. Tarhule and Lamb (2003) provide fur-
ther discussion on the pathways of information flow.

The above developments relate primarily to procedures and structures
within government agencies charged with managing the impacts of climate
variability. Other efforts have focused on the village level and the ultimate
consumers of climate forecast information. For example the Office of Glo-
bal Programmes (OGP) in the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency
(NOAA) has been especially active in sponsoring pilot studies to evaluate
constraints and opportunities in utilising climate forecast information as well
as the best practices, structures, and mechanisms for delivering such infor-
mation to vulnerable groups. One example is Climate Forecasting for Agri-
cultural Resources (CFAR), which investigates incentives and constraints to
implementing seasonal forecasts in Burkina Faso (Kirshen and Flitcroft 2000;
Roncoli et al. 2001, 2002; Ingram et al. 2002). A second NOAA-funded
project based in Ghana within the sub-humid zone is currently developing a
decision support system for agricultural applications of climate forecasts,
while the CLIMAG (Climate Prediction and Agriculture) initiative, based in
Mali and funded by the US National Science Foundation, is also focused on
reducing food insecurity and vulnerability of agro-ecosystems caused by the
interactive effects of global climate change, resource degradation and sea-
sonal climate fluctuations in Sudano-Sahelian West Africa.

A number of experiments in the most appropriate technologies for dis-
seminating climate information are also being carried out. One of these is

the USAID-funded project RANET, whose goal is to bring NMHS and re-
lated information to the village level in Africa by pioneering the use of new
communication technologies (from satellite and internet reception by local
radio stations, to FM radio transmission, to wind-up radio listening in vil-
lages).

An integrated approach to information dissemination

The developments and initiatives discussed above can potentially allow Africa
to simultaneously mitigate risks and take advantage of favourable climatic
conditions to secure positive social and economic outcomes (see Stern and
Easterling 1999). However, to reach that objective, there is a need for greater
synergy and systematic links between policy, the various research programmes
and stakeholders. The conceptual model presented here provides a framework
for achieving those objectives. The model was developed based on the findings
of a survey of 600 climate information end-users and twenty-seven
organisations in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. Tarhule and Lamb
(2003) present detailed discussion of the results of this survey. The proposed
model (see Figure 1) builds upon climate forecast dissemination concepts at
ACMAD, as well as gaps and shortcomings identified in existing
dissemination structures.

Figure 1: Conceptual model of climate research seasonal forecast
information dissemination for West Africa*
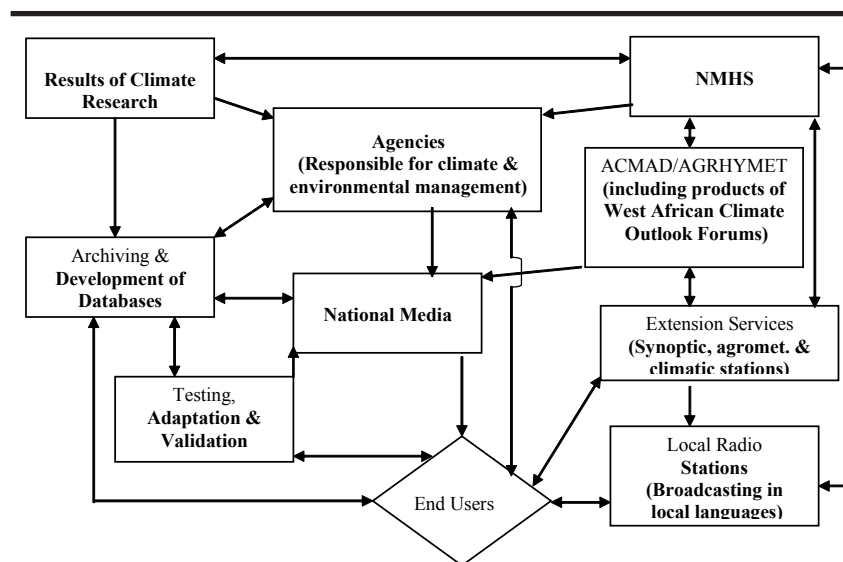
* After Tarhule and Lamb (2003: 1755).

- The extreme right hand column in Figure 1 is based on information dissemination ideas developed at ACMAD (From Tarhule and Lamb 2003). The model is premised on the idea that institutional structures for monitoring, archiving and adapting potentially beneficial research findings must be strengthened or established where none exist currently. This is important because few African countries currently have the resources or technical capacity to fund major climate and environmental research programmes. The model recognises that scattered in the pages of various academic journals and technical reports are the results of climate studies and experiments that could potentially benefit many vulnerable groups and planning agencies. However, these results often remain unutilised because of low literacy levels, lack of access, and the absence of structures that can facilitate their translation into practice. It calls for the establishment of a new agency charged with monitoring emerging research findings that might have relevance or applications to African situations. This agency would maintain an archive and database of such results that could be assessed and queried by researchers, policy makers, media organisations and funding agencies. This would facilitate more rapid propagation of best practices and minimise duplication of efforts. In lieu of entirely new agencies, existing organisations such as ACMAD could take on this additional responsibility. It must be stressed that the approach suggested here is a "backdoor" way for African countries to utilise research findings that they cannot produce themselves. Ultimately, however, Africa must take control of its own research. A society cannot develop by being dependent on external science and technology. Africa must produce and retain indigenous scientists and research facilities with sufficient technical expertise to solve its own problems.

- In any case, the results of research culled from journal articles would seldom be directly applicable to specific local conditions. For this reason, there will be a need to test and validate such results using local data and circumstances and to develop the best adaptation strategy. This role is recognised in the model (see the third box of the first column in Figure 1 above). Information flow is a two-way process, but many existing arrangements for climate information dissemination appear to be linear and unidirectional. While much effort is devoted to getting information to stakeholders and user groups, far less priority is attached to receiving feedback that might improve both the quality of the information as well as the dissemination process. The proposed framework remedies this deficiency by linking climate research and forecast dissemination pathways with agencies responsible for managing the effects of climate variability, the news media and end users in a coherent, logical structure. To appreciate

this expanded scope, it is worth considering that the extreme right column of Figure 1 above is the forecast dissemination structure that was proposed at ACMAD. The framework can accommodate nested, finer-scale information flow pathways without a need for major reconfiguration. For example, information does not get dumped in a vacuum within the end-user node: contacts receive information and then transmit it through appropriate channels in the village information flow network. Notice that this level of detail does not affect the overall structure of the proposed framework.

Conclusions

Societal welfare in many parts of Africa is linked strongly to cycles of climatic variability and hazards, because a majority of the population depends directly on rain-fed agriculture. The link between climatic variability and agriculture has implications for the GDP of African countries, because the agricultural sector comprises about 40 per cent of GDP for many of these countries. It is imperative therefore to mitigate climate effects if meaningful development is to take hold. Some social thinkers have argued that true development is akin to an ecological process in which a society increases its capacity for dealing with the environment, including extreme environmental conditions that produce disasters (Apeldoorn 1981). This process involves three stages – understanding the problem, disseminating information about the problem and having the ability to act on the information. A review of the situation for West Africa suggests the region is probably between stages one and two. While much effort has been made to understand the major climatic hazard (drought), only now is concerted effort being made to disseminate information on drought to vulnerable groups. This paper has proposed a new conceptual framework of information structure and flow pathways as a contribution towards that dissemination effort. The proposed structure integrates the disparate components presently involved in information dissemination. It represents the first systematic structure of information flow that can be applied at a national or regional scale. Successful implementation will contribute significantly to improved dissemination and use of climate forecast information for precautionary planning and risk management.

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Horton Revisited: African Traditional Thought and Western Science

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Abstract

Over the years Robin Horton has argued for what he refers to as the 'continuity thesis' according to which there are theoretical similarities between African traditional thought and modern Western science. Horton's thesis stands in contrast to the standard Western anthropological appraisal of traditional African thought. The standard appraisal (Levy-Bruhl, Durkheim, Evans-Pritchard, et al.) stated that the two modes of thought were incommensurate. I argue that while the continuity thesis holds for certain aspects of African thought – empirical, proto-scientific and metaphysical – it does not apply to traditional African religious expression. My thesis here is that belief systems founded on magic, religion and their combinations should be understood as belonging to what might be referred to as general metaphysics. I argue too that if the continuity thesis is to apply to the history of thought in Africa then the more apt comparison should be between the different phases of technological and scientific thought of the West. Thus Horton's claim that traditional African religious thought is configured according to the goals of explanation, prediction and control thereby putting it on the same epistemic plane as modern Western science is thereby rendered irrelevant. On the other hand the goal of traditional African religion like that of many other religious traditions – including those of the West – has principally been to seek a conscious communion with ancestors and anthropomorphised godheads and spiritual entities of the metaphysical realm.

Résumé

Au fil des ans, Robin Horton a soutenu ce qu'il appelle la « thèse de la continuité » selon laquelle il existe des similitudes théoriques entre la pensée

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Africaine traditionnelle et la science occidentale moderne. La thèse de Horton est à l'opposé de l'évaluation anthropologique courante en Occident de la pensée africaine traditionnelle. Selon cette évaluation courante (Lévy-Bruhl, Durkheim, Evans-Pritchard, et al.) ces deux modes de pensée sont sans rapport. Je soutiens que si la thèse de la continuité vaut pour certains aspects de la pensée africaine – empiriques, proto-scientifiques et métaphysiques – elle ne s'applique pas à l'expression religieuse africaine. Ma thèse démontre qu'il faut appréhender les systèmes de croyance reposant sur la magie, la religion et leurs mélanges comme appartenant à ce que l'on pourrait dénommer la métaphysique générale. Je soutiens également que si la thèse de la continuité doit s'appliquer à l'histoire de la pensée en Afrique, alors la comparaison la plus qualifiée doit se situer entre les différentes phases de la pensée technologique et scientifique en Occident. Ainsi l'argument de Horton selon lequel la pensée religieuse traditionnelle en Afrique est configurée en fonction des objectifs d'explication, de prévision et de contrôle, ce qui la place sur le même plan épistémologique que la science occidentale moderne, devient donc hors propos. D'autre part, la religion africaine traditionnelle comme biens d'autres traditions religieuses – y compris celles de l'Occident – a essentiellement pour but de rechercher une communion consciente avec les ancêtres et avec les divinités anthropomorphiques et les entités spirituelles du monde métaphysique.

Introduction

The expansion of Western Europe into other parts of the globe was no doubt partially caused by the Western European absorption of the intellectual patrimony of the ancient Greco-Egyptian world transported to Europe by way of the Islamic beachhead of Moorish Spain. The Renaissance is the name usually given to the ensuing paradigm shift in Western Europe founded on the critical episteme of the ancient Greco-Egyptian world. The Renaissance culminated in the European Enlightenment with its stress on rationality, empiricism, and an increasing opposition to metaphysics. The ideological role of this latter was to offer reasoned support for the principal claims of Western theology founded, ironically, on two thinkers from North Africa, Plotinus and Augustine. The increasing opposition to metaphysics no doubt stemmed from an increasing recognition that an empiricist approach to things was more efficacious for practical life than that afforded by metaphysical thinking. A paradigm founded on empiricist principles that sought to explain events in nature, expressed in the permanency of writing and quantitative measurement, offered a much greater cognitive and technological yield that any extant system of metaphysics.

It was the triumph of empiricism as made evident by an increasing embrace of the cognitive power and yield of a burgeoning science (then known as natural philosophy) that, translated into a rapidly improving technology, afforded Western Europe the tools to expand and impose its influence on

other parts of the globe. On this basis Europe assumed to itself a novel identity of 'empirical rationality' founded on number, measurement and the printed word, all expressed in an increasingly effective technology. This technology included not only machines that aided humans in practical matters but also weaponry that supported the advancement of warfare.

Thus in time the technological advantages that Western Europe enjoyed over the rest of the world, including Africa, were seen to derive from the rational-empiricist cognitive paradigm that was the intellectual fruit of the European Enlightenment. The great cognitive transition in Europe occurred when theology was dethroned as the major explanatory discipline by those philosophers who were eventually seen as rationalists or empiricists. Descartes's rationalist methodology and Hume's critical empiricism all led eventually to the weakening of the central claims of theology in spite of its rationalist methodology.

At the time of the European Enlightenment the practice of religion as ritual by the non-intellectual public was not much threatened by the imminent intellectual transformations that were about to eventuate with regard to theology and philosophy. The practice of ritual Christianity by a minimally literate public was untouched by the intellectual wrestling about ontological proofs engaged in by the philosophers. Following Kant's systematic analysis of the structure of human reasoning, the central role that metaphysics played in the human quest to know and understand reality gave way to a scientific empiricism formulated according to the directives of critical thinking.

It was the Enlightenment that led not only to the eventual primacy of experimental physical science but also to the moral sciences which ultimately developed into the human and social sciences. Political economy, political philosophy, sociology and anthropology were all founded on the Enlightenment principle of critical reason coupled with empirical observation. Obviously, societies that did not conform to the intellectual principles of the Enlightenment were seen as intellectually backward. This point of view was easily buttressed by the technological advantages that Enlightenment society conferred on the nations of Western Europe. The upshot of this intellectual transformation for Western Europe was that reality was no longer to be viewed in terms of principles that supported a natural interaction between the material and non-material worlds. Cartesian dualism effectively established this principle. Henceforth, concepts that could not be empirically substantiated apart from those of pure mathematics and logic were to be relegated to the world of metaphysics. This world of metaphysics was then seen increasingly as the repository of items traditionally discussed in areas such as theology, moral philosophy and magic.

But the Enlightenment mindset was so deeply entrenched at the time of the development of the discipline of anthropology that the anthropologists who studied non-Western societies were easily convinced that the modes of thinking of non-Western peoples, including Africans, were to be viewed as intrinsically erroneous because such thinking did not establish clear distinctions between ideas concerning the world of empirically confirmable events and those that did not. Despite the fact that non-Westerners operated with practical rationality in matters concerning the material world there were in many instances no strict lines of demarcation drawn between the sensory empirical world and its assumed metaphysical counterpart. Those familiar with the writings of the British philosopher, David Hume, will recall his recommendation that all texts on metaphysics should be, as he put it, 'committed to the flames'.

In short, the Enlightenment thesis arrived at the conclusion that genuine knowledge with cognitive content was restricted to the empirical world which was, for all practical purposes, *inanimate*. If an animate world existed it was relegated to a general realm that was the proper province of metaphysics. The inanimate world was the proper world to which those who sought genuine knowledge must restrict themselves. And inquiry into this world should be conducted by appeal to the proper principles of deductive reasoning as was found in mathematics and logic.

It is on this basis that post-Enlightenment European thinkers, having first invented the social science of anthropology to examine the cultures of the world's non-European peoples, sought to dismiss, for example, the thinking that justified African systems of belief as pre-logical or irrational. But this was more the stance adopted by those who approached the issue from a more theoretical angle. Those anthropologists who actually observed the practical life of African peoples recognised that the practical logic employed in this regard was indeed transculturally valid. Consider in this regard the respective debates on the ideas of researchers such as Lucien Levy-Bruhl and E.E. Evans-Pritchard respectively.

It was recognised too by the European theorists that the systems of thought of the peoples of Africa sprang mainly from a holistic world view. It was this feature of African thinking that prompted thinkers such as Placide Tempels to merge the spiritual world of Christian theology, as a branch of metaphysics, with the purported animist assumptions of holistic African thought. Yet in spite of all this, the explanatory and instrumental power of an epistemologically independent empirical science could not be challenged either by Christian theology or the holistic metaphysics of Africa.

Instrumental practices involving magic proved again to be no match for the principles of modern science. Out of all this there arose three schools of

thought in the camp of the Western anthropologists: those who argued that the thinking patterns of the modern West were systematically incompatible with the traditional thinking patterns of Africa, those who thought that there could be some inter-cultural common point of reference on the issue of religious communication, and those who thought that there was indeed a certifiable cognitive bridgehead between African religious (cum metaphysical) thought and Western science. Robin Horton, among the latest in a long line of Western theorists who studied Africa from Enlightenment times, supported the third position. It is on this basis that his 1967 paper 'African Traditional Thought and Western Science' generated a great amount of interest just at the historic juncture of African decolonisation. Horton's paper is of historical interest because it attempted to argue for a position that hitherto had not been argued for: that there was a cognitively rational core that linked African traditional thought with the modern Western scientific paradigm. Horton's claim was that just as explanation, prediction and control were the rational goals of modern science, so too were these three requirements at the core of African traditional thought.

But what is the significance of this evolution in the evaluation of pre-colonial African thought in the history of ideas? The significance is that it offers some insights into the way in which Europe and Africa interacted with each other at the point of encounter not only at the practical level but also at the intellectual. The intellectual interaction was initially one-sided given the monopoly of appraisal that derived from the Western side. Hegel, Levy-Bruhl, Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard, Tempels, Gellner, et al., all had their say without equal African input and this helped shape the image of Africa throughout the colonial era until the spirited counterpoints from theorists such as Cheikh Anta Diop and Paulin Hountondji, both of whom responded to the then popular Western appraisal of African thought. In the same vein, one must also note the responses of African thinkers such as Senghor who adopted the views of Western theorists such as Levy-Bruhl and Frobenius. Thus, an appraisal of the work of Horton affords an appraisal of the trends in the evaluation of African modes of thought over time.

Before an actual evaluation of Horton's theories, I want to establish the framework in which the discussion will take place. The world as reflected in human thought consists of two realms: the material realm that is explored by practical observation and empirical science, and a non-empirical realm that, for purposes of convenience, can be referred to as the realm of metaphysics. The origin of the realm of metaphysics is as follows: when humans were unable to explain or control events in the material world, appeal was often made to explanations and control methods that existed in an assumed non-material world. This theoretical world was populated not only with forces

and entities that were assumed to be causally connected to the material world but also with conscious beings themselves, albeit in non-material form. The former elements belonged to the sub-realm of magic while the latter belonged to the other sub-realm of religion. Quite often both sub-realms were inter-twined in their purported interaction with living humans in the material world. I believe that this distinction between the non-material human agents and non-material entities of the metaphysical world is important. The reason is that whereas the principles of explanation, prediction and control could be seen to apply equally to what scientists and metaphysicians of magic or al-chemy seek this is not the case with regard to human interaction with their non-material counterparts in the metaphysical world. This is where religion distinguishes itself from other aspects of the world of metaphysics. The es-sential point about religion is that it constitutes a set of beliefs and practices whose main function is communication with kin folk who are deceased. These kin folk include not only departed ancestors but also anthropomorphic crea-tors of all phenomena including humans. The function of religion as dis-course is not really about explanation, prediction and control as Horton might argue but mainly about communication with sprirtualised counterparts in the non-material world.

Horton's continuity thesis

Horton's 1967 paper argues that African traditional thought and Western science both share the same methodological goals of explanation, prediction and control. In the case of African traditional thought, Horton focuses espe-cially on what he refers to as African traditional religion and in the case of Western science he refers to science as it is practiced in the modern West. According to Horton, 'down through the years, this article enjoyed a certain notoriety... [but] All in all, the responses to the article have been predomi-nantly unfavourable. But they have continued in surprising profusion down to the present day' (Horton 1997: 310). In this regard, Horton makes pointed reference to Tambiah (1973) and Wiredu (1980) who respectively view his com-parative study as 'Eurocentric or otherwise ill-conceived' (Horton 1997: 432). It was on account of the continuing response to the article that Horton chose to revisit its theme with 'Tradition and Modernity Revisited' (Horton 1997).

The significance of Horton's paper derives from the fact that it sought to place on the same methodological plane the modes of thinking involved in traditional African thought and those of the modern West. The dominant paradigm concerning African thought as expressed by Western anthropo-logical theory was that African modes of thought in general were essentially incommensurable with the rational modes of expression that symbolised the cognitive patrimony of the West. Lucien Levy-Bruhl is well-known for his

argument that the thought patterns of pre-modern people were pre-logical with their recourse to mysticism and superstition to explain phenomena (Levy Bruhl 1910, 1922). This thesis of Levy-Bruhl's later served as the theoretical template for the work of E. E. Evans-Pritchard in his anthropological field-work among the Azande of South Sudan (Evans-Pritchard 1937, 1956). What Evans-Pritchard noted was that in their mundane daily existence involving practical matters, the Azande employed commonsense thinking based on empirical observations. But it was his description of the thought processes of this ethnic group regarding their metaphysical explanations of events that was of epistemological importance to Western philosophers. The upshot of the discussion concerning Azande thought was that while it appeared to be cognitively incommensurate with modern Western thought it was cognitively consistent in its own conceptual universe. But what Evans-Pritchard's studies were seen to achieve was the maintaining of an implicitly essentialist theory of African traditional thought.

The effect of Horton's thesis in 'African Traditional Thought and Western Science' was to radically revise the then dominant Western paradigm concerning traditional African thought by arguing that there was an epistemological continuity between traditional African religious thought and modern Western science. The basic question that is posed by both scientific and religious theory is how should empirically observed phenomena, processes and events be explained? According to Horton, traditional African religious thought appeals to non-observable theoretical entities in much the same way that empirical science does. In this regard, traditional religious concepts such as spirits, gods and similar entities have as much ontological significance as the theoretical terms of contemporary physical science.

In the case of science, explanation for Horton involves a quest for the 'elaboration of a scheme of entities or forces operating "behind" or "within" the world of common-sense observations' (Horton 1997:198). The total theoretical package makes sense because observed or sensed phenomena are linked to underlying non-evident occurrences by what philosophers of science call correspondence rules. The key question here of course is that concerning the reality or purely theoretical nature of the 'qualia' of theory. According to Horton, 'Perhaps the most up-to-date line is that there are good reasons for conceding the reality both of common-sense things and of theoretical entities' (198). What this establishes is a 'unity in duality uniquely characteristic of the relation between the world of common-sense and the world of theory' (198).

For Horton, the qualitative similarity between African traditional thought and modern science is that they both share the criteria required of any cognitive theory. According to Horton: 'if, however, we recognise that the aim of

theory is the demonstration of a limited number of *kinds* of entity or process underlying the diversity of experience, then the picture becomes different' (199). The qualitative similarity between African traditional thought and modern Western science is to be explained by Horton's persistent claim that human intellectual interaction with the surrounding empirical world is motivated basically by three considerations – of prediction, explanation and control. Horton argues for what he regards as a continuity thesis between African traditional – its metaphysical aspects – thought and modern Western science. The explanatory assumptions of traditional metaphysics differ from their counterparts in modern science only in that the former are animate and anthropomorphised – as in the case of religion – while the latter are not. In this connection, Horton makes little distinction between African traditional religions, metaphysics and modern science.

In 'Tradition and Modernity Revisited', Horton points out that there have been basically three kinds of response to his 1967 article. There are those theorists who 'doubted the legitimacy of the comparative exercise itself' (306) on the grounds that modern and scientific modes of thought are most evidently epistemologically superior to traditional ways of thinking if only for their greater efficacy and pragmatic yield. In this regard, comparative studies of inter-cultural modes of thought are probably only of academic interest. Justification in this regard for Horton would derive from the fact that understanding of modernity is advanced by evaluating it from the standpoint of the traditional (306). Of more interest to Horton have been those whom he defined as 'Symbolists' and 'Fideists'. According to him, the Symbolists regard 'all religious life, whether traditional or modern, as a species of poetic jollification rather than as a system of theory and practice guided by the aims of explanation, prediction and control' (306). And the 'Wittgensteinian "Fideists"' who like to think of all religious life as an expression of an autonomous commitment to communion with Spiritual Being, and again as something totally different from thought and action directed by the ends of explanation, prediction and control' (306). I am rather partial to the views of Horton's 'Symbolists' and 'Fideists'.

Horton sums up the ongoing debates concerning his original thesis in a 'Postscript' in which he defends what he refers to as his 'intellectualist' (1997:13) approach concerning African traditional modes of thought with his insistence that the central roles of explanation, prediction and control apply not only to modern science but also to religious beliefs. This is his basis for arguing not only in favour of the continuity thesis ('Tradition and Modernity Revisited', 1997:301–46) but also on behalf of the similarity thesis ('Postscript', 1997:347–48). As Horton puts it: 'If there is one thesis that unites the essays assembled in this volume, it is that of the deep-seated simi-

larity between much of the world's religious thought, past and present, and the theoretical thought of the modern sciences' ('Postscript', 1997: 347).

Metaphysics, religion, and science

In what follows I intend to argue *contra* Horton that there are good grounds for justifying a distinction between religion, magic and the proto-scientific within the context of metaphysical systems. Despite the fact that all human systems of thought are ontologically unified in their quest to explain, understand and control relevant phenomena, in the area of traditional religion this intent is less concerned with epistemological concerns than with the emotive ones of communion with spiritual beings. Yet there is an area of traditional metaphysical thought which does conform to Horton's intellectualist paradigm of explanation, prediction and control. It is this area of human thought that eventually developed into theoretical empirical science by way of magic and alchemy. But I would not proceed along the lines of James Frazer's 'Golden Bough' hypothesis (Frazer 1967). Frazer argued that the progression of human thought could be defined according to three distinct temporal phases indicative of an ever-increasing intellectual maturation: magic, religion, then science. I do not accept this three stage approach because it seems to me that religion serves a special function in the psychology of humankind. Magic and science are concerned essentially with the explanation and manipulation of phenomena. Religion is concerned mainly with communication and maintaining kinship with departed ancestors and anthropomorphised beings in the form of deities or some single deity who is the source of all phenomena and on whom might be conferred a supra-human moral authority.

What I argue for is this distinction: properly scientific thought is committed to a paradigm of empiricism and non-scientific thought is committed to metaphysical modes of thinking. The realm of the metaphysical assumes that there are two kinds of world: the physical and the metaphysical. Both worlds are conjoined but the metaphysical exercises great influence on the physical. And even so, the metaphysical world mirrors the physical world in that the human elements of the physical world have their counterparts in the metaphysical world. This is the province of religious thought. The non-human elements of the metaphysical world are also correlated with the non-human elements, forces and agencies of the empirical world. But the key problem here, and where I have a problem with Horton's thesis, is that empirical science necessarily requires that its theoretical terms have *actual* empirical reference of some sorts. This is not a necessary and provable requirement for metaphysical claims.

Horton claims that the reason why there is no justification for any qualitative distinction between the goals of scientific practice and traditional African metaphysical systems is that in both cases the aims of their respective practitioners are the same: explanation, prediction and control. This observation may be correct but it does no more than state an obvious fact. For the very elementary purposes of survival human thinking in all cultures is geared towards explanation, prediction, and control of all sensed phenomena.

In the essay 'Tradition and Modernity Revisited', Horton (1997:317) has sought to defend his original thesis of a 'closed-open' distinction between modern scientific paradigms and traditional thought systems by arguing that the 'closed-open' distinction is not to be as sharply assumed as in his previous research. What this more flexible paradigm has achieved is that 'it tends to produce and sustain a single over-arching theoretical framework rather than a multiplicity of such frameworks' (317). The result of this of course is to further reinforce Horton's continuity thesis. This thesis claims that the explanatory entities that modern science and traditional metaphysical systems invoke to explain primary phenomena belong to the same context. The intellectual intent in both cases is strictly pragmatic with efficacy of result being the ultimate goal. One might consider in this instance the classic case of the individual in a village society who first seeks a traditional cure for some illness, then after disappointment seeks treatment based on the findings of modern science. Repeated success with the latter route would tend to wean the villager away from the putatively ineffective traditional cures. The principle at work here is no doubt that of inductive inference. It is for this reason that especially in Africa's urban areas curative pharmaceutical products of all types are regularly purchased on the basis of their efficacy. One should note that in this regard no metaphysical explanations are sought to explain their curative powers.

But the gradual erosion in the belief in the efficacy of traditional predictive and explanatory cures has not led to widespread disaffection with religious belief. The reason for this derives from the distinction I make between explanatory systems that appeal to magic and religious systems in general. Horton's central point expressed as the similarity thesis is that since traditional modes of belief are formulated to answer questions of explanation, prediction and control, as is the case for the sciences, there is no genuine ontological basis to distinguish qualitatively between scientific and metaphysical modes of thought. Traditional African metaphysical systems include both religious systems whose main elements constitute spiritual beings with moral powers and influence, and holistic systems whose function is to explain the sensory world without the special considerations assigned to communication as in the sense of religion.

But Horton's claim about explanation, prediction and control as being the goals of both scientific theory and religious systems is in itself a trivial claim about the psychology of human behaviour. For example, parents are fully concerned with the explanation, prediction and control of the behaviour of their young children. Similarly, any organised society is necessarily concerned with the explanation, prediction and control of its constituent citizens, usually by legal and cultural methods. Thus, one can point to a multiplicity of human practices and behaviours for which the goal is control of behaviour founded on the principles of prediction and control.

On the basis of the above argument, the central plank of Horton's continuity and similarity theses is cast in doubt. But this observation does not however question the fact that scientific and metaphysical theories both seek explanation, prediction and control of observed phenomena. In the case of science 'control' is specifically the task of applied science and technology; in the case of control metaphysics 'control' is in the hands of the shaman – in reality a pseudo-technologist – who attempts to explain some phenomenon, usually an illness or physical defect, by appeal to conscious or living supra-sensory animate entities or spirits (Horton 1997).

But we should make a qualitative distinction between the animate explanatory phenomena of traditional metaphysical systems and foundational moral systems of belief enforced by personalised supra-sensory figures often known as deities. Purely in terms of its definitional terms the concept of religion has not been securely defined (Horton 1997:19–20). Horton finds the three standard definitions wanting and seeks to offer an alternative definition (Horton 1997: 19). Horton claims that his definition of religion is closer to that of Tylor's as 'belief in a certain kind of object, whether this be "spirits" or "the supernatural"' (Horton 1997: 23). He is more specific about religion when he writes: 'In short, religion can be looked upon as an extension of the field of people's social relationships beyond the confines of purely human society' (Horton 1997: 32). Thus the key element in Horton's definition of religion is the extension of the idea of human-to-human relationships to human-to-god relationships. And these relationships are, according to Horton, a combination of communion and manipulation (33). He states too that as scientific findings are established the manipulative aspect of religion 'will be continuously eroded while communion remains' (45).

Horton's position on the manipulation-communion thesis is at variance with that assumed by twentieth century empiricism founded on the assumption that only empirically testable beliefs can ever be candidates for serious epistemological validity. But the basis for this particular paradigm, according to Horton, is the epistemologically suspect principle of induction. Horton offers the standard critique of the principle of induction with the observation that no epistemological justification of induction is possible 'which does not

appeal to the very principles involved' (Horton 1993: 46). But he then makes the curious claim that the basis for human commitment to the principle of induction 'has causes deep in the roots of our nature, but which has no rationale; and as such its status is no different from a programme which accepts faith as sufficient ground for believing in god or gods' (46).

Horton's claim that the human acceptance of inductive inference has its origins in the human constitution is problematic and difficult to accept. It would seem that our adherence to the principle of induction derives rather from the nature of the sensorily-experienced material world dependent as it is on the past and present but not on the future. And while there are logically sound reasons for action and behaviour in this world based on inductive inference – reinforced with deductive modes of thinking – it is obviously cognitively problematic to apply a programme of faith to untestables. After all, a programme of faith must still be founded on some epistemological principle. And a programme of faith upheld on the basis of *credo quia credo* must appeal to some epistemological principle especially when it involves untestables.

It is on this basis that Horton is inconsistent when he claims that the individual who applies a 'single logical programme to all beliefs' is no more logically coherent than the individual who applies a 'second programme to beliefs about which the first can say nothing' (46). For Horton's epistemological framework is based on the idea of the similarity thesis. This thesis claims that explanation, prediction and control constitute the pragmatic designs behind religious practice and scientific investigation (328). Thus whatever differences that exist between traditional religions and modern scientific thinking are not to be taken as qualitative but should be seen rather as aspects of similar epistemological paradigms. Both traditional religions and modern scientific thought could be formulated as constitutive of primary and secondary theories. Primary theory is concerned to formulate in linguistically coherent terms the sensory macroscopic world while secondary theory explains this world in terms of programmes of prediction, explanation and control.

It is evident that explanation, prediction and control would not be possible without the positing of testable hypotheses. Yet Horton argues (46) on behalf of sustaining hypotheses that are founded on a non-uniform epistemology. A more accurate explanation of the past and ongoing epistemological conflict between metaphysics and empiricism is as follows: The history of human thought may be described as attempts to understand the sensory world in terms of the structure of phenomena as they exist in time. The sensory world presents itself to humans in myriad forms: forms that appear to be protean, forms that seem to be constant and static, and forms that interact

with the human organism in ways that demand understanding, that is, explanation. Human pragmatism, effected along the lines of trial and error, has historically been the source of technology which in turn reflects particular levels of explanation and prediction. It was this essentially empiricist approach to sensory experiences that formed the basis for what later developed into scientific analysis.

What is most striking about the human cerebral structure is that it is unique among the cerebral structures of all organisms in its attempts to interpret and understand the sensory experiences presented to it in essentially holistic terms. It is this holistic approach to sensory experiences that has led to what has been called metaphysics. The function of metaphysics in the human quest for holistic understanding of sensory phenomena has been to offer ontological formulations to explain phenomena that defied empirical explanations. It is in the context of metaphysics that the non-empirical world became populated with non-visible but existent forces. But such forces could also be conscious.

It is instructive now to stress again that the domain of metaphysics consists of two qualitatively distinct spheres. There is the strictly ontological world of animate matter and phenomena which may be controlled by the operations of individuals who like modern technologists have ascribed to themselves the power to manipulate this metaphysical world so as to effect changes in the empirical world. It is this ontological world that has been absorbed by modern science and technology. Horton's similarity and continuity theses apply to this world only.

But there is also the other sphere of the domain of metaphysics that is occupied also by empirically untestable animate phenomena, but such phenomena are not just animate but also personalised. This sphere is populated by two kinds of personalised beings: departed ancestors and supernatural progenitors whose function is to establish ethical standards for the living and who ultimately offer an explanation for the purpose of life and existence itself. Such supernatural progenitors are generically referred to as gods and provide communion with humans essentially on moral terms. The relationship is purely ethical and has little bearing on the idea of explanation, prediction and control as it would apply in the case of a metaphysical or empiricist ontology.

The crucial function played by this metaphysical domain again may be explained by the human cerebral structure. Given that human behaviour is not motivated by instinct but by conscious decision-making which involves conscious choice and the socially founded ethical implications of such, ethics becomes therefore the cornerstone of human social life. It was natural in the course of human history for humans to cultivate a specific emotional

attachment to their ancestors, an emotional attachment that became reified in ethical terms. Humans must necessarily have assumed that there was some first ancestor who was the original progenitor of all humans and all phenomena. In strictly practical terms the idea of a supernatural progenitor of individuals could be seen merely as idealisations of relationships that humans share with their parents from infancy to adulthood. The parent is seen as omnipotent, benevolent and the ultimate provider. It is the parent who establishes and enforces moral codes and rules. Proper conduct on the part of the child is rewarded while improper conduct is reshaped by various forms of operant conditioning. The child also expects the ideal parent to entertain requests for wishes, needs, and wants. The child as adult projects this model of child-parent relationship into an ideal world of a person-godhead relationship. The key element here is interactive communion instantiated with symbolic and ritual acts involving prayer, sacrificial offerings, votary offerings, and so on.

The principle discussed here applies equally to 'traditional African religions' as well as those of more universalist reach such as Christianity and Islam. It is in this sense that Horton's idea of the communion/manipulation aspect of human behaviour seems appropriate with regard to religion (Horton 1997). The key point made here is that *contra* Horton, religion – of whatever dimension – is an aspect of metaphysics but is distinct from ontological metaphysics, increasingly replaced by empirical science.

Given that the relationship of communion between the supernatural deity and humans is one of supplication, especially in times of perceived need, such dependence has been indeed reduced in those societies where recommendations of empirical science have proved to be more efficacious. Individuals suffering from some ailment in those societies that rely heavily on modern technology would preferably and initially seek cures founded on scientifically proven empirical procedures rather than those founded on the metaphysical mechanisms of prayer and other kinds of ritual offerings. But it should be noted that when cures founded on empirical science fail, alternatives, including prayer, are pursued.

But does the above analysis offer a fair treatment of metaphysics, a body of ideas that humans have appealed to ever since the dawn of humanity to provide cognitive closure to questions that were not answerable empirically? Metaphysics has survived in the areas of religion and theology despite the continuing advances of empirical science. I want to argue though that metaphysical thought maintains much allegiance only because of the way humans think. The human brain is structured not only to receive sensory information but also to seek explanations in terms of the principles of proximate and ultimate causation. In this regard the human mind is not just limited to

receive sensory information from the empirical world. Thus if explanations in terms of ultimate causes are not provided by the empirical world the mind would tend to seek explanations from an assumed or imagined non-empirical realm. The tendency to seek non-empirical explanations would seem to be inversely related to the advances made by empirical science as is evidenced by an appraisal of the history of the growth of knowledge. It was on account of this that Immanuel Kant, a major philosopher of the European Enlightenment, was able to demonstrate that metaphysics was not a genuine source for knowledge. The human mind may crave metaphysical knowledge in its desire for ontological closure on the issue of 'being' but such knowledge remains limited to what could be empirically confirmable in a cognitively bracketed context. In this regard, the power and influence of metaphysics lay historically with religion and theology. The inroads of empirical science with its impressive empirical and technological yield are what transformed this situation. Religious thought from whatever cultural origin was increasingly seen, therefore, as being founded on human imagination prompted by the emotions. Science, by contrast, required mature and disciplined thinking founded on rationality and psychological maturity.

What this interpretation of the history of religion and science means is that modern science is seen as representative of the more efficacious aspects of human thought. But the Western, though problematic, view is that science, as we know it, is of Western provenance and that this, therefore, puts traditional systems of thought at an epistemological disadvantage. According to Horton, this is the position taken by the Symbolists who 'by their steadfast determination to interpret magic and religion as types of thought dedicated to the production and appreciation of symbolic imagery for its own sake, avoid this over-scientistic approach and duly transcend the Western perspective in which they were brought up' (1997: 129).

Horton's answer to what may seem to be an evident epistemological disparity in terms of yield on the one hand from scientific analysis and from traditional modes of thought that appeal to metaphysics for explanation on the other is that both the traditional and the modern share similar goals of explanation, prediction and control. This approach effectively deals with the idea that traditional and modern modes of thought are sufficiently distinct qualitatively to warrant the appellations of 'irrational' and 'rational' respectively. Thus one might argue that what Horton has achieved is as follows: he has offered cogent arguments against the old comparative paradigm formulated by Lucien Levy-Bruhl et al., that claimed that non-European traditional thought was 'primitive' and 'pre-logical' while modern thought founded on reason and scientific empiricism was epistemologically sound and pragmatically efficacious (Levy-Bruhl 1922). The principal aspect of so-called 'primi-

tive' thought was emotion not ontological objectivity. It is interesting to note that in order to offer an alternative to what was perceived as the epistemological dominance of Western scientific rationality the Negritude school of thought of Senghor and Césaire positively embraced this dualistic paradigm. Horton's paradigm, no doubt, is opposed to this position.

Qualitative epistemology: Primary and secondary theories

Horton's continuity thesis relies to a great extent on the ideas of what he refers to as primary and secondary theory. Note parenthetically that modern philosophers of science speak of the 'observational' and the 'theoretical'. According to Horton primary theory may be applied transculturally hence intra-linguistically. The reason is that the empirical world presents itself in similar fashion to all humans in all cultures. As he puts it: 'Primary theory does not differ very much from community to community or from culture to culture. These differences notwithstanding, however, the overall framework remains the same. In this respect, it provides the cross-cultural voyager with his intellectual bridgehead' (1997: 321). In the case of secondary theory, however, matters become somewhat more problematic: the explanatory theories appealed to in traditional African metaphysics are qualitatively at variance with those in modern science. Recall that Horton's goal is 'to present a programme for the cross-cultural study of human thought systems.... Basic to this programme is the assumption of a strong core of human cognitive rationality common to the cultures of all places on earth and all times since the dawn of properly human social life. Central to this "common core" of rationality is the use of theory in explanation, prediction and control of events. Central too is the use of analogical, deductive and inductive inference in the development and application of theory' (1997: 343).

But the key question that Horton seeks to answer is as follows: 'How do we get from the "common core" of rationality to the dramatic differences which we observe between, for example, the styles and patterns of thought in sub-Saharan Africa and the styles and patterns in the recent West?' (1997: 343). Horton applies the same question to what he describes as the 'almost equally dramatic differences between twelfth-century and twentieth-century Western styles and patterns' (1997: 343). Horton's answer is that the '"logic of the situation" dictates the use of different intellectual means to achieve the same ends' (1997: 343). In this regard, Horton tells us, the assumed epistemological opposition between the 'intellectualist' and 'sociological' paradigms of explanation is erroneous; both are complementary and mutually indispensable. But what is of importance is Horton's argument that the difference in yield between modern science and other modes of explanation does not derive from the 'superior rationality of Westerners' but rather from

'*universal rationality* operating in a particular technological, economic and social setting' (1997: 343). According to Horton, this observation 'could have momentous implications for cross-cultural studies generally' (1997: 343). In sum, Horton argues for a 'universal rationality' not a 'superior Western rationality' as a more appropriate means of explaining the greater cognitive yield of modern science, which 'enables the egalitarian scholar to cast away his fear of invidious comparisons and look at non-Western theory with the eye of its user' (1997: 344).

Horton's argumentation here is problematic because on the one hand he speaks of a universal rationality and on the other he speaks of that kind of rationality as being appropriate for a particular technological setting. The implication is that this universal rationality would be appropriate for one technological setting but not for some other. If this is the case then we cannot properly speak of an inter-cultural universal rationality. The point is that universal rationality applied to all contexts would offer ontologically similar explanations in all cases. It follows logically that some explanations would be more efficacious regardless of context. The reason for this is that if universal rationality is acceptable at the level of primary quality on grounds of palpable evidence it should also be acceptable on the same grounds at the secondary level. The crucial distinction between the theoretical posits of the secondary theories of empirical science are expected to bear empirical evidence – directly or indirectly – at some stage of the explanatory narrative.

The theories of empirical science rely maximally on theoretical terms whose cognitive worth is determined by how much they refer to existent phenomena. Theoretical terms such as electrons, protons, neutrons, genes, and so on do not belong to primary theory according to Horton yet their confirmable empirical existence is vouched for according to publicly accessible experiments. Thus there is a direct causal link between the terms and concepts of primary theory and those of secondary theory in the case of empirical science. The application of logical rules such as *modus tollens* is important in this regard. In the case of traditional metaphysics this is just not the case. Repeatable instances of the public application of *modus tollens* and a recognition of what set of results would prove the theory untrustworthy are not assigned crucial importance. In this regard there is no requirement that a confirmable causal connection be established between primary and secondary theory. Horton's theory of universal rationality would seem to be inapplicable in this instance. It is on account of the requirement that there be epistemological commensurability between primary and secondary theory that renders problematic Horton's thesis about the appeal to universal rationality for both scientific and metaphysical thought.

It is for this reason that physicists are still puzzled by the behaviour of matter at the quantum level as expressed by Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Or consider Bohr's validated claim that the classical model does not apply to the world of elementary particles. Now Bohr just did not posit that claim. He engaged in a debate with Einstein about the causal structures of the quantum world that was to be settled by empirical test. But even if one of the results of quantum analysis is that observed or sensed reality results from a puzzling interaction between the observer and observed, the goal is to continuously seek new explanations by way of empirical test. This is not the case with traditional metaphysics. Because once established, the secondary theories in traditional metaphysics preserve a particular ontology which is not required to be tested against reality. A universal rationality cannot logically apply, therefore, to both kinds of secondary theory. Another observation is that any scientific theory gains its validity on the basis of two important phenomena: inductive inference and potential falsifiability. Inductive inference is the principle on which scientific theories and their constituent laws regularly describe the structure of reality. Metaphysical theories in general do not expose themselves to such. Similarly, a theory demonstrates its scientific credentials by formulating exactly how it could be invalidated. Again, metaphysical theory is not sufficiently well formulated to allow such. This would mean, therefore, that the mere fact that a particular theory appeals to a secondary theory does not constitute an adequate basis to place it on qualitative par with an empirically based scientific theory.

Yet there are scientists who are epistemologically comfortable with Horton's continuity hypothesis. Physicist Edgar Ascher in a discussion on Horton and Bohr (Asher 1990: 176) argues that there are certain similarities between traditional African thought and quantum mechanics. But again, I argue that there is a crucial difference between quantum mechanics and traditional African metaphysics in that researchers in the former field are not epistemologically comfortable with the anomalies and puzzles of quantum mechanics and work to resolve them by appeal to empirical evidence. Such is not the case with metaphysical theories.

African science and the continuity thesis

The implicit subtext of Horton's thesis is that he is seeking to make up for the Western belief that the West has established an important cultural differential between itself and the non-Western world – Africa especially – because it invented science. Horton's appeal to the idea of universal rationality and his claims about explanation, prediction and control – intrinsic to the scientific enterprise – being equally intrinsic to traditional African thought can be seen as his own coming to terms with the question he himself posed in

this regard. Horton writes: 'Here, I think, we get close to the root of liberal sentiment. For is it not the inmost reason why the Western liberal feels compelled to allot the non-Westerner a special cognitive province a secret conviction that science can never really be the non-Westerner's "thing"' (Horton 1997:102). This is also the basis for Horton's critique of both 'Symbolism' and 'Fideism'. Horton dismisses these two movements for lacking in intellectual conviction, but that 'They survive, not because they have any genuine interpretative value, but because they serve an ideological need: i.e. the need to place traditional religious thought beyond the range of invidious comparison with Western scientific in respect of efficiency in the realms of explanation, prediction and control' (Horton 1997: 307).

But I would want to disabuse Horton and others of this assumption about the West and the origins of science. He writes: 'In many ways, the rise of the scientific outlook makes a strange tale. It starts in the Greek overseas colonies during the sixth century B.C., continues first in Alexandria, then in Baghdad, then in southern Italy and Spain, then finally shifts to north-west Europe, the United States and the Soviet Union' (ibid: 101). An obvious point of critique here is that Japan should also be included on Horton's short diffusionist list. But the key point of criticism here is that science did not begin with the Greeks. In support of this Horton claims that science first began in the Greek overseas colonies and not in Greece proper. And although Alexandria was a colony of Greece, it was mainland Greece itself that absorbed scientific knowledge from Alexandria where the technological legacy of ancient Egypt was evident. For example, the important mathematical and scientific work that theorists such as Euclid and Heron carried out was done in Egypt and not in mainland Greece.

The idea that science (and logos in general) first began in Greece is an idea spread by most Western historians of science and other Western intellectuals. But consider this: Clearly, the Greek overseas colonies and Alexandria were not intrinsic parts of Greece itself. Science, properly defined, is merely an empirical search for the causal understanding of phenomena about which the researcher harbours an interest. In short, it is not much more than inquiry into the structures of reality and the principles that govern those structures. None of the present orthodox definitions and mystifications of science would contravene this observation about science in general. The claim that science is of particular Greek – hence putatively Western – origin is, on this basis, quite problematic. Science in its most general sense involves understanding natural processes in as dispassionately a manner as possible, without regard to non-empirical causes and effects.

In this regard the claims for a Greek origin of science cannot be upheld. The obvious evidence of the monumental ruins of the Egypto-Nubian culture

complex points to some systematic knowledge of the laws of mechanics. This is supported by extant manuscripts in geometry and trigonometry. I refer to the Rhind and Moscow papyri for example. And in Plato's *Phaedrus* (274b especially) there is reference to the Egyptian invention of 'number and calculation, geometry and astronomy...' Perhaps it is for this reason that the historical evidence points to Athens as the centre of intellectual life for the Greeks while Alexandria was the locale for the diffusion of the scientific and proto-scientific ideas of the ancient Egyptians.

In further response to Horton's claim about the origins of science one might note that the ancient Egyptians also engaged in a systematic study of the stars before the Greeks. The ancient Egyptians observed the paths of stellar bodies empirically and sought to integrate the behaviour of these bodies into a general theory. It is on this basis that the sidereal calendar now in universal usage derives principally from the scientific theory of astronomy developed by the ancient Egyptians. Their pioneering efforts also in the area of the scientific study of human physiology are also noteworthy. One must recognise, of course, that the claim that the history of science should include its African phase would be viewed as problematic given the almost universally assumed priority ascribed to classical Greece. But opposing arguments by theorists such as Cheikh Anta Diop, who has marshalled strong evidentiary arguments in favour of Africa's position in the history of science, have already been made (Diop 1991). Relying on the research of scholars such as Paul Ver Eecke and V.V. Struve, together with the writings of the Greeks themselves, Diop makes a strong case for the thesis that the research efforts of the ancient Egyptians should be viewed as scientific (Diop 1991: 231-307). Historian of science George Sarton was also convinced that the efforts of the early researchers in Ancient Egypt should be considered scientific. Consider the following: 'Some readers having at the back of their minds the prejudice that science is a Greek invention (have not scholars repeated that for centuries?) will insist and say "That may be science but not pure science." Why not?' (Sarton 1952: 49). Sarton then cites the remarks of a prominent Egyptologist, Henry Breasted, on the scientific structure of the Edwin Smith medical papyrus. Breasted is cited as describing the author (a surgeon) of the treatise and his successor as 'the earliest known natural scientists' (Sarton 1952: 49). But consider too Sarton's general assessment: 'To conclude, the Smith papyrus, and to a lesser extent the Ebers one, gives us a favorable idea of the idea of the medicine, anatomy, and physiology of the Egyptians, and the scientific outlook they had obtained at least two thousand years before Hippocrates' (Sarton 1952: 48).

We recognise that the essential feature of what we call science is inquiry into the structures of the natural world with the explicit goal of certifiable

explanation. Accordingly then, the hallmark of scientific investigation is careful analysis expressed in objective language and strict measurement. In this regard, mathematics is of special importance. The scientific outlook of the Greeks would not have been grounded had it not been for its reliance on mathematics, the science of number and measurement. But Greek mathematics owed a debt to the mathematics of the Egyptians. Sarton himself writes of the pioneering work done by the Egyptians as part of 'the millenary efforts of Africans and Asians' (Sarton 1936: 9) that was later passed on to the Greeks who later located their centre for research in mathematics in Alexandria. Sarton writes: 'Thus was their debt to Egypt abundantly repaid by the Greek masters and their Roman disciples' (Sarton 1936: 9).

But the scientific outlook was not limited to Ancient Egypt only. Ancient Nubia during the era of Kush (Napata and Meroe) became know for its technology of iron smelting and metal work. Given the cultural relatedness and physical proximity of Ancient Nubia to Ancient Egypt it would follow that both areas shared similarities in technology and the scientific outlook. But iron technology, glass making and medical practices and their requirement of an implicit scientific outlook are not to be limited to the Egypt-Nubia complex but also to extensive areas of Africa much further South (Diop 1987: 196–211). It is a fact that the relatively complex iron smelting employed by some African societies was often performed within the context of metaphysical assumptions but this should not detract from the claim that in terms of the actual empirical practices the scientific intent was evident (de Barros 1997: 132–149). One should recall too that scientific research in Europe before its modern expression was often accompanied by considerations that appealed to the occult (Seligman 1948: 482).

Thus the idea that science is strictly of Western origin is problematic as I have stated. It is in this historical regard that Horton's continuity and similarity theses are to be understood. The point is that African thought has produced a continuous progression from a metaphysical epistemology and ontology to one that has become increasingly empiricist over time. Horton's major claim in the general corpus of his writings, we may recall, is as follows: 'if there is one thesis that unites the essays assembled in this volume, it is that of the deep-seated similarity between much of the world's religious thought, past and present, and the theoretical thought of the modern sciences' ('Postscript', 347). But what Horton should have mentioned is that there is evidence for practical-cum metaphysical thought in pre-modern African societies all the way up to what is now regarded as the beginnings of scientific thought. One can argue with confidence that the idea of 'science' in Greece was not the end product of a continuous stream of mutational thought that was indigenous to Europe. As mentioned above, Horton fails to

distinguish between metaphysical thought which sought to explain empirical phenomena by appeal to non-verifiable causes, and metaphysical thought whose function was to establish modes of communication between humans and personalised, idealised or spiritual entities whose abode was a non-empirical world. These modes of communication were established principally then on moral considerations.

There is indeed a similarity of intent between pre-scientific causal metaphysics and modern science in that both paradigms seek the explanation, prediction, and control of sensed phenomena, but matters are different in the case of religion whether major or otherwise. The interaction between humans and their gods is personal and geared towards communion. The communion is essentially based on moral principles and without much consideration granted to explanation, prediction and control – except in a very general way.

The implication of what is argued for in this instance is that it really is not necessary to argue for qualitative similarities between traditional African religion and Western science to prove epistemological continuities between the two modes of thought. Religious thought is no more the essence of African modes of thinking than scientific thought is that of the West. More appropriate comparisons would be between European traditional-cum-religious thought and Western science. Similar considerations apply to modes of thought in Africa. Human interaction with empirical nature has always been driven by a pragmatic need to master the environment. Metaphysical explanations were sought for phenomena that could not be explained by appeal to the pragmatic. Increasing success in the explanation of phenomena by appeal to the empirical led ultimately to the weakening of the cognitive acceptability of metaphysical theory. The ultimate defeat of metaphysics in seventeenth century Europe must necessarily be traced back to the practical and empirical thought that served as the prototype for the development of tool technology in Africa in general and the development of proto-scientific and scientific thought in the Egypto-Nubian complex. The same may be said about the meaning of modern religious thought of the monotheistic variety and traditional African religions. Both are merely versions of what some anthropologists refer to as 'ancestor worship'.

Relativism, foundationalism, and Horton's thesis

What distinguishes philosophical inquiry historically from other disciplines is that it is constantly wrestling with issues of epistemology – the perennial problem of establishing the appropriate criteria for separating genuine knowledge, truth, the facts, and its cognates from what *appear* to be such. I would not attribute these cognitive concerns specifically to ancient Greek philoso-

phy but rather to the nature of human consciousness as embedded in human languages. Every human language must necessarily include not only concepts of truth and falsity but also epistemological criteria for determining such. But important constraints exist in determining whether established truth-determining criteria are adequate or whether they are being adequately applied. At the level of primary theory where phenomena are easily observed and claims about such confirmable, matters are not very problematic. In any language a proposition such as 'I have five cows on my farm and I want to sell them' is an empirical claim whose truth status is easily confirmable. But epistemic problems arise when claims about phenomena are made but are not easily confirmable.

The importance of science derives from the fact that human consciousness recognises that sensed phenomena are complex and may be examined in diverse ways. Primary theory, according to Horton, tells us for instance that colours are macroscopic appearances but the secondary theory of scientific research informs us that they are light rays of particular wavelengths on the visible spectrum. As we see, the science-philosophy problematic is in reality just another way of examining the old 'appearance-reality' problematic. The question here is this: just how successful could the enterprise of ontology be under the guidance of scientific investigation? Scientists are quite confident that their discipline is best equipped to answer this question and as a result place little confidence in the results derived from metaphysical research. Despite the crucial necessity of deductive thinking, theories must ultimately be tested against reality if the ontological question is to be solved.

One of the problems with Horton's continuity thesis is that whenever novel ontological claims are seen to be at scientific variance with predicted outcomes, cognitive anomalies are immediately recognised. Concerted efforts are then embarked on to save the theory. In terms of primary and secondary theory there is an epistemologically unacceptable disjunction between the empirical claims of primary theory and the putatively theoretical constructs of secondary theory.

But this kind of consideration does not apply to scientific theory since there is no epistemological obligation to vouch for the existence of entities circumscribed by secondary theory unless they are at least testable in principle. So universal rationality cannot apply in both cases. The paradox with Horton's epistemology is that it is intrinsically relativist while claiming to be universalistic. The reason is that it is only on relativist grounds that one could claim that primary and secondary theories in scientific and metaphysical thought are equally valid. The point is that for empirical science reducibility in principle is supposed to hold for primary and secondary theory. It is in this

realm alone that universal rationality is assumed to hold. But Horton is not a cognitive relativist.

Note in this connection that it was Kuhn who argued for a theory of cognitive relativism with the claim that science progresses not by adherence to some principle of universal rationality but by cultivating research paradigms that might be cognitively incommensurable. Kuhn's research proved to be highly controversial given that many theorists saw his work as being founded on epistemological relativism which was seen as incompatible with genuine scientific research. Kuhn's theory meant for epistemology that the ontological quest for foundations was questionable. But his theory did not stand alone: Kuhn's theoretical approach became an intrinsic part of a novel cognitive movement. His ideas were soon to be complemented by the more pronounced epistemological relativism of Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method* (Feyerabend 1975) and in the area of philosophy proper by the work of Richard Rorty (Rorty 1980). For Rorty, the perceived soundness of a theory was a function purely of its contextual moorings. The question concerning the strength of a theory was to be determined only by its pragmatic yield. In other words the 'truth' of a claim or theory was not to be determined according to some universal rationality but according to the epistemological criteria set by the theory itself. In this regard Horton is on an ontological par with Rorty and Kuhn.

But there is a crucial difference. Epistemological relativists eschew the idea of a universal rationality whereas Horton does not. There is an obvious reason for this. Horton's research involves making judgments on modes of inter-cultural thought. His attempts to inject cross-cultural translatability into different paradigms of thought would no doubt flounder were he to embrace the relativist epistemology of a Kuhn or a Feyerabend. Such a move would place him epistemologically on par with theorists such as Levy-Bruhl and Evans-Pritchard in their analyses of African modes of thought which, of course, was not his intention. It was on this basis that he saw fit to narrow an assumed epistemological gap between African metaphysical (including religious) thought and modern scientific modes of inquiry with the positing of the idea of an universal rationality. Horton's thesis is correct in one sense but erroneous in another. He is correct in assuming that human thought – a function of an environmentally shaped central nervous system – confronts the sensory world not only empirically but also causally. Whenever possible, explanations of phenomena are sought on the basis of empirical causation. But it should be noted too that when empirical explanations are not forthcoming human thinking has the tendency to seek next best explanations by appeal to the metaphysical. But in resorting to this modality of explanation empirically certifiable causal chains are given short shrift. The saving grace is that as technology develops and permits empirically more certifiable causal

explanations, metaphysical explanations are increasingly replaced. And this gradual transformation has taken place at all levels in Africa and other areas.

But this brings me to the interesting debate that Horton engages in as he compares the epistemological paradigms of Levy-Bruhl and Durkheim, both of which are central to Horton's own analysis of culturally derived modes of thought. Horton has embraced what he refers to as the continuity/evolutionary schema in contradistinction to the contrast/inversion schema embraced by theorists such as Levy-Bruhl. For theorists such as Levy-Bruhl, traditional pre-modern thought was essentially founded on a non-rational epistemology. Modern thought by contrast derived from rational, empirical and logical considerations. And it was this approach that made scientific investigation and rational thought possible. The evolutionary process therefore was as follows: as scientific knowledge accumulates non-rational beliefs are increasingly given up. But this evolutionary process requires radical epistemological changes because the two modes of thought are incommensurable. According to Horton, Durkheim partook of this methodology in his contrasting of what he regarded as modes of thought characteristic of the 'sacred' and of the 'profane'. It is in this connection that Durkheim and Levy-Bruhl are epistemologically on a par. Yet Horton claims that Durkheim also argued for a common epistemological grounding for both pre-modern metaphysical thought – religious or otherwise – and scientific thought in that both modes of thought sought explanation of sensed phenomena by appeal to non-empirical theoretical considerations (Horton, 1997: 72). Horton cites Durkheim favourably with the following: 'Thus between the logic of religious thought and the logic of scientific thought there is no abyss. The two are made up of the same elements, though inequally and differently developed' (Horton 1997: 72). For Horton this is evidence that Durkheim supported the continuity/evolution paradigm. Thus, according to Horton, 'although there is recognizably one Levy-Bruhl, there are at least two Durkheims. In choosing which Durkheim to use in the comparison, I have been guided by the master's own opinion. Nevertheless, we should not forget that, in some of Durkheim's remarks about the sacred and profane, there is implicit a contrast/inversion which is difficult if not impossible to reconcile with the evolutionist main line in his thought, and which is reminiscent of Levy-Bruhl' (Horton 1997: 78–9).

But this seeming problematic is easily resolved according to the thesis for which I argue. Human thought historically may be understood as consisting of two main categories: empirically confirmable thought and metaphysical thought. Empirical science with its commitment to explanatory analysis that must be grounded in the empirical world belongs to the same category as the profane whether in the case of the pragmatic thinking of pre-modern

villagers or that of the laboratory-bound scientist. Metaphysical thinking consists of two sub-categories, one of which has developed into religion and other into a kind of *ersatz* science. It is on these grounds that the contrast/inversion model finds its limitations. The reason is that it is not viewed as anomalous for a contemporary Westerner to be thoroughly schooled in modern physics yet practice and be affiliated with a set of religious doctrines that require suspension of critical rationality in favour of religious faith. A ready proof is afforded by the West itself where Jesuit priests at academic institutions are practicing physicists. Assumedly, they pray regularly and have communion with their personalised deity. Yet such individuals would not accept the existence of substances such as the ether or phlogiston. And again I argue in opposition to Horton that the continuity/evolution theory would apply only to the non-religion part of general explanatory theory. And this is so simply because although religious theory seeks ultimate explanation it distinguishes itself from the other section of metaphysics in that it seeks contact and communion with departed ancestors or godheads.

In this regard the position taken by the 'Fideists' concerning religion does have merit. Horton states that 'much hot ink has been directed against my thesis of a basic *continuity* of structure and intention as between traditional religious and modern scientific thought' (Horton 1997: 306). For the 'Symbolists' religious life is to be understood as 'a species of poetic jollification rather than as a system of theory and practice guided by the aims of explanation, prediction and control' (Horton 1997: 306). For the Wittgenstein 'Fideists' religious life amounts to the 'expression of an autonomous commitment to communion with Spiritual Being, and again as something totally different from thought and action directed by the ends of explanation, prediction and control' (Horton 1997: 306).

The fundamental problem here is this: despite the fact that those who adhere to particular religions do seek ultimate explanation for the existence of phenomena in general, they seek this explanation in terms of interactive communion. The beings communicated with are necessarily anthropomorphised. This is not the case basically with empirical and scientific inquiry. The ultimate goal is to seek the explanation of the existence and behaviour of phenomena assumed to be *inanimate* purely in terms of causal laws and principles. It is in this regard that the contrast/inversion and continuity/evolution paradigms collapse into each other. Pre-modern science involved empirically untenable assumptions such as *vis viva,* entelechy and so forth. In many cases, theoretical constructs were simply assumed without confirmable empirical evidence. But a continuous evolution was guaranteed in the progress of science by the stubborn adherence to the principle that the empirical world alone

could afford cognitively satisfying explanations. The same empirical principle that leads a pre-modern farmer to confirm the number of cows in his possession by counting them then seeking empirical explanations if any are missing is the same principle that drives empirical science along its evolutionary path as it necessarily discounts un-confirmable metaphysical claims. This process involving both inversion and evolution does not apply to religious practice.

What also constitutes an important differential between religious practice and scientific investigation is that the former is often a marker of social and group identification that adherents conform to mainly on cultural grounds. A society where participation in a regular religious practice is the norm would tend to confer outsider status on non-conforming individuals. The social costs to epistemologically sceptical individuals may just be unacceptable; so they outwardly conform to the practice. Kuhn (1962) pointed out that this kind of socio-anthropological behaviour is also common among differing scientific research paradigms but the crucial consideration is that the goals of scientific research ultimately override the emotively founded kinship networks established whenever cultural practices develop.

A retrospective note

In recent times the intellectual appraisal of Africa and its peoples by research scholars has been different from similar appraisals elsewhere in the sense that it has been rather deficient in self-appraisal. This has not been the case with Europe and parts of Asia. Europe has long engaged in its own self-appraisals ever since it adopted the Mesopotamian and Ancient Greek intellectual traditions. The same applies to parts of Asia, especially China with its intellectual self-appraisals according to the reflections of writers such as K'ung Fu-tzu (Confucius) and Lao Tsze. The West's appraisal of China does not stand on its own. It must be taken in conjunction with China's own intellectual self-appraisals. Matters are somewhat different in the case of Africa. On account of historical contingencies, Africa's self-appraisal in the form of the intellectual efforts of, say, Ancient Egypt and Nubia, Plotinus, Augustine, Ibn Khaldun, Ahmed Baba, Timbuktu scholars such as Kati and Sadi, Zara Yacob, etc., has not been much established as elements of an history of ideas. The more popular intellectual appraisals of Africa are those that have been produced within the context of the European colonial paradigm. Hence Placide Tempels and E.E. Evans Pritchard are much better known for their 'other' appraisals of Africa than the appraisals of an Ahmed Baba or a Plotinus. Thus any self-appraisal of African thought that accurately describes Africa's intellectual history over time must require a different autonomously generated conceptual framework. This is what occurred in the case of Europe. The

Western history of ideas is one that has been constructed to include not only the intellectual history of the Greeks but also those of the Romans who extended their civilisation to most parts of Europe. But the official Western history of ideas does not include a Celtic or Gallic traditional thought or ethnic philosophy. Instead, Greek thought – by no means *sui generis* with its adapted influences from Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia – is posited as the catalytic point of departure for Western thought. And yet the Greeks had no conception of the historic role they would play in the development of the intellectual history of the West.

The appraisal and development of African thought, both 'traditional' and modern, need not travel the route of a search for 'gnosis' or alternative modes of thought as suggested by theorists such as Mudimbe (1988) and others. The truth is that human thought began in Africa and its products were exactly those that we have today: the empirical, the metaphysical, and the axiological. This has been the intellectual patrimony handed down to all of humanity. The thinking that produced the implements of the African Palaeolithic and Neolithic is the same kind of thinking that produced modern thought in all its dimensions.

Metaphysics entered the human intellectual landscape because what the human mind could not certify and explain empirically was shunted over into the thought realm of the imagination. Thus there are no African or human modes of thought which do not partake of the empirical, the metaphysical and the evaluative. Practical technology is the forerunner of empirical science as we know it today. And as mentioned above, this has been Africa's intellectual contribution to world civilisation. As Horton has argued, there is just one continuous epistemological line stretching from African traditional thought to modern science. The truth is that there is no epistemological tradition that has sprung up independently in the West. Its mutational roots – like those for all of humanity – go straight back to the African causal modes of thinking described by Horton and not those of the quasi-essentialist varieties described by Tempels, E.E. Evans-Pritchard and J. Mbiti.

In the final analysis humans assign less practical value to esoteric modes than to those modes of thought that produce empirical and technological knowledge. Humans in Africa and elsewhere are more appreciative, in practical terms, of the theoretical and empirical knowledge that yielded the world's first technologies such as witnessed by the Neolithic, the Iron Age, the Agricultural Age and the Modern Age.

The same may be said for other important dimensions of human thought such as those involving the evaluative judgments of ethics and aesthetics. This kind of thinking is also a direct product of fundamental African thought. The belief that there is something qualitatively distinctive about African

thought or that there is something essentialist about pre-modern African thought is, therefore, erroneous. The architecture of the modern human brain was set in place ever since humanity in Africa developed abstract thought, speech, and variable technologies. Contemporary research in anthropology has yielded the reasonable hypothesis that behaviourally modern humanity began in Africa (Macbrearty and Brooks 2000: 453–563). This would imply that all aspects of modern human thought have their foundations in African thought. Thus the lingering belief that African modes of thought are essentially more affectively impressionistic than epistemological and that Western epistemologies are *sui generis* and derive possibly from a different cerebral architecture is quite problematic. The point is that human modes of thought are strictly determined by the existing environment with its culture-specific technologies and knowledge bases.

There are those who believe (anonymous referees, for example), that the perceived distinctiveness of the different human languages suggests qualitatively distinct epistemologies. But all human languages are artificial and spring from the abstractive and constructive qualities of the human mind, which must begin its operations in the materiality of the sensory world. Disputations about different epistemologies and their supposedly qualitative independences are thereby rendered moot on account of the flexibility and inter-translatability of all human languages on all matters empirical. It follows from this that there is no epistemological tradition that originates in the West that does not derive from a prior universal epistemology that has its roots in the thinking processes of the first humans in Africa.

Conclusion

The explicit function of anthropology as an invented discipline was to study and evaluate the customs and modes of thought of non-European peoples. Cultures studied under the rubric of cultural anthropology had a physiological correlate in the study of the brain structures of physical anthropology. But the research goal of cultural anthropologists was to analyse and solve the problem of the evolution of human thought. This was the question that engendered the dynamic of discussion engaged in by European theorists such as William Wundt, Levy-Bruhl, James Frazer, Claude Levi-Strauss, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Franz Boas and others. The fundamental question always was the relationship between modern Western thought implicitly viewed as developed and rational and non-Western thought seen as less developed. Horton's function in this history of Western anthropology was to attempt to debunk the cognitive incommensurability thesis between traditional non-Western modes of thought and those of the modern West. Witness in this regard Horton's critique of Winch (Horton 1997: 138-160).

Horton's main point is that African traditional modes of thought and Western modes are qualitatively cognate and epistemologically commensurable. Thus African modes of thought and Western modes of thought are to be understood as operationally identical in terms of explanation, prediction and control. The cognitive processes here were to be understood in terms of a kind of epistemological equality between Western science and African traditional thought. This was explained in terms of Horton's primary and secondary theories. At work here was what Horton labelled 'universal rationality'. Yet there was a crucial differential: the West invented and partook of the scientific wing in the cognitive structures of universal rationality. It is on this crucial point that I argued that this partition was problematic. If one were to retain the idea of universal rationality one could argue that one portion would justify itself according to what one might refer to as 'cognitive ontology' while the other portion could be labelled 'heuristic rationality'. Cognitive ontology would refer specifically to confirmable scientific theory and heuristic rationality would apply to explanations offered that could not be similarly confirmed.

The foundations and expressions of such could be found both in historical Western and African thought. Thus all levels of universal rationality – in the sense of the human need to explain phenomena – were to be found in the history of African modes of thought whether religious, magical or scientific. I argue that religious discourse is essentially not about prediction, explanation and control but about communion and interaction with metaphysical entities. Since there is an African history of science and technology the comparison between African traditional thought and Western science is thereby rendered unnecessary.

The problematic of interpretation originally developed because – unlike in the West – there has not been a constructed tapestry linking together the different stages of Africa's intellectual efforts. This gives the impression of an uneven, restricted and truncated African intellectual history. It is on this basis that attempts to establish the contours of modern African thought invariably sought their groundings in some Western school of thought. Consider in this regard the holistically metaphysical groundings provided by Levy-Bruhl, and Placide Tempels for Negritude (Senghor and N'Daw), Ethnophilosophy (Mbiti), and African dynamic materialism (Hountondji). By appeal to a broader, more historical, model of African historical self-consciousness, it becomes more possible to evaluate the ideas on African thought as expressed by the various theorists operating from within the Western intellectual tradition.

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Book Review

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This discussion paper is a study of the emergence/re-assertion of urban based youth in the public political sphere in Kenya. It explores how existing urban popular spaces have provided avenues for the youth to express their fears as well as their hopes in times of changing political developments in Kenya.

The study is divided into four sections including the introduction prefaced on the very first page with the Kenyan national anthem, itself an embodiment of the hopes and dreams of Kenyans at independence in 1963. At the beginning of each section is a proverb, perhaps to summarize what is contained therein. In the background, the author sets out various attributes of popular culture (a term Lukalo uses interchangeably with urban culture) including music, politics, Kiswahili language, cartoons and religion as basis for discussion, and around which she defines her study objectives.

Chapter one takes the reader deep into a discussion of the definition of youth, KANU's political manipulations of the youth, including the formation of money-guzzling YK92 and related political commentary on Kenya's political situation using cartoons. Alongside this is also a brief analysis of the history of music in Kenya, covering people such as Jean Bosco Mwenda, Eric Wainaina and Congolese musicians in Kenya. The chapter also discusses political praise-singing and the role of the national broadcaster Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) as a state mouthpiece for the then ruling party, KANU.

This is followed in chapter two by an analysis of the role of religion in Kenya's politics, including how former president Moi painted a picture of himself as an ardent religious person. The author counteracts this with a

discussion of corruption in Kenya as presided over by the same Moi, which led to the temporary withdrawal of donor funding. This corrupt situation provides a strong theme upon which Eric Wainaina composed his hit song *Nchi ya Kitu Kidogo*. Finally, in chapter three, Lukalo offers a textual analysis of the song *Nchi ya Kitu Kidogo*.

There is much to commend in this study. But in spite of its title and promise, it becomes clear upon reading the text that the author simply set out to analyze Wainaina's song *Nchi ya Kitu Kidogo* (literally translates into 'a nation/country of something small', 'something small' refers to bribery or corruption) as an example of the new spaces urban youth utilize to comment on emerging wanton corruption in Kenya. This is handled fairly well in the last chapter. The rest of the work, basically bedrocked on secondary data, can be considered a background that builds up a case for the latter analysis. In this background, the author provokes the reader with various ideas, thoughts and questions for further reflection.

There are problems, nonetheless, with the study approach to youth, urban culture and politics in Kenya. In the background, the author handles many important issues that play a crucial role in understanding Kenyan political situation during the time of President Moi. Some of these are not exhaustively discussed leaving the readers hungering for more. Indeed, even the English rendition of the Kiswahili version of the national anthem leaves a slightly different meaning. It is also not clear whether the section on the so-called praise singers Boniface Mganga and David Zalo was an interview or not, since it is not indicated in the footnotes or reference sections. At this point the author also mentions the fact that the praise singers benefited to the extent that they contributed to the plundering of the economy. This might be so, but he author fails to demonstrate how.

The other small issue is about the flow of thought in the work, especially in chapters one and two. For example, it is after discussing several important issues relating to the youth that the author decides to offer a couple of definitions of 'youth'. This mars the flow of thought since definitions by their very nature clarify the frameworks of analysis before the full discussion of the content of issue at hand. Also, the same explanations of youth are not conceptualized with a view to capturing the situation in Kenya. The use of the term 'in the late 2000s...' which is employed severally in the text, takes the reader beyond the period of publication 2006 and above. One would also expect that a discussion on Mau Mau songs as previously initiated by Maina wa Kinyatii be given special position and emphasis in the background since the songs have direct links with Kenyan politics at independence. However, they come much later and are mentioned in passing.

Given the fact that the text is a 2006 publication, the reader expects more about the current situation. The difference in youth experiences during the earlier government and the present Kibaki one. This is, however, not captured and the study stops in the year 2002 after the electoral defeat of the KANU government. The tone of the study is in past tense. The assumption one gets is that the youth fought a good fight and now their problems are over. This perception could have been avoided.

The title of the work leaves the reader with a lot of expectations, especially so, on urban culture. Although quite a good discussion is made of newspaper cartoons (whose dates of publication could have been included given that most are archived and available on the internet) and the role of religion in politics, the study heavily focuses on music and, as a result, is limited in its understanding of the concept of urban culture. It is also not clear what the difference is between urban culture and popular culture, terms that are also interchangeably used in the text.

Furthermore, it might be obvious to Kenyan readers, however, it is not clear upon reading the text who Eric Wainaina is and why his song is important to deserve the emphasis and prominence that Lukalo gives it. Also, although Moi was an authoritarian leader and Wainana's song was a critique of Moi's government, Lukalo fails to explain why and how the song escaped the censorship that was so characteristic of Moi's government.

At any rate, *Extended Handshake or Wrestling Match?: Youth and Urban Culture Celebrating Politics in Kenya* presents a compelling and stimulating discussion of the discourses on youth in relation to drugs, sex, militia etc. It is poised to be a key text for readers in popular culture, music, politics and youth studies.